



Submission on Draft Charter of Consultation and Regulatory Practice
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From: newDemocracy
To: Essential Services Commission

Good afternoon,

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the draft Charter. As suggested, I have grouped comments under the four questions posed in your consultation paper.

Q. 1 - Our principles-based approach – is this the right direction for the commission?

Yes, we strongly support publicising principles as there are numerous methods, models and forms within which they can be implemented.

Q. 2 - Our principles – have we got them right?

I would suggest the principles could be amended in four areas –

- a. I would suggest you add to the “considered, planned and genuine” principle some hard standard regarding the need to closing the loop and provide a response within 45 days of the end of an engagement.
- b. I would suggest that “our engagement is inclusive” inadvertently promotes and directs hearing from the noisiest self-selected interests. The principle is stronger if in addition to the first sentence the Charter notes a need to preserve a voice for a representative sample of the community being invited to comment in order to ensure that government doesn’t hear solely from those with an interest.
- c. with regard to the information principles, we would encourage you to note the value of including avenues for a diverse range of sources to be presented.
- d. again, in the final principle is a gearing toward being responsive to stakeholders. We think a stronger and fairer standard is being responsive to representative groups of citizens.

Q. 3 - Our approach to regulatory practice – does this line up with what you would expect from the commission?

Yes, this aligns with our expectations. The narrower audience makes the focus on stakeholders (as opposed to the wider citizenry) entirely appropriate in this context.

Q. 4 – Any other comments about our approach to engagement and consultation?

You may wish to give consideration to one principle we offer to those in elected office. ‘The community’ and ‘community groups’ are two different entities: you should aim to strike a balance of hearing from both.

I am happy to be contacted to provide further detail if requested by the Commission.

Regards

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