

What to expect at a hearing

1 WHAT IS A HEARING?

A hearing is a chance for members of the public to speak directly to elected members about the topic they have submitted on.

Hearings are only held for some consultation. If a hearing is being held you will be asked if you wish to speak or be heard. You will see this question when you are filling out a submission form. If you email us your submission, please say that you wish to speak at a hearing.

To be able to speak at a hearing you must have made a submission on a proposal.

Elected members will receive your written submission and will read it before you speak.

2 CAN ANYONE SPEAK AT A HEARING?

Yes. There are no age limits or rules about who can speak at a hearing.

We encourage members of the community to speak to elected members to share their views and ideas. Community voice is important in decision-making.

3 WHEN ARE HEARINGS HELD?

Hearings are held at the end of a consultation period, once all submissions have been received.

They are usually held on a weekday during work hours and usually at a council venue and there is usually the option to either come in person or to speak online via Zoom.

If you have made a submission on a proposal and indicated that you would like to speak to your submission, we will contact you with a time, date and location for the hearing.

4 WHO IS AT A HEARING?

Usually all members of the Council, including the Mayor and councillors. Council staff will also be in attendance to support.

Hearings are public meetings, so any members of the public can attend, including the media. Hearings are also usually livestreamed and able to be viewed live or later via Council's YouTube channel.

5 WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I ARRIVE?

When you arrive at the hearing, council staff will sign you in. You will then take a seat in the public seating area until your allocated time slot.

You will have been given a timeslot, this is to fit everybody into the schedule particularly if there are a lot of people speaking.

6 WHAT HAPPENS WHEN IT IS MY TURN TO SPEAK?

When it is time for you to speak, you will be introduced by the chairperson and you will be asked to sit at the presenters table to speak. You will be asked to use the microphone to ensure everybody can hear you.

You will only have a certain amount of time to speak, usually five minutes, so think about the key things you want to say beforehand.

Tips:

- give a brief summary of your submission
- you do not need to read out your submission as the elected members will have read it before the hearing
- stick to the topic that the hearing is about

There will be a timer which will be explained to you and you will be able to see this to help you keep to your time. We use this to make sure the process is fair and all submitters get the same amount of time to speak.

If there is still time left after you've spoken, elected members might ask you questions about your submission.

7 WHAT HAPPENS AFTERWARDS?

After you have spoken, you are welcome to either stay and listen to other people speak or leave.

A final decision is made by Council after they have taken all submissions, including what they heard during the hearing, into consideration.

Decisions made will be published on the Rotorua Lakes Council website.