



**THE HON TONY SMITH MP**  
**Speaker of the House of Representatives**

28 June 2018

Mrs Lucy Wicks MP  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Petitions  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mrs Wicks

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Petitions in its report *Making voices heard: Inquiry into the e-petitioning system of the House of Representatives Petitions Committee*. This response is to the recommendations in the report addressed to the Department of the House of Representatives (the department) and I shall table the response in the House.

**Recommendation 1: Agreed**

The department's Parliamentary and Business Information Services Office (PBIS) has lodged a capital works submission with the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) to enhance the e-petitions system. DPS is responsible for developing and supporting the department's business systems, including the existing e-petitions system. PBIS will work closely with the committee secretariat to define the scope and requirements of the e-petition enhancements, to ensure the system is fit for purpose and addresses the committee's recommendations. PBIS will also work closely with DPS and the committee secretariat to improve the usability of the e-petitions website interface, including with written and video tutorials.

**Recommendation 2: Agreed**

PBIS is responsible for many of the department's promotional and outreach services, and will work with the committee secretariat on a campaign to promote petitioning the House, with an emphasis on e-petitioning, to the community. This campaign will be progressively launched over 2018-19, with an initial focus on raising awareness, and a later focus on the enhanced e-petitions platform.

I follow the work of your committee with interest and look forward to seeing the enhanced e-petitions system when it is finalised.

Yours sincerely

**THE HON TONY SMITH MP**



PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

# Making voices heard

*Inquiry into the e-petitioning system of the House of  
Representatives Petitions Committee*

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Petitions

May 2018  
CANBERRA

# List of Recommendations

## Recommendation 1

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- 2.70 The Committee recommends that the Department of the House of Representatives, in conjunction with the Department of Parliamentary Services, work within existing resources to update the House e-petitions system and web page design to improve user experience and accessibility for all users, giving consideration to adding the following features to the House Petitions List and website:
- A unique URL for each petition, to allow petitioners to easily share and promote their e-petitions for signing;
  - Additional navigation options to improve the ability to search for an e-petition, such as the ability to re-order the list according to subject matter or date certified (i.e. listing the current e-petitions open for signatures at the top of the page);
  - An easier signing process, if the security and robustness of the verification process can be maintained;
  - The use of plain English language, including simple instructions for using the e-petitions system and wider petitions process;
  - The use of explanatory symbols and imagery in addition to text, to increase understanding of the petitions process;
  - A series of online written and video tutorials to assist users to create and sign petitions.

## **Recommendation 2**

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- 3.27 The Committee recommends that the Department of the House of Representatives develop a campaign to promote petitioning in the House, with an emphasis on e-petitioning.

## **Recommendation 3**

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- 3.43 That the Committee inquire into and report on:
- The role and operations of the Standing Committee on Petitions;
  - Petitioning the House of Representatives, including a review of Standing Orders and other relevant practice and procedures.
- 3.44 In conducting this inquiry, the committee will give consideration to the petitions processes and procedures of other jurisdictions.

