



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY  
PARLIAMENTARY EDUCATION SERVICES

## Committee Role Play for Legal Studies Students

The committee role play activity is a hands-on learning experience to help students understand the committee process and the relationship to how a law is passed through Parliament. During the committee role play, students work in groups to present evidence at a committee hearing on a proposed new law.

Our educators come to your school and provide everything needed to conduct the sessions. The program will run for 90 minutes, including a lesson on the role of the committee in the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly.

## Intended Outcomes

By participating in this activity, students can gain an understanding of the role of the committee in the law making process, explore contemporary issues, examine government accountability and scrutiny, engage in critical thinking, and practice public speaking.

## Alignment with Stage 1 & 2 Learning Requirements

### Stage 1

Topic 2: People, Structures, and Processes

*How representative is parliament, and how responsible is government?*

*How can civic participation be fostered?*

Topic 3: Law-making

*How is legislation made and controlled?*

### Stage 2

Topic 1: Basis of Government in Australia - *representative and responsible government and parliamentary democracy*

Topic 3: Law-making - *Legislation*

## Conducting the Role Play

- The committee chair starts the hearing by introducing the committee, outlining the terms of reference, listing the witness groups, and outlining the protections of parliamentary privilege.
- The committee chair invites the first witness group to the table, and to state their names for the Hansard record. The first group will make its opening statement.
- The leader of the witness group makes a brief opening statement outlining the group's position, and what it hopes the Assembly will do regarding the issue.
- The committee chair invites all committee members to ask the witness group questions (5–8 minutes per group).
- The committee chair thanks the witness group for attending and invites the next group to the table.
- The committee session finishes when the committee chair reads the closing statement.
- You can ask the committee to prepare a report on the hearing. The report should outline what the committee thinks the Assembly should do about the issue they have investigated.

## CHAIRPERSON SCRIPT

 On behalf of the Committee, I welcome everyone to this public hearing into Increased School Hours Bill 2018

The terms of reference are to determine:

- the advantages and disadvantages of increasing the school day from the current schedule of 8.05 am – 2.40 pm to an eight-hour; 9.00 am – 5.00 pm model.
- what changes would be necessary to implement the new increased school schedule into Northern Territory Schools.

 I welcome representatives from (*choose a group*):

1. NT Department of Education
2. Australian Education Union (AEU) NT Branch
3. Parent representative association
4. A Student Representative Council (SRC)

 Thank you for coming before the Committee. We appreciate you taking the time to speak to the Committee and look forward to hearing from you today.

 This is a formal proceeding of the Committee and the protection of parliamentary privilege and the obligation not to mislead the Committee apply.

 This is a public hearing and is being webcast through the Assembly's website. A transcript will be made for use of the Committee and may be put on the Committee's website.

 If at any time during the hearing you are concerned that what you will say should not be made public, you may ask that the Committee go into a closed session and take your evidence in private.

 I will ask each witness to state their name for the Hansard record and the capacity in which they appear. I will then ask you to make a brief opening statement before proceeding to the Committee's questions.

 (*Insert group name*), would you like to make an opening statement?

*After the group's opening statement has been read, say:*

 Committee members, do you have any questions for the witness group?

*Give each committee member a chance to ask a question. After the questions have finished, say:*

 I thank the representatives from (*group name*) for coming today.

*Repeat the above for each witness group.*

*After ALL the witness groups have been heard, say:*

 This committee hearing is now adjourned. The committee will consider the evidence heard here today and will write its report. The report will be tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

## EXAMPLE COMMITTEE QUESTIONS

*You are the Committee on School Hours. You are holding a hearing into the length of the school day, the proposed bill would allow the school day to be increased from 6 hours to 8 hours.*

*The following four witness groups will appear before the committee to answer your questions about this issue:*

1. NT Department of Education
2. Australian Education Union (AEU) NT Branch
3. Parent representative association
4. A Student Representative Council (SRC)

*After the committee hears from these witness groups, it will write a report based on the evidence it has heard. The report can recommend to support or oppose the idea of increasing hours in the school day, or to make changes to the idea.*

*You need to think of questions to ask each group. These are the sorts of questions you might like to ask:*

- How will the increased school day improve students' performance?
- What impact will the increased school day have on budgets for teacher salary?
- Is eight hours a day too long for students to concentrate?
- Will the increased school hour's impact teacher retention?
- Would increasing the school day have a positive impact for working parents?
- What impacts will increasing the school day have on the wider community?
- Who is your witness group speaking for and what evidence do they have to support their position?
- What methods did your witness group use to find its evidence?

## INFORMATION FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

### NT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

You want the school day to be increased to the new proposed hours. This will allow for more in classroom time for study, and less required at home work. However, the impact the increase in school hours would have on teacher salary would need to be negotiated. It's your job to convince the committee that increasing the school day is a good idea.

### AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION UNION (AEU) NT BRANCH

You believe that the current hours for the school day in the Northern Territory works well and should not be changed. You have concerns around the hours required to work and teacher salaries. It's your job to convince the committee that increasing the hours in the school day will not be good for students' concentration or teacher performance.

### PARENT REPRESENTATIVE ORGANISATION

You support increasing the hours of the school day, as this will allow more flexibility for working parents. It's your job to convince the committee of your point of view.

### STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (SRC)

You believe that eight hours of school each day is too much. It's your job to convince the committee that increasing the school day will have a negative impact on students' wellbeing.



**AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION UNION (AEU) NT BRANCH**

*You believe that the current hours for the school day in the Northern Territory works well and should not be changed. You have concerns around the hours required to work and teacher salaries. It's your job to convince the committee that increasing the hours in the school day will not be good for students' concentration or teacher performance.*

*Write a statement outlining your group's view. While you are doing this you may want to consider some of these ideas:*

- *teachers are already too busy and stressed*
- *children just can't work that long - they'd get too tired*
- *it would cost more because teachers would have to be paid more*

*Begin your statement with: Thank you Mr/Madam Chairperson, we are from the NT branch of the Australian Education Union. We believe that...*

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## Committee Report

*The Social Policy Committee has reviewed the community feedback on the Increased School Hours Bill 2018. We have investigated the issues of increasing the school day to a 9.00 am - 5.00 pm schedule and makes the following recommendations:*

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