



**MAKING A SUBMISSION
TO A
PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE
OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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WHAT DO PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES DO?

Parliamentary committees are made up of members of parliament. They investigate and report on matters of public importance within their area of responsibility. During the inquiry process, committee members gather information, call for submissions and speak with government and non-government bodies, specialists and private individuals about the inquiry topic. The committee members discuss the evidence gathered and formulate findings and recommendations for government action. The committee will then prepare and deliberate on a draft report, which is presented (tabled) in Parliament.

Members of the public can be involved in inquiries by writing submissions and giving oral evidence at a hearing. This brochure outlines the rules and processes you need to know if you decide to provide a written submission to a committee

If you need information about giving oral evidence to a committee, refer to the brochure *Giving Oral Evidence to a Parliamentary Committee of the Legislative Assembly*.



HOW DO I MAKE A WRITTEN SUBMISSION?

Parliamentary committees have the power to send for persons, papers and records, and may order or summons a person to attend a hearing or provide documents to a committee. A submission to a committee inquiry is a written document expressing your views and given to a committee. A submission should address the specific terms of reference for an inquiry, which can be found on the committee's website or by calling the Legislative Assembly Committee Office (see details on the back of this brochure). Committees invite submissions from members of the public and other interested parties by advertising in newspapers and other publications. Also, a committee may write directly to public agencies and others who have a particular interest in, or relevance to, its inquiry.

WHAT HAPPENS TO MY SUBMISSION?

When your submission is received by the committee you will be sent an acknowledgement of this. The committee members use your submission to help them form a view on the subject they are investigating. Once your submission is received by the committee, it becomes a committee document and is subject to parliamentary privilege. This means that you cannot give your submission to anyone else once you have given it to the committee, as only the committee can decide to release it or make it public. However, this does not apply to information in your submission that has already been published elsewhere or was in the public domain before you sent it to the committee.

WHY IS MY SUBMISSION SUBJECT TO PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE?

Parliamentary privilege protects you from being taken to court and questioned about what you write to the committee in your submission. This is important so that you are able to be honest and direct in your submission to a committee, without fear of being sued for defamation or fear of harassment, intimidation or improper influence by anyone. In return, the committee expects you will provide evidence that is directly relevant to its inquiry and the questions asked, and not abuse the protection you have. If you repeat any of the statements you make in your submission (where they are not already in the public domain), or publish your submission elsewhere, you are not protected by parliamentary privilege for those subsequent statements. If you are found to have deliberately abused the protection given to you, for example, by making reckless statements about other people, you may be found to be in contempt of Parliament. Submissions provided from outside Western Australia are privileged in relation to any court action taken in this State, but privilege may not necessarily apply to actions commenced outside the State.

WHAT ABOUT MY PRIVACY?

Submissions become public documents once they have been tabled with the committee's report in the Legislative Assembly. However, it is possible that a committee may decide to publish submissions on the Parliament's website before the report is tabled. When this occurs, committees usually resolve not to include the personal contact details of submitters on the website copy of the submission. If you are concerned about the confidential nature of the information



you wish to give to the committee, you can request that all or part of your submission is accepted as either a closed or an *in camera* submission.

- Closed submissions are confidential, and no one may publish or disclose any part of the submission received by the committee unless the committee itself resolves to do so. If a closed submission is not tabled or published by the committee at the completion of its inquiry, that submission may not be disclosed for at least ten years.
- *In camera* submissions are also confidential and may only be published or disclosed by the committee with your written approval. If you do not authorise the disclosure of your *in camera* submission, it remains confidential and only may be made public after 30 years. If you have private or confidential information to present to the committee, you should ask the committee's Principal Research Officer for advice well before sending in your submission as there are restrictions on the handling, use and publication of closed and *in camera* submissions. It is rare for a committee to agree to this level of protection.

CAN I WITHDRAW MY SUBMISSION?

Once a submission is received by the committee it cannot be withdrawn. However, in exceptional circumstances the committee may accept a substitute submission and/or keep the original as closed evidence.

WHAT IF I AM LATE WITH MY SUBMISSION?

Advertisements will give the final date by which the committee will accept submissions. Committees work to tight deadlines and any late submission may not be accepted after the advertised closing date. If you or your organisation is having difficulty in meeting the submission closing date, please let the Principal Research Officer know as soon as possible and ask whether any extension of time is available.

WHAT ABOUT FREEDOM OF INFORMATION?

Freedom of Information (FOI) provisions do not apply to committee documents, including your submission to the committee, by virtue of Schedule 1, s.12(c) of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*. This means that no one will be able to obtain your submission through FOI procedures.

FORM AND CONTENT OF A SUBMISSION

Submissions may be handwritten or typed and can be sent by post, fax or email. Providing submissions via fax or email often helps meet the submission deadline. If you send your submission via email you must also provide a signed hard copy. Your submission should present your information, point of view and supporting evidence or reasons clearly, precisely and as succinctly as possible. All submissions should include the following information:

- your name and, if relevant, the name of the organisation or agency you represent;
- your position title within that organisation;
- contact names, email, telephone and facsimile numbers;
- the name of the committee and the inquiry for which your submission is intended; and
- whether you or representatives of your organisation wish to appear before the committee to present your case.

If your submission addresses a general investigative inquiry it is useful to:

- indicate your general attitude towards the issues under inquiry;
- summarise the broad thrust or reasoning behind your comments; and
- make any recommendation(s) or comment(s) on the specific terms of reference.

If your submission addresses an inquiry about a Bill you should:

- indicate why you are for or against the main thrust of the Bill;
- indicate whether you are for or against specific measures in the Bill;
- summarise changes you want and indicate why;
- indicate the clause number when commenting on specific clauses, noting subclause numbers where relevant. Try to make comments on each clause self-contained; and
- perhaps suggest new wording where you believe changes to clauses are necessary. Supporting papers should be kept to a minimum, be relevant and support your submission.

WHERE DO I SEND MY SUBMISSION?

Send your submission to the Principal Research Officer of the relevant committee at the address listed at the back of this brochure. Submissions should be received before the closing date for submissions. If you have requested the opportunity to appear before a committee, the Principal Research Officer will advise you if the committee members wish to have you appear before them to give oral evidence.



COMMITTEE REPORTS

If you make a submission to a committee for a committee inquiry, you will receive a copy of the committee's report(s). This allows you to see the outcome of the committee's deliberations on the inquiry issues and the committee's recommendations for government action.

FURTHER INFORMATION

More information about individual committees, their members, inquiries and reports are available on the Parliament of Western Australia's website at <http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au>. If you have any questions, please contact either the Principal Research Officer of the relevant committee or the Clerk Assistant (Committees) (see details at the back of this brochure).



CURRENT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES

Community Development and Justice Standing Committee

Email: ladjsc@parliament.wa.gov.au

Web : www.parliament.wa.gov.au/cdjsc

Economics and Industry Standing Committee

Email: laeisc@parliament.wa.gov.au

Web : www.parliament.wa.gov.au/eisc

Education and Health Standing Committee

Email: laehsc@parliament.wa.gov.au

Web : www.parliament.wa.gov.au/ehsc

Public Accounts Committee

Email: lapac@parliament.wa.gov.au

Web : www.parliament.wa.gov.au/pac

Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission

Email: jscccc@parliament.wa.gov.au

Web : www.parliament.wa.gov.au/jscccc

Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People

Email: jscccyp@parliament.wa.gov.au

Web : www.parliament.wa.gov.au/jscccyp

Legislative Assembly Committee Office

Address: Level 1
11 Harvest Terrace
West Perth WA 6005

Telephone: (08) 9222 7494

Facsimile: (08) 9222 7804

Freecall: 1800 199 187

www.parliament.wa.gov.au/committees