

Dear Committee,

I would appreciate your consideration of the following submission in relation to “*the suitability of the current provisions of the standing orders governing the form, submission, and consideration of petitions and e-petitions*”.

The submission deals with a Petition which I presented to the House on 19 February 2025. It is copied below.

Petition EN7051 - A Plea to Restore 1st Armoured Regiment’s Combat Role

Petition Status

*The petition has been **presented** to the House.*

Petition Reason

In its 75th year, 1st Armoured Regiment, the Army’s senior combat unit, has been relegated to a non-combat role; essentially removing it from the Order of Battle. Rather than crewing tanks to destroy the enemy and provide intimate fire support to infantry ... it will be tasked with testing new technologies. The sole rationale for this is to minimise the cost of relocating personnel to Townsville (from Adelaide). This is at odds with the fact that it is service and regimental pride that lies at the heart of an Army's fighting spirit. It is especially heart-breaking to veterans when the loss of heritage and tradition established during the unit’s service since 1949, can so easily be avoided. Rather than 2nd Cavalry Regiment in Townsville commanding two tank and two reconnaissance squadrons, 1st Armoured Regiment could command the two tank squadrons. No new facilities would be required. Given that morale is part of the Army’s combat power, any cost would be offset by the morale boost achieved.

Petition Request

We therefore ask the House to urge the Defence Minister, Richard Marles, to reinstate 1st Armoured Regiment as the nation’s tank regiment, overturning the Department of Defence's decision to remove the Royal Australian Armoured Corps’ oldest and most decorated regular army unit from the ORBAT. We seek this so as to honour the service and sacrifice of tank crews during the past 75 years, creating an inspirational legacy worthy of being passed on to those serving today.

<i>Signature count:</i>	176
<i>Closing date for signatures:</i>	19 February 2025 11:59 PM (AEDT)

I expected to receive a response within the 90-day period set out in the Parliamentary protocols governing Petitions.

No response has been received, however.

Having made follow-up enquiries, I'm led to believe that the expectation of a response is quite false. If the Minister decides not to respond, then there is nothing that the Petitions Committee can do.

Surely this is a failure as far as Parliamentary standards are concerned. A protocol which stipulates a procedure to be followed, is linked to an expectation.

If this expectation is not met, then Parliament is considered to have failed in its statutory duty.

Unfortunately, the nature of information provided to the applicant, suggested that it was '*just too bad*' ... there was nothing that could be done. The impression I got was that: '*It is Ministers, after all, who decide what it is that Ministers do or don't do*'.

Am I mistaken to believe that members of Parliament have an obligation to their fellow citizens to serve the public interest with integrity ... or does this '*old school*' thinking belong in the past?

My request to the Petitions Committee is to please clarify what petitioners have a right to expect when they lodge a petition.

For many of us, Parliament is the highest pinnacle of ethical standards ... it is simply devastating when this is found to be false.