

FROM THE COAST

Writing a Submission to Council

Who hasn't been frustrated by certain rules and regulations from time to time? When an innocent activity is restricted by some stuffy rules it can be hard to understand what the powers that be were thinking! Often the reason is just something you haven't thought of, where although it's an inconvenience to you, it may actually be protecting the life or property of someone else. Sometimes the rules are simply outdated and no longer cater to the current community, and sometimes it's those who have made the rules who may have overlooked a particular portion of the community.

Local Laws are reviewed and updated as needed, at most every eight years, to help local governments establish and maintain the quality of life expected within their district and provide a standard under which businesses, residents and ratepayers must conduct their activities. They can be also be helpful in the resolution of disputes and achieving effective government.

That's why it's important to have your say. A moan to the next door neighbour or a rant on social media might make you feel better but is unlikely to be heard by your elected Councillors. By writing an effective submission, Council will not only be informed of your concerns, but will address them and seriously consider your suggestions.

Three Local Laws the Shire of Esperance is currently reviewing are the Private Property Local Law 2003; Local Government Property Local Law 2001 and the Activities on Thoroughfares and Trading in Thoroughfares and Public Places Local Law 2001. These directly impact on several topical issues, including signage, al fresco and permitted activities on Local Government Property. We are asking for the community to have their say so these laws can best reflect the broadest community.

Some important things to remember when writing a submission are to be able to easily summarise your objection or proposal, providing accurate figures. Do your homework - most importantly, read all the documents Council have provided so you know what research has already been done. Make sure your submission is structured so it is easy to understand. It is often better to use a table or dot points rather than narrative, and highlight key recommendations. Stick to the topic and avoid including comments about other issues. Ask for feedback, and above all, show Council that you have logically analysed the issue appropriately and without emotion. Your submission will become publicly available.

If you'd like to find out more about how to write an effective submission or the three laws currently under review, copies can be obtained from the Shire Administration Office or can be downloaded from the Shire website www.esperance.wa.gov.au. Submissions are open until Friday 26th August.