



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEBATING DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS

On any meeting day, a range of documents and reports are presented or tabled in the Assembly by committees, Ministers and the Speaker. The Clerk also tables documents which must be presented to the Assembly by law or by order of the Assembly.

Why does the Assembly take note?

The Assembly may debate some documents by a Member moving 'that the Assembly take note'. This question is then debated in accordance with the Standing Orders for debates.

Committee reports

There are two main opportunities for tabling committee reports: in response to an order of the Assembly; or in the time allocated in the Routine of Business for papers to be tabled.

Usually the committee report is tabled by the Chair of the Committee on or before the reporting date. If the Assembly is not meeting, the committee report can be received by the Speaker and is made public at that time and then tabled in the Assembly when it next meets.

Reports ordered to be presented

The Assembly may order a committee report to be presented by a certain deadline. This is classed as Business of the Assembly. It therefore takes precedence over other business on the day it is presented to the Assembly.

When a report is tabled, the Chair of the Committee may make a tabling statement and may move 'that the report be noted' or 'that the report be adopted'.

Reports when papers are called

The exception to this practice occurs each day when the Speaker calls for papers. Standing Order 195 will allow a committee to present to the Assembly a progress report of its proceedings. Leave of the Assembly must be granted before such a report is tabled.

There is no allowance in the Standing Orders for these reports to be debated. However, a Member may seek leave of the Assembly to move 'that the report be noted'.

Documents tabled by Ministers

Ministers have the ability to table documents when they have the call. Other Members may do so only if leave of the Assembly is granted.

If relevant, a Minister may make a brief tabling statement and move that the Assembly takes note. This allows the Assembly to debate the subject of the document tabled.

Most documents in this category are annual reports, many of which are required by law to be tabled. A list of all tabled papers including those deemed tabled are reported in the Minutes of Proceedings.

Documents presented by the Speaker

The Speaker tables a variety of documents, including Auditor-General's reports, responses to resolutions of the Assembly, documents from the Department of the Legislative Assembly and other documents required by law, such as those relating to Members' entitlements.

SUMMARY

The Assembly debates most documents by a Member moving 'that the Assembly take note'

Documents and Reports that are debated include:

- Committee Reports
- Papers tabled by Ministers
- Papers tabled by the Speaker.

Auditor-General's Reports

The Assembly's procedures guarantee opportunities for debating Auditor-General's reports. Standing Order 65 ensures that specific time can be allocated in the Sessional Orders. This allows the Assembly to debate the subject of the report tabled.

Follow-up debates

Where debate on a motion to take note of a document is not concluded on the day of tabling, the item is listed on the Notice Paper under 'Government Business – Orders of the Day'.

This provides an opportunity to return to adjourned debate on a document.

By moving motions to adjourn the debate or seeking leave to continue their remarks at a later time, Members may keep documents on the Notice Paper. This allows Members to read and consider any document in detail prior to making their speech.