

SUPER CITY SELECT COMMITTEE SEMINAR

BREAKOUT SESSION: SELECT COMMITTEE/POLITICAL PROCESS

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The purpose of this session was to suggest approaches to making submissions that would ensure the best possible impact and what to expect from the process.

It covered tips on developing your argument, structuring your submission, the political nuances and advice on the technical and procedural aspects of making submissions.

Sources

- *Making a Submission to a Parliamentary Select Committee*, Parliamentary website: www.parliament.nz. Click on Get Involved, then How to Make a Submission. See contents page below.

URL http://www.parliament.nz/NR/rdonlyres/6092F83E-CE78-4C66-A50A-CC4490DC9034/103478/makingasubmission2007_1.pdf

- For information on the Local Government (Auckland Council) Bill and the select committee: www.parliament.nz. Search on the name of the Bill. Provides links to *Making a Submission*, the Bill itself and an email contact for the committee secretariat.

General

1. Select committees provide MPs with potentially the greatest opportunity to influence legislation (more so than debate in the House). It is a key stage in the Bill's progress through the House.
2. Party affiliations are only one guide to the position individual committee members will take.
3. Every committee member is an individual – expect individual styles.
4. Expect media coverage.

The process

1. The legislative process: where the select committee stage fits; when you might want to listen in.
 - First reading: focus is on the purpose and the question “should it be introduced?” Does not deal with content or principles, and does not give the House's blessing to the Bill.
 - Referred to select committee.
 - Report back: Takes the form of the Bill with amendments proposed by the committee.
 - Second reading: Wider-ranging debate, deals with principles and details. House is asked to accept the Bill in principle; in essence commits to the desirability of passing the Bill (or not).
 - Third reading: usually a formality before Bill is passed.
2. The Bill is, in effect, the committee's terms of reference. Keep submissions relevant to the purpose and content of the Bill.

3. Committee membership (see below).
4. Scope/powers select committees have to make changes to Bills. Amendments may be minor or extensive. Committee may recommend to the House that the Bill not proceed, in which case the Bill will be withdrawn at the second reading.
5. Select committee procedural powers: summoning witnesses, demanding documents, examining witnesses under oath etc. Emphasises the importance of taking the submission process seriously and with respect.
6. Breaches of privilege: it is no longer a breach to release submissions in advance of the select committee hearing, but it is wise (and a courtesy) not to. It is OK to consult/discuss your intended submission with others and to share drafts. It is a clear breach of privilege to report any select committee findings before the committee reports to House (if you become privy to any aspect of the committee's findings).
7. Appearing before the committee. For what happens at hearings see *Making a Submission to a Parliamentary Select Committee* (above).
8. Submissions are normally heard in public, unless you request otherwise and the committee agrees. The media can report on what you say.
9. Committees that receive large numbers of submissions may not be able to hear them all, or may seek to manage the volumes by grouping submissions according to 'like' themes. The committee may invite witnesses to appear jointly rather than one by one.
10. Timetables can get disrupted – run late or run out of time. People may be offered the opportunity to come back another day.
11. Role of committee staff: will happily give advice on the process; point of contact for public; manage hearing schedules; advise the committee; prepare summaries; assist committee prepare Bill for reporting back.
12. Committees sometimes use video conferencing. At the time of the seminar use of video conferencing had not been addressed by the committee.

Your submission

1. Be: straightforward, clear and simple, respectful. See "five basic principles" in *Making a Submission to a Parliamentary Select Committee* (extract attached below).
2. Be aware that MPs have a keen nose for what will 'wash'.
3. Your points may well have been heard before, from other sources and other submissions.
4. Submissions can be emailed (email link on parliamentary website, see above link).

Select committee membership:

| Role | MP Name | Party, Electorate |
|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Member | Blue, Jackie | National Party, List |
| Member | Boscawen, John | ACT New Zealand, List |
| Member | Bradford, Sue | Green Party, List |
| Member | Bridges, Simon | National Party, Tauranga |
| Chairperson | Carter, John | National Party, Northland |
| Member | Harawira, Hone | Maori Party, Te Tai Tokerau |
| Member | Hawkins, George | Labour Party, Manurewa |
| Deputy-Chairperson | Henare, Tau | National Party, List |
| Member | Jones, Shane | Labour Party, List |
| Member | Kaye, Nikki | National Party, Auckland Central |
| Member | Sio, Su'a William | Labour Party, Mangere |
| Member | Twyford, Phil | Labour Party, List |

MAKING A SUBMISSION TO A PARLIAMENTARY SELECT COMMITTEE

Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives
2007

Extracts

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Writing on a bill

Focus on the bill When writing a submission on a bill you should have a copy of that bill so you know what is being proposed. You will then be able to focus your submission on what the bill actually contains. Information on public access to bills is contained in the previous section, 'Getting started'.

General position First, state your general position on the bill, whether you support or oppose the measure being proposed, and give your reasons.

Detailed comments Having stated your general position, make more detailed comments on the clauses that are of concern to you. If you feel that certain clauses need to be changed, say so, and give your reasons. You might also like to suggest new wording for the clauses that you feel ought to be changed. Using clauses as numbered in the bill is a good way to organise your submission.

Writing for an inquiry

Address the terms of reference Writing a submission for an inquiry is different from writing a submission on a bill. As there are no specific clauses to comment on, use the terms of reference of the inquiry as a guide to presenting your views. You may then like to list any specific recommendations that you wish the committee to consider.

Suggested submission format

Date Page number

SUBMISSION on the XXX Bill/Inquiry

To the XXX Committee

Introduction

This submission is from (name of individual/organisation and address).

I/we wish to appear before the committee to speak to my/our submission.

I can be contacted at: *(List your daytime contact telephone number or the name, address and contact telephone number of the contact person for your organisation if different from above. These details could be included in a covering letter instead for privacy reasons.)*

I/we wish that the following also appear in support of my/our submission: *(List names and positions in organisation. If an organisation, give brief details of your organisation's aims, membership and structure and the people consulted in the preparation of the submission.)*

Summary

I/we support/oppose the intent of this bill because *(state reasons)*.

I/we wish to make the following comments *(general views on the inquiry)*.

Clause * (if submitting on a bill)

I/we support/oppose this clause because *(state reasons)*.

Clause * (if submitting on a bill)

Although I/we agree with the general intent of this clause, I/we feel that *(note changes you would like made and suggest new wording)*.

Specific comments (if submitting on an inquiry)

I/we wish to raise the following matters under term of reference 1, term of reference 2, etc *(expand on your views and give reasons)*.

Recommendations

List any further recommendations or conclusions you wish the committee to consider. You may wish to restate recommendations mentioned earlier.