

PETITIONS/REFERENDA POLICY

Source:	LTCCP 2004/2005
Date:	Adopted 30/6/04
Reviewed:	Next review:
See also:	NZS 9202:2003

Display of Petitions

The Buller District Council values the free sharing and expression of ideas, but acknowledges that accepting petitions and other information materials for display can be interpreted to be approval or support of a particular issue, which may not always be appropriate or reflective of our community's views.

In response to requests from the public for the display of petitions and other materials, the following guidelines have been adopted.

Requests for Council to display public petitions will be referred to the Sue Thomson-Casey Memorial Library in Westport. Petitions will not be accepted for display at any other Council buildings.

Once checked by the District Librarian, petitions will be forwarded to the Inangahua library for display where this is more appropriate than display in the Sue Thomson-Casey Memorial Library.

Public libraries are a suitable and important place for the display of material on current affairs and issues, whether local, regional, national or international.

In displaying this information, public libraries are governed by sound principles.

These are that:

- The aim of the library is to provide access to responsible resources in order that the public may form a balanced opinion
- Libraries have a role to play in making information available from a wide range of community perspectives
- Librarians have a professional role to provide information without judgement, prejudice or comment, and to ensure all views are covered
- Space should be available for all sides of opinion in controversial matters to be displayed, including unpopular and unorthodox opinions

The library will display petitions providing they meet the following criteria:

- They do not contravene the law or incite people to break the law
- Petitions presented must comprise fewer than 50 words and not be disrespectful, nor use offensive language or include statements made with malice (NZS 9202:2003)
- Petitions must indicate the name of the responsible group or individual, with a contact address or phone number
- Any petitions that use language or images that could be considered racist, obscene, indecent, libellous or defamatory will not be accepted
- Petitions that include personal attacks will not be accepted
- Party political material will not be accepted
- Petition will be static displays only
- The wording of petitions must be very clear to ensure the public understand exactly what is being signed

The decision whether a petition meets the above criteria remains at the discretion of the District Librarian or Manager Community Services.

In addition to the above criteria, the library may:

- decline to display a petition at a certain time if space is not available
- choose to display information or resources that ensure customers can access and assess other perspectives on the topic if only one dimension of an issue is presented
- limit the duration of the display should there be space restrictions
- remove from display any material that is no longer current

The library does not accept liability for any damage to, or theft of, materials.

The library will not be responsible for returning any materials left over after distribution or display. Collection is the responsibility of the responsible person or group.

The library will display a disclaimer that the views expressed in the material are not those of the library or the Buller District Council.

Petitions Submitted to Council

Council will consider petitions in accordance with standing orders.

Where a petition is submitted as part of a consultation process, the petition will be considered as one submission.

Referenda

Council will not accept citizen or community initiated referenda.