Individuals and organisations may seek to have petitions presented to the Assembly. Petitions generally express views on matters of public policy, and they 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 take the view that they should seek to present any petition forwarded to them, even if the views represented in the petition do not reflect the views of the Member presenting it.

Before lodging a petition a Member must place his or her name on it. Note that a Member does not sign the petition with the other signatories.

**SUMMARY**

Petitions express views on matters of public policy, and they ask the Assembly to take – or in some cases not take – a particular course of action.

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.

Once a petition has been referred to a Minister, the Minister must respond within 12 sitting days.

Petitions must be lodged with the Clerk for presentation. This is done by delivering the petition to the Clerk's Office, which arranges the presentation of petitions. Petitions must be lodged at least three hours before the time of the meeting of the Assembly on the day which the Member proposes to present it.

On each sitting day at the time provided in the routine of business (currently after 2 pm Notices), the Chair calls on Members to present any petitions they have.

**Conform 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 a petition is non-conforming it may still be presented to the Assembly, but leave of the Assembly must be granted.

**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.

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 sitting days. The Minister lodges his response with the Clerk for presentation in the Assembly, who in turn presents the response in the Chamber on the next Sitting Day after new petitions have been presented.

Second and subsequent pages of a petition must contain the prayer of the petition:

YOUR PETITIONERS THEREFORE HUMBLY PRAY THAT

..........................................................................................................................

*[Terms of action requested]*

AND YOUR PETITIONERS, AS IN DUTY BOUND, WILL EVER PRAY.

*[Name] [Signatures] [Address]*

Following is the form of a typical petition:

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TO THE HONOURABLE THE **SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY** OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY:

WE THE UNDERSIGNED RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH

...........................................................................................................

*[Circumstances of case stated to the* ***Assembly****]*

YOUR PETITIONERS THEREFORE HUMBLY PRAY THAT

...........................................................................................................

*[Terms of action requested by petitions to the* ***Assembly****]*

AND YOUR PETITIONERS, AS IN DUTY BOUND, WILL EVER PRAY.

*[Name] [Signatures] [Address]*