

The Senate

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Procedure Committee

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First report of 2026

e-petitions

May 2026

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# First report of 2026

## e-petitions

- 1.1 On 5 February 2026, on the motion of Senator Payman, the Senate referred the following matter to the committee for inquiry and report by 11 May 2026:

The appropriateness of amending standing orders 69, 70 and 71 to allow for the creation of a system for the initiation of e-petitions, similar to the system used by the House of Representatives, with particular reference to:

- (a) making it easier for Australians to petition their elected representatives in the Senate;
- (b) the rise in non-conforming petitions in recent years;
- (c) the environmental impact of printing out the entirety of petitions for presentation or tabling, which may contain thousands of signatures; and
- (d) any other related matters.

## Discussion

- 1.2 The committee considered the matter at a meeting on 4 March 2026.
- 1.3 The committee noted an answer to an estimates question on notice from Senator Payman (attached) containing statistics on the recent use of the petitions process in the Senate. The committee also noted that, under the existing standing orders, senators may present petitions on which signatures have been collected electronically: see Odgers' *Australian Senate Practice*, 14th ed., p. 592. Finally, the committee noted challenges to the House of Representatives system for e-petitions being posed by new technologies, including artificial intelligence.

## Recommendation

- 1.4 The committee resolved not to recommend the creation of a similar system for the Senate at this time.

**Senator Slade Brockman**  
**Chair**



# Appendix 1

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES**

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**Department/Agency:** Department of the Senate  
**Outcome/Program Group:**  
**Topic:** **Petitions**

**Senator:** Senator Payman  
**Question reference number:** 107  
**Type of question:** Written, 10 December 2025  
**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 29 January 2026

**Number of pages:** 1

**Question:**

The House of Representatives has a platform on the APH website for e-petitions to be created in accordance with the standing orders of that house.

- a. Does the Department of the Senate or DPS have plans to create a similar facility for e-petitions to the Senate?
- b. If not, why not?
- c. Please provide a list of the numbers of conforming and non-conforming petitions presented to the Senate in the last 5 financial years, and this financial year to date.

**Answer:**

- a. No.
- b. The way petitions are dealt with is set out in standing orders 69-71. Any changes to that approach would require a decision of the Senate.
- c.

Year	Petitions that comply with SOs	Non-conforming petitions
2020-21	14	12
2021-22	4	3
2022-23	3	14
2023-24	5	10
2024-25	4	13
2025-26 (to date)	1	6