



Guidelines for deliberations on submissions – February 2024

The following are guidelines for deliberating on submissions, including some relevant principles from guidance on conducting deliberations on Resource Management Act processes¹:

- Deliberations need to be conducted fairly so that all involved consider their views have been genuinely taken into account.
- The decision-making must be independent and unbiased, and not influenced by matters that have not been transparent in the course of the hearing.
- No conflicts of interest should interfere with the decision-making process.
- The Committee needs to deliberate and decide on all submissions and submission points received, not just those submissions that were presented at the Hearing.
- The Committee can consider whether they agree or disagree with the staff recommendations in the staff report, and if they want any changes made to the staff recommendations and reasons.
- The Committee can either go through and decide on each submission point and then have a single resolution at the end, for example, if the Committee accepts all of those submission points; or resolve each individual submission point.
- The majority agreement will prevail, but the members who do not agree may record their dissension in the published decision.
- Staff involved with the staff report can attend the Deliberations at the Committee's request, and can only ask or answer questions of clarification; draft the decision and provide procedural advice; and do not influence the decision in any way.
- The Committee's decisions will be recorded, and a draft Decisions Report will be prepared and sent to the Committee for checking.
- Decisions should include general reasons, as well as reference to the reasons for some key submission points.
- It is useful to refer to submitters' concerns in a decision, especially if the decision is contrary to what the submitter sought.
- The final Decisions Report will be sent to Committee members on the Hearing Panel and all submitters.

¹ Ministry for the Environment, "Keeping it fair: Conducting hearings under the RMA".