



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Parliamentary Committees - Guidelines for the Preparation of Submissions

INTRODUCTION

Parliamentary committees inquire into matters on behalf of the Legislative Assembly and report their findings to the Assembly.

Each committee inquiry has Terms of Reference which set the matters the committee will consider.

Committees comprise Members of the Legislative Assembly who are Government, Opposition and Independent Members.

Committees obtain information from individuals, organisations, government agencies and experts. People provide this information by making submissions. Committees may also hold public hearings where selected individuals and organisations answer the Committee's questions.

WHAT IS A SUBMISSION?

A submission is the giving of facts, opinions, arguments or recommendations to a Committee. Submissions must address some or all of the inquiry's Terms of Reference. They are normally in writing but audio or video recordings can be submitted.

WHO CAN MAKE A SUBMISSION?

Any individual or organisation may make a submission to a Committee.

HOW TO WRITE A SUBMISSION

There is no set format for submissions. They range from brief letters raising a single issue to extensive research papers. However, it is suggested that:

- the terms of reference be a guide to structuring a submission;
- a summary be included at the front if the submission is more than a couple of pages.

A submission must:

- say who it is from and be signed by that person. If it is from an organisation, it must say the name and position of the person authorising it. A signature is not essential for emailed submissions.
- address at least one of the terms of reference.
- include a return address and telephone number.

- Oral submissions can be made and will be transcribed to allow for publication.

HOW TO LODGE A SUBMISSION

You can email or post your submission to the secretary of the committee. It is preferred that submissions be emailed as pdf or Microsoft Word files or posted on typed A4 sheets, although other formats are acceptable.

PUBLICATION OF SUBMISSIONS

Submissions to committees are usually made public and put on the Assembly's website. The name of the person making the submission is usually included with personal contact details deleted.

Once a submission is received by a committee, it cannot be withdrawn or altered without the committee's permission, nor can it be published or disclosed to any other person unless the committee has authorised its publication.

After the committee has received a submission it will decide whether to accept the submission and whether to authorise its publication.

CONFIDENTIAL MATERIAL

You can request that all or part of your submission remain confidential. This should be clearly indicated in the front of the submission. You could also consider putting any confidential material in an appendix to the submission to allow the body of the submission to be published.

The committee will consider individual requests for confidentiality, but retains the authority to publish any submission. A committee may also decide not to authorise the publication of a submission for a range of reasons, despite the author wishing it to be public.

PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE

The submission of a document to a committee is privileged. Essentially this means that a person is immune from legal action in respect of lodging the submission or any statements contained in it. If a submission is authorised for publication, its distribution is also immune from legal action.