

New Plymouth District Council Significance and Engagement Policy

Climate Justice Taranaki submission, August 2023

1. Do you support Council considering climate change mitigation and adaptation in considering how significant an issue is? *(please tick one)*

Yes No Don't know

2. Do you support the proposal to broaden the scope of the policy to also consider the issues of significance to the district's iwi and hapū when considering how significant an issue is? *(please tick one)*

Yes No Don't know

3. Do you have any comments on the above questions, or have other things we should take into account when considering how important an issue is?

We congratulate Council for taking the step to treat climate change seriously. Indeed, many community members have asked repeatedly that a climate change lens be put on all decisions Council makes. We agree that matters that may result in "increase in emissions"; or "increase in the need to adapt to climate change in the future" ought to be treated as significant or critical.

4. Do you support Council taking a balanced approach between engaging the community on every matter and only engaging on the most major matters? *(please tick one)*

Yes No Don't know

Comments:

We would like Council to engage a lot more with the community. Where people are impacted negatively or particular groups are disproportionately impacted, there should be genuine engagement to minimize such impacts. We feel that terms like impacted negatively to a "negligible", "moderate" or "high degree" are too subjective. We also need to make it easier and create more space for public input and participation to help 'balance' the pressures from profit-driven commercial and industry lobbying.

5. Do you support Council outlining its expectations on how the community will respond to consultation? *(please tick one)*

Yes No Don't know

Comments:

But we are concerned about the lack of transparency and prejudice if the right to redact and reject submissions are abused. Who would determine whether a submission (or part of it) contains "profanities, defamatory attacks" or "other highly offensive or unacceptable material"? We believe submitters should have the right to appeal or complain to the Ombudsman in such cases.

6. Do you have any other comments on the draft Policy?

We encourage Council to elevate the levels of participation from merely "consult" to actually "involve", "collaborate" and "empower" the public, to foster strong, resilient communities which would be better able to deal with the multiple environmental and socio-economic crises we are facing and ensure community wellbeing. Be open and be ready for co-governance with Māori.