



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

PETITIONS

Individuals and groups (petitioners) 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, appropriate and reasonable in its language, and not contain irrelevant statements
- be neatly written, typewritten, printed or reproduced by mechanical process
- contain a prayer at the end
- be in English language 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 for presentation. Petitions must be lodged at least two hours before the time of the meeting of the Assembly on the day 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 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 checks a petition is in a form that follows the Standing Orders. If the petition doesn't comply with the rules the Assembly may grant leave for it to be presented anyway.

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 his response with the Clerk for presentation in the Assembly

SUMMARY

- A member of the public wants to petition the Assembly
- Approach Member
- Member presents to Clerk for compliance.
- If compliant, Member presents to Assembly
- If not compliant member seeks leave of the Assembly to present the petition (non-conforming petition)
- Petition is read out in Assembly
- Petition is referred to a Government Minister
- Petition may be referred to a committee to recommend whether it be debated in the Assembly.
- A response to a petition is tabled when the Minister replies after 12 Meeting Days.