

## Parliamentary privilege

The presentation or 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 also is immune from legal action.

## Inquiry evidence

The evidence on which a parliamentary committee bases its findings includes the written submissions it receives and the oral evidence taken at hearings. Those making submissions may be asked to appear before the committee at a public or closed (*in camera*) hearing (see also the pamphlet *Appearing as a witness*)

## Inquiry process at a glance

The inquiry process may vary from inquiry to inquiry as circumstances demand but usually consists of the following steps.

1. Reference received by the committee.
2. Reference advertised through various media, and submissions sought from individuals and organisations.
3. Submissions received and authorised for publication.
4. Committee conducts on-site inspections, background briefing and seminars (where appropriate).
5. Committee conducts public hearings with selected individuals and organisations requested to give oral evidence.
6. Committee considers evidence and prepares report.
7. The report is presented to the Parliament and may be debated.
8. Copies of the report are made available through various means including through the national and state libraries and publication on the Parliament's website.
9. Government considers report.
10. Government responds to report by presenting response in the Parliament.

## Submission checklist

Before lodging your submission you may find it helpful to consider the following checklist:

- Have I commented on some or all of the terms of reference?
- Have I provided a summary of the submission at the front (for lengthy submissions)?
- Have I provided my return address and contact details with the submission?
- If the submission contains confidential information, have I made this clear at the front?
- Have I provided an electronic version of the submission (if possible)?

Further information can be sought from the secretary of the committee conducting the particular inquiry or from:

### Clerk Assistant (Committees)

#### House of Representatives

PO Box 6021

#### Parliament House

CANBERRA ACT 2600

Tel: 02 6277 4397

Fax: 02 6277 4034

Email: [committee.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:committee.reps@aph.gov.au)



THE PARLIAMENT  
of the  
COMMONWEALTH of AUSTRALIA

# Preparing a Submission

Notes to assist those preparing a submission  
to a parliamentary committee inquiry

September 2009

Department of the House of Representatives  
COMMITTEE OFFICE



THE PARLIAMENT  
*of the*  
COMMONWEALTH of AUSTRALIA

The following advice is offered to assist those wishing to make a submission to a parliamentary committee.

The main purpose of parliamentary committees is to carry out investigations and report the findings of those investigations to the Parliament. Each inquiry has terms of reference, which outline the matters to be considered by the committee.

As part of the inquiry process, a committee seeks written submissions addressing the terms of reference.

Information about committee inquiries can be found at: [www.aph.gov.au/house/committee](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee)

### Who can make a submission?

Any individual or organisation can make a submission to a parliamentary committee.

### What should be in a submission?

There is no prescribed form for a submission to a parliamentary committee. Submissions may be in the form of a letter, a short document or a substantial paper. They may include appendices and other supporting documents.

Submissions should be prepared solely for the inquiry and should be relevant to the terms of reference. They may address all or a selection of the points outlined in the terms of reference. Submissions may contain facts, opinions, and arguments and recommendations for action.

It is helpful if lengthy submissions are prefaced by a brief summary of the main points.

Supplementary submissions may be lodged during the course of an inquiry to provide additional information or comments on other evidence.

### How to lodge a submission

Submissions should be sent to the secretary of the relevant committee, House of Representatives, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600. Individual committee addresses are contained in inquiry advertisements and are available on the Australian Parliament's website. Submissions may be in hard copy (written or printed) form, or can be made by email.

The author must sign a written submission either on his or her own behalf or on behalf of the organisation making the submission.

Those signing on behalf of an organisation should indicate the level at which the submission has been authorised (eg President, Chief Executive, Secretary).

A return address for correspondence and a contact telephone number should be provided with the submission. Submissions forwarded by email must include the name, postal address and phone number of the person or organisation making the submission.

Submissions should be lodged by the advertised closing date. An extension of time, if required, can be requested from the committee secretary.

Where possible, hard copy submissions should be typed on A4 paper. This helps with reproduction of the submission. Where typing facilities are not available, hand written submissions are acceptable, but care should be taken to ensure that they are legible and suitable for photocopying.

It is helpful if each hard copy submission is sent with an electronic version on disk or CD-ROM, preferably in Microsoft Word® or Portable Document Format (PDF). This assists committees with publishing submissions on the Parliament's website.

### Publication of submissions

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 or until the committee has authorised its publication.

On receipt of a submission, a committee decides whether to accept the submission and authorise its publication. Copies of submissions authorised for publication are usually available from the Parliament's website. Hard copies of the submission can be requested from the committee secretariat.

An author of a submission can request that all or part of the submission should remain confidential. This should be indicated clearly in the front of the submission. You could also consider presenting any confidential information 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.