



Terms of Reference

Hearings Panel

Purpose

The Hearings Panel exercises the Council's quasi-judicial functions where independent consideration and determination of objections, applications, consent matters, and other statutory proceedings are required. The Panel is responsible for conducting fair, impartial, and transparent hearings in accordance with the principles of natural justice and the requirements of relevant legislation. Its role is to consider evidence and submissions, make decisions within its delegated authority, and provide written reasons for those decisions where required by law.

Key Responsibilities

The Hearings Panel is responsible for:

- Hearing and determining objections under the Dog Control Act 1996, including:
 - objections to the classification of a dog as dangerous (section 31(3));
 - objections to the classification of a dog as menacing (section 33B);
 - objections to the classification of a dog as menacing by virtue of breed or type (section 33D); and
 - objections relating to barking dog nuisance notices (section 55).
- Hearing and determining applications for consent to establish gambling premises under the Gambling Act 2003;
- Hearing and determining applications for consent under the Racing Act 2003;
- Making an order protecting sensitive information under section 42 Resource Management Act 1991;
- Make application to Environment Court for a declaration under sections 310 and 311 Resource Management Act 1991.

In exercising these powers, the Hearings Panel is responsible for conducting hearings in a manner that is procedurally fair, unbiased, and consistent with the principles of natural justice.

Receiving and considering reports, evidence, expert advice, submissions, and other relevant information presented by applicants, objectors, submitters, Council officers, and witnesses.

Making decisions based solely on the evidence and information presented, and providing reasons for those decisions where required.

Ensuring that parties have a reasonable opportunity to be heard and that hearing processes are transparent, respectful, and legally robust.

Delegated Authority

- Section 31(3) Dog Control Act 1996
- Section 33B Dog Control Act 1996

- Section 33D Dog Control Act 1996
- Section 55 Dog Control Act 1996
- Section 100 Gambling Act 2003
- Section 65C Racing Act 2003
- Section 42 Resource Management Act 1991
- Sections 310 and 311 Resource Management Act 1991

Membership

The membership of the Hearings Panel is appointed under delegated authority and will consist of three elected members of the Tararua District Council under the recommendation of the Mayor, taking into account any potential conflicts of interest with the matter being heard.

Quorum

Three members of the panel

Meeting Cycle

Hearings held as and when required.

Executive Support

Group Manager – Operations