**How to Write a Blog Piece for NZCGS**

We welcome submissions of relevant blog articles to be published on our website at <https://nzcgs.org.nz>.

**Hot Topics**

Writing a blog piece is different from other types of scholarly writing. The goal is to get your point across concisely and convincingly, so it’s better to adopt an informal journalistic style rather than a formal academic one. The key is to grab the reader’s attention very quickly at the outset. To do that, it helps to address a hot topic that’s in the news, and where your goal is to correct or clarify the public record, provide policy advice, or identify an angle that’s new and interesting. Make sure your title and first sentence immediately hook the reader in.

Blog contributions work best if they’re extremely tight, framed around a single point, and brought to life using examples, quotes, and other forms of emphasis. Write on topics that are within your area of expertise, but imagine you’re writing for an extremely busy, intelligent reader, who is not necessarily a subject expert and who needs to grasp the fundamentals of it very quickly.

Blog pieces are short (around 800 words), but don’t be fooled into thinking they’re quick and easy to write. In fact, blogging is a skill that needs to be carefully honed. Before you start writing, take your time to construct a clear and compelling argument. When you’re sure you can do that, sit down and write it, using a conversational style.

You need to back up your arguments with solid evidence, but rather than crowding your piece with too many facts and figures, add hyperlinks to your text where readers can find other publications and documents that reinforce your point.

**Style guide**

It will help us if you could follow our blog’s house style.

**Blog length, format and punctuation**: Please don’t exceed 800 words. Write in short, easily digestible paragraphs. Avoid lists, note form and bullet points. Use single spaces after full stops, left-justify your text, and use single ‘quotation marks’. Write single digit numbers in full (‘one’ to ‘nine’) and use numerals thereafter (‘10’, ‘11’, ‘12’…).

**Title**: Provide a short title for your blog piece that encapsulates your topic. We might suggest an alternative if a snappier title occurs to us.

**Subtitle**: A short (less than 7 words) descriptive sentence to summarise the subject or question.

**Language:** Use plain English and avoid academic terminology. Before you submit your piece to us, please read it aloud to yourself and edit anything that sounds too formal or wordy. We’re aiming for clear, simple prose, so when you read it aloud it should sound natural and conversational (although not slangy). It helps if you use the first person (‘I argue’ or ‘I believe’, rather than ‘it is sometimes argued’, etc.) and use contractions (use ‘they’re’ instead of ‘they are’, and ‘it’s’ instead of ‘it is’, etc.).

**Disclosures**: Please disclose to us and the reader any relevant institutional affiliations or funding relevant to your blog piece.

**Be your own editor**: Take time to correct your typos, improve the clarity of your prose, and make the necessary adjustments to your blog piece to ensure it meets our requirements. That way, we’re much more likely to accept your piece, and to publish it without unnecessary delays.

**Podcasts & videos**: You’re welcome to provide a 5-minute podcast or video of you discussing the topic of your blog piece. If it’s compelling and well-edited (in terms of both content and technical quality), we’ll publish it with your blog piece. Please see our other help article for more info and advice on how to create your own NZCGS podcast or video using your phone.

**Still unsure?**

If in doubt, email us with your idea for your blog piece before you start working on it.

You can also review the numerous other blog articles on our website to see the kind of style other authors have used.

https://nzcgs.org.nz/blog/