



SENATE COMMITTEES

Experience democracy first-hand

The work of a Senator does not end in the Senate chamber. When the Senate is not sitting, its committees are working – conducting meetings, gathering evidence, making site visits, holding hearings with witnesses in Parliament House and in other places across Australia.

Committees then prepare reports about proposed laws or other matters affecting the Australian community. The results of these inquiries help Senators to shape laws and to make better-informed decisions about matters they debate in the Senate.

Committee inquiries also raise awareness in the community about important issues for Australia.

Committees inquire into all kinds of matters-workplace relations, foreign policy, immigration, health, proposed taxes and government spending.

Committee hearings are usually open to the public. In some cases however, evidence may be taken in private.

SENATE COMMITTEES

Community Affairs	Economics	Education and Employment	Environment and Communications	Finance and Public Administration	Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade	Legal and Constitutional Affairs	Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
Families and children Recreation and sport Housing and homelessness Health Aged care	Resources Industry and small business Finance and markets Superannuation Taxation	Schools Higher education Vocational education Employment Workplace relations Childcare	Energy Climate change Environment protection and biodiversity Online safety Arts	Budget management Parliamentary services Financial accountability Indigenous affairs	Foreign policy Defence policy Security Treaties Trade agreements Tourism	Immigration Crime prevention and enforcement National security and counter-terrorism Human rights and anti-discrimination Native title	Regional Australia Agriculture and food Fisheries Forestry Road safety Railways

Senate committees are established at the start of each new parliament. In addition to the standing committees, there are other committees that deal with matters such as scrutiny of legislation and human rights, select committees established to inquire into specific topics, and joint Senate and House of Representatives committees.

Senate committees also conduct estimates hearings to scrutinise the work and spending of the government, and this function has raised the public profile of Senate committees in recent years.

For a complete list of Senate committees, visit the Australian Parliament House website: www.aph.gov.au

What happens at a Senate hearing?

A committee may invite people who have made a written submission to appear before it, to present information and to answer questions.

People giving evidence to Senate committees are protected by parliamentary privilege. Parliamentary privilege means that witnesses cannot be sued or prosecuted for what they say in evidence to a committee.

Members of the public are welcome

Just as the parliamentary proceedings in the chambers are open for citizens and visitors to see and hear, so too are parliamentary committee hearings (unless hearings are held in private). Members of the public are welcome and encouraged to sit in on Senate committee hearings.

How do I organise to see a public hearing?

If you visit Parliament House, check with the Visitor Service desk about current hearings. Most are open to the public.

Not in Canberra?

You can watch proceedings online by going to the Australian Parliament House website: www.aph.gov.au

You can also keep up to date with a committee's hearings and activities by following the Senate on Twitter @AuSenate, subscribing to an RSS feed, or using the track committee or inquiry function available from each committee home page or inquiry page.



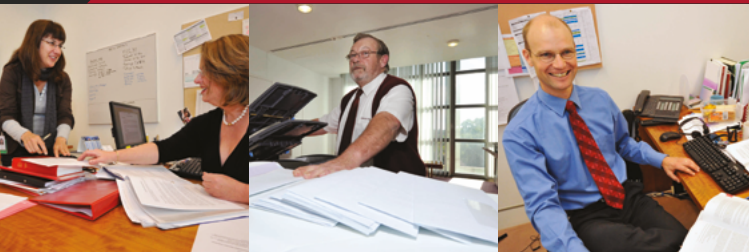
Across Australia



PUBLIC HEARINGS

At Parliament House





Who organises Senate committee hearings?

Small teams of parliamentary officers provide support to Senate committees. They do research, plan hearings, receive submissions, draft reports and provide procedural advice to committees.

What if I want to be involved in a Senate inquiry?

As well as providing a means for detailed scrutiny of legislation and other matters, parliamentary committees provide an opportunity for the community to be directly involved in the work of Parliament.

If you would like to contribute to a particular Senate inquiry, please contact the Department of the Senate's Committee Office. Committee staff will be able to provide you with information and advice on:

- a committee's program of activities;
- how to prepare a submission; and
- appearing before a committee as a witness.

Contact details for the Senate's standing committees and certain joint committees are available at the back of this pamphlet.

Our commitment

As committee staff in the Department of the Senate, we are guided in our work by the Parliamentary Service Values and the Parliamentary Service Code of Conduct. We are committed to providing professional and high quality service.

Contact details

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEES

Community Affairs

02 6277 3515 | community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Economics

02 6277 3540 | economics.sen@aph.gov.au

Education and Employment

02 6277 3521 | eec.sen@aph.gov.au

Environment and Communications

02 6277 3526 | ec.sen@aph.gov.au

Finance and Public Administration

02 6277 3439 | fpa.sen@aph.gov.au

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

02 6277 3535 | fadt.sen@aph.gov.au

Legal and Constitutional Affairs

02 6277 3560 | legcon.sen@aph.gov.au

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

02 6277 3511 | rrat.sen@aph.gov.au

JOINT COMMITTEES

Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity

02 6277 3419 | aclei.committee@aph.gov.au

Corporations and Financial Services

02 6277 3538 | corporations.joint@aph.gov.au

Law Enforcement

02 6277 3419 | le.committee@aph.gov.au

MAILING ADDRESS

The mailing address for all Senate committees is:

PO Box 6100, Parliament House, CANBERRA ACT 2600

OFFICE OF THE SENIOR CLERK OF COMMITTEES

02 6277 3555 | SeniorClerk.Committees.Sen@aph.gov.au

If you are seeking to contact a parliamentary committee that is not listed above, please contact the Office of the Senior Clerk of Committees for assistance. The committee you are interested may have been recently appointed or may be supported by the Department of the House of Representatives.