CCLA's Political Submissions Playbook

How to write submissions the CCL way with how-to guides, stories and examples.

Political submissions

Submissions are another means to call for action and offer solutions to government in addressing climate and energy challenges. They follow the inquiry process of:

Step 1: Find a cause to write for

Finding open submissions can be as easy as Google search: something like "Current open submissions for <YOUR CAUSE e.g. climate change, renewable energy, gas tax>". Remember, local, state and federal governments all call for submissions.

Another way to keep on top of calls for submissions is through joining relevant email lists. For example, the Climate Action Network Australia emails their members when a new submission opens and lists open submissions on their website. Similarly, Better Futures Australia has a webpage that advertises new and old submissions.

Step 2: Research and prepare

Much like researching your MP to understand their views, previous statements and political affiliations, to help decide what path might be most effective in communicating your message, preparing and researching the historical, political and scientific context of your submission is critical.

Start by reading the Terms of Reference for the submission carefully – what resonates with you? What does your preferred policy effectively address?

Critiquing the existing policy and understanding the ins and outs of its shortcomings is critical to ensure that your solutions address these gaps. Similarly, harshly critiquing your proposed solution for gaps and defects is equally as important, to maximise the chances that your solution is heard, considered and might be acted on!

Step 3: Write and submit your proposal

The federal requirements for a submission and process to lodge your submission can be found at: https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Making_a_submission

Generally, all written submissions should:

- Clearly identify why you are writing: namely in response to the call for submissions, for example, on the proposed 2026-27 Safeguard Mechanism Review and be clearly aligned with the Terms of Reference
- Accurately present the current landscape, its shortcomings and your logical, scientifically backed proposal, for example, the APP with ACD and ABAM.
- Identify your affiliations e.g. with CCL, endorsement of the Superpower Institute etc.
- Frame it as a narrative and ensure its political viability – straight science won't get you anywhere, neither will ungrounded emotion or wishful thinking.
- Be succinct and structured – the recipients will be reading many submissions; be helpful to the decision-maker.
- Be formatted well (smart headings, page numbered, graphs labelled etc.) with visuals and aesthetics to communicate professionalism and validity.

Further reference: Pepper, J 2015, A basic guide to good written and oral advocacy, Land and Environment Court of New South Wales, Sydney, viewed 15 July 2026, https://lec.nsw.gov.au/documents/speeches-and-papers/PepperJ%20A%20basic%20guide%20to%20written%20and%20oral%20advocacy%20ANU%20160315.pdf.

Here is a brief structure that CCL follows:

<ORGANISATION's or PERSONAL VISUAL IDENTITY e.g. branded headers and footers>

Submission to: <INSERT SUBMISSION NAME HERE e.g. SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE TAXATION OF GAS RESOURCES>

<DATE, MONTH, YEAR>

Prepared by: <NAME AND ROLE>, < NAME AND ROLE >, and <NAME AND ROLE>

Preamble: Who you are and why you are writing. Be specific about the issue you are addressing, for example, highlight the exact part of the Terms of Reference.

Introduction: the broader context of the issue, the problems we are currently facing, create a narrative that makes it obvious why we need a different solution – your solution.

Summary of your proposal: a brief, succinct and clear outline of your policy proposal, why it addresses the submission call out and how it is better.

Notes (optional): any extra information that is required to help contextualise your proposal or make it more powerful, can act as a brief rebuttal to common misconceptions and political talking points/excuses.

Conclusion: a summary and powerful call to action.

Contact details: phone, email, return postal address

Remember that submissions can be submitted by individuals too. They can be simply a matter of expressing concern on the topic of submission; it is useful for the government to hear citizens' concerns, particularly if the terms of reference don't leave space for our proposed solutions.

Step 4: Collaborate

One way for your submission to have higher impact is if you highlight your network, endorsers and coordinate with peer organisations: receiving many submissions that speak to the same issues and offer the same, or a vastly similar solution gives it greater validity and the sense of wider public support. This, again, helps you maximise the chances that your solution is heard, considered and is acted on!

CCL's connection with The Superpower Institute

A note from our Chair, Rod Mitchell: Warwick Smith, one of our members, appeared on a panel at a Tax Summit in Melbourne in February 2025. Baethan Mullen, the CEO of The Superpower Institute was on the same panel. Both were talking about pricing carbon, so I encouraged them to meet and discuss the importance of returning revenue to households. I also had a few conversations and email exchanges with Baethan and a couple of emails with Rod Sims, Director of TSI.

In January 2026 they launched *The Case for Pricing Pollution* report which outlined the Polluter Pays Levy and the Fair Share Levy, both of which we are happy to endorse as excellent policies for speeding our transition towards zero emissions.

We continue to collaborate and we are striving to get other organisations that support pollution pricing to consider ways of cooperating to maximise the chance of success.

Step 5: The End of the Process

The results of the inquiry will be published online and in print; this is your chance to see your proposal published and read what others recommended. Generally, a formal written response to the recommendations proposed will be collated in a report. Hopefully this leads to some action in parliament – some real legislative change!