

Guidelines for Lodging a Petition



Introduction

Members of the public can seek to inform the Council about their concerns in many ways. One such method is the lodgement of a petition about a specific issue.

A petition is a direct request to Council that it take some particular course of action. Signing a petition is an important way for citizens and groups to make their concerns known to Council. Petitions must be signed by at least one person, but are often signed by many people who are hoping to influence the Council on a particular matter.

The purpose of this document is to outline the procedures that need to be followed in order that a petition may be treated as such by the Council.

Preparing a Petition

The subject of a petition must be a matter on which the Council has the power to act.

A person lodging a petition is to ensure that the petition contains:

- A covering note detailing:
 - the full printed name, address and signature of the person lodging the petition
 - email address (preferred, but optional)
 - a clear and concise statement identifying the subject matter, starting with: *“We, the undersigned, petition the Mayor and Councillors of Byron Shire Council to:”*
 - the number of signatories on the petition; excluding non-electoral role member
- On each page:
 - a heading
 - a clear and concise statement identifying the subject matter
 - the action requested of Council
- The signatories on the petition are to each:
 - clearly print their name and address
 - sign their name
 - be registered on the electoral roll for the Byron Shire

It is the responsibility of the person lodging the petition to ensure that they have advised all signatories that the details provided by those signing the petition may be made public. A statement such as below is encouraged:

“The information obtained through this petition will be provided to Council and may become a public document. By signing this petition you consent to the publication of any details provided on this petition by you.”

A sample petition, together with a covering note to be completed by the person who lodges the petition, is available online at www.byron.nsw.gov.au/petitions.

Lodging a Petition

A person may lodge an original petition with the Council by addressing it to:
Byron Shire Council – Petitions
70 Station Street
MULLUMBIMBY NSW 2482

What happens to my petition after I lodge it with Council?

Council staff will review the petition and report compliant petitions to the next Ordinary meeting.

The petition will not be considered by Council if:

- it is not compliant with the requirements specified under Preparing a Petition
- it is defamatory, vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate
- it is not relating to a matter on which the Council has the power to act
- it is not clear what the petitioners have requested
- any action it proposes is unlawful
- the matter has already been raised in the previous twenty-four (24) months

You will be notified within twenty-one (21) days after lodgement if the petition is not accepted, together with the reasons for it not being reported to Council.

The treatment of a petition will depend on the number of signatures:

- A petition with less than 100 signatures will be tabled at the Council meeting for information
- A petition with more than 100 signatures but less than 1000 signatures will be reported to Council with staff comment for a determination by Council
- A petition with more than 1000 signatures will be reported to Council to consider initiating community engagement on the topic

Due to the nature of personal information contained within a petition, petitions attached to Council reports are provided as confidential attachments, with a summary of the information outlined in the report e.g. number of signatures and suburbs.

The Council will record in the minutes of the meeting the resolution of Council. Following the Council Meeting, the person lodging the petition will be notified of the outcome of the report to Council.