

Wellington Convention Centre Proposal - Results of Consultation

Overview of consultation

Communication of proposal

Key elements of the proposal – including how people could access information and make a submission – was communicated through a series of ‘Our Wellington’ page articles and through media releases. An email alert was also sent to over 700 individuals and businesses on council’s consultation database informing them of the proposal and how they could make a submission.

Media coverage of the proposal

The proposal was also covered extensively in the lead-up to – and during – the consultation period by print media including the Dominion Post and The Wellingtonian, on various websites including Stuff, Scoop, 3 News, the NZ Herald and the National Business Review. It also featured on blogs such as Eyeofthefish and Kiwiblog, and was covered on a variety of radio stations.

Council advertising and the high level of media interest and subsequent articles helped raise awareness of the proposal in the community.

Consultation material

The consultation document, as well as the detailed business case, were made available on council’s website, in the service centre on Wakefield Street and in Council libraries.

Consultation period

Stakeholders and the community were asked to provide written feedback on the proposed convention centre over a five week period (8 July to 14 August 2014).

Summary of community feedback

Submissions

Seventy six submissions were received. Fifty two submissions (68%) were received from individuals and 24 (31%) from organisations. Many of the organisations that submitted were 'umbrella' associations representing sectors of industry often made up of hundreds – and sometimes thousands of individual members eg. The Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Industry Association NZ, the NZ Retailers Association etc.

Support for the proposal

Overall, nearly eight out of ten submissions (78%) support the proposal, with a minority in opposition (21%). Supportive themes generally focus on the benefits to the economy, the need to retain and grow market share, and the jobs that would be created, while those that did not support the proposal argued that it wasn't council's role.

Key themes

The main themes of those who indicated support for the proposal are

- The convention centre would give economic benefits to the city (26% of all submissions) as well as create jobs (14%).
- The convention centre is needed to compete for new, and retain existing market share (22%).
- The convention centre location is a good one and it is a good use of the site (14%).
- The convention centre would fill a gap in the city's current venue offering (12%).

Of those who stated opposition to the proposal, 15 were individuals and one was a residents association. The main theme of those that do not support the proposal was that it is not the role of Council to fund the centre, which is viewed as primarily accruing benefit for a private enterprise (13%).

Figure 1 shows the frequency of themes appearing in submissions, and whether they are broadly supportive of the proposal (green), neutral (grey) or a reason against the proposal (red).

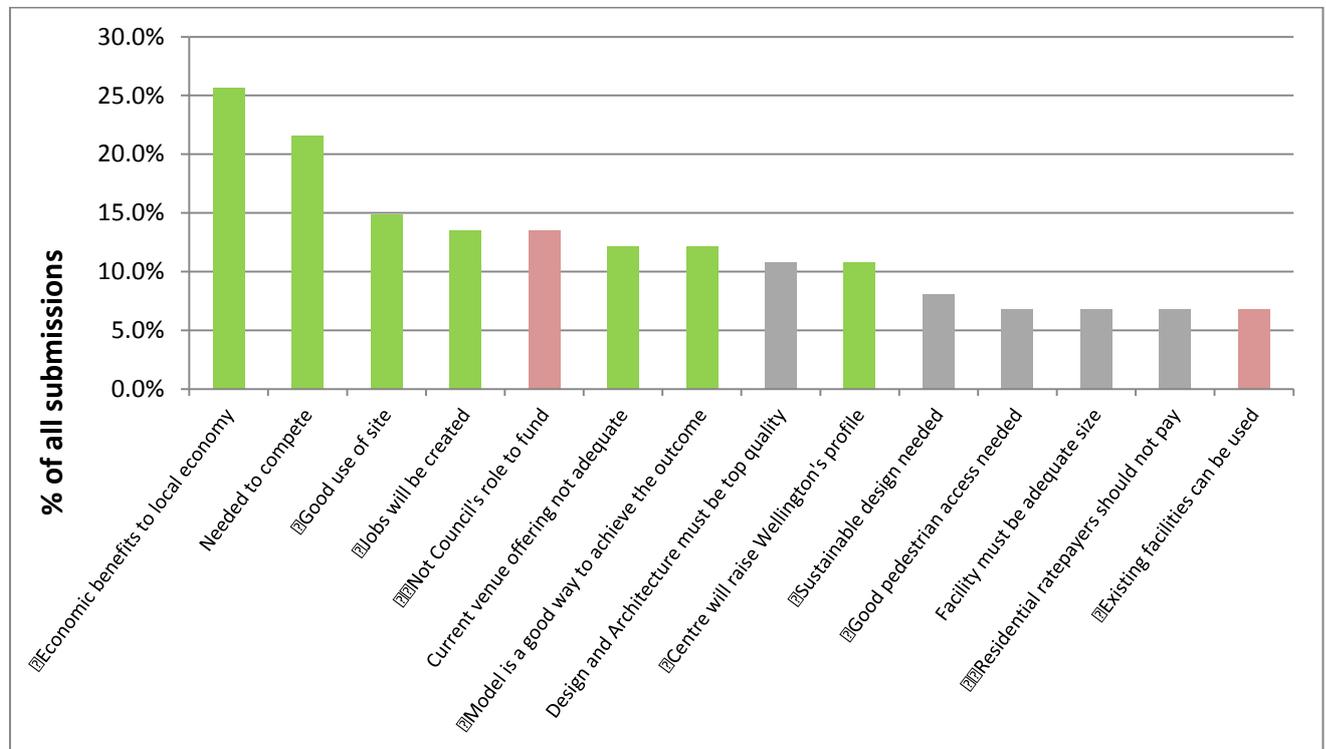


Figure 1: Submission themes and the proportion of submissions they appeared in.

Several other themes were also covered by submitters, some in great detail. Those themes most prominent in terms of volume and thought are:

- comments regarding the design, urban design and urban planning elements of the proposal. These submissions focus on making any Centre design optimal.
- comments about the funding split between residential and commercial ratepayers were common. Individuals generally believe commercial ratepayers should pick up more of the funding burden, and commercially aligned submitters believe residential ratepayers should pay more.

