



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

## PETITIONS

Petitioners (individuals and groups) may present a request to the Assembly. Petitions ask the Assembly to take — or in some cases not take — a particular course of action.

### Petitioning the Assembly

The Standing Orders provide the rules for petitions. To be accepted, a petition must:

- be respectful and not contain irrelevant statements
- be neatly written, typewritten, printed or reproduced without subsequent additions
- contain a request or a prayer at the end
- be in English or be accompanied by a translation certified to be correct by the Member who lodges it
- be signed by the parties
- have every signature written on the petition or on sheets containing the prayer
- have no letters, affidavits or other documents attached

### Petitions must be lodged by a Member

Only Members may lodge petitions. A person wishing to petition the Assembly must forward the petition to a Member and ask the Member to present it. While there is nothing in the Standing Orders to compel a Member to present a petition, most Members will.

Petitions must be lodged with the Clerk at least two hours before the commencement of the Meeting of the Assembly that the Member proposes to present it. On each Meeting Day at the time provided in the Routine of Business, the Speaker calls on Members to present any petitions that they have.

### Conforming and non-conforming petitions

Petitions must be certified by the Clerk as conforming with the Standing Orders before they can be presented. The Clerk confirms a petition is in a form that follows the Standing Orders. If the petition does not comply with the rules the Assembly may grant *leave* (permission) for it to be presented.

### SUMMARY

- The public can petition the Assembly
- A petition must be lodged by a Member
- Member presents the petition to Clerk to confirm conformity with Standing Orders
- If conforming, the Member presents the petition to the Assembly
- If not conforming, the Member seeks leave of the Assembly to present the non-conforming petition
- The petition is read out in the Assembly
- The petition may be referred to a committee to recommend whether it be debated in the Assembly
- The petition is referred to a Government Minister
- A response to a petition is tabled once the Minister replies within 12 meeting days

### What happens to petitions?

When a petition is presented to the Assembly, the Member responsible for presenting it will move 'that the petition be read' and may make a brief statement about where the petition came from, the number of signatures, the material contained in the petition and the prayer attached to it. Once the motion is agreed to, a Clerk at the Table reads the petition.

Immediately after a petition has been read, a Member may move that the petition be referred to a committee to advise if it should be debated. Petitions presented to the Assembly are brought to the attention of the appropriate Minister by the Clerk.

### Responding to petitions

Once a petition has been referred to a Minister, the Minister must respond within 12 meeting days. The Minister lodges their response with the Clerk for presentation to the Assembly.

For further information about petitions see:

[parliament.nt.gov.au/business/petitions-and-responses](http://parliament.nt.gov.au/business/petitions-and-responses)