



## **Submission of Civic Trust Auckland**

### **Review of Standing Orders 2026**

#### **Civic Trust Auckland**

Civic Trust Auckland (CTA) is a non-profit public interest group, formed in 1968, with activities and interests throughout the greater Auckland region.

The aims of the Trust include:

- Protection of natural landforms
- Preservation of heritage, in all its aspects
- Encouragement of good planning for the city and region.

CTA appreciates that the Review of Standing Orders is being undertaken. In our view, there will always be useful suggestions provided both from within and outside of parliament for improvements in governance.

#### **Urgency**

(a) CTA has a concern about the use of urgency, namely, that a motion to accord urgency to certain business should apply only to matters such as a severe natural disaster, a pandemic, a high risk to national security, or a crisis of economic nature. It should not apply when there is sufficient time to use the normal legislative processes.

(b) If a matter is passed under urgency, then the minister responsible for that motion should be required to report on how the legislation that was passed was put into practice.

#### **Improved Scrutiny of Legislation**

(a) It would seem that all MPs, especially those from minor parties, would benefit from more resources, in particular, skilled and independent analysts, in order to gain a more thorough understanding of proposed legislation.

(b) We see a conflict of interest when departmental officials are the only ones providing summaries of submissions to MPs.

(c) It would also seem useful that the public is able to comment on legislation as it is being drafted, not just later in the process (see our points in our next section), and that as much of the documentation as possible that is provided to MPs is made available to the public at the same time.

(d) CTA finds it useful to be able to read the submissions of other submitters – we lobbied about this to Auckland Council and are pleased that they now provide submissions on their website for everyone to read. It is very easy to provide links to material in this digital age we are in, and so we encourage parliament to do the same, with both written and oral submissions.

(e) It is CTA's view that submitters with expert knowledge should be able to request (and a select committee should be empowered to grant) more time than 5 minutes in an oral hearing.

(f) CTA would support the use of citizens' assemblies on certain topics, and for select committees to consider meeting with submitters face-to-face, where practicable, with such meetings being a collaboration between committee staff and the local people, in order to encourage more of the public to take part in the submission process and gain more understanding about this opportunity to have their voice heard and effective ways to do so.

### **Exposure Draft Bills**

(a) These draft bills, such as the Natural and Built Environments Bill – which CTA submitted on in February 2023 – are a way for individual members of the public and special interest groups to provide comment on legislation before it is brought before the House. Such a process could allow draft legislation to be subjected to tests and queries that could contribute to its robustness, allow those with extensive subject knowledge to give valuable feedback, and ultimately result in legislation with higher levels of public understanding and support.

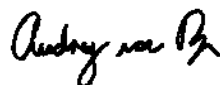
(b) Exposure draft bills can help speed up the process of introducing new legislation, because, such a bill already having been through the select committee process, it should need less time in a second select committee.

### **CTA's recommendations are that:**

1. Standing orders should include defined parameters around the use of urgency.
2. The minister responsible for any particular legislation should be required to report as to the grounds for the use of urgency with any such legislation.
3. For the sake of real and perceived independence, analysts assisting MPs and select committees should be employed by the Parliamentary Service.
4. The public should be given more opportunity for early commentary on legislation, and full documentation should be made available.
5. All submissions should be published on the parliament website as they are received, and care should be taken to ensure that online navigation to that information is as simple and clear as possible.
6. Subject matter experts should be allocated more than 5 minutes in a hearing, if appropriate.
7. Additional processes, such as citizens' assemblies should be considered, where appropriate.
8. More use should be made of exposure draft bills.

Date of submission: 25 September 2025

Signature:



Audrey van Ryn  
Secretary, Civic Trust Auckland