



This brochure has advice on how to make a submission to a parliamentary committee. More detailed information is on our website: www.aph.gov.au/committees.

Why do committees seek submissions?

The main purpose of a parliamentary committee is to inquire into a topic and report back to the Parliament. Most inquiries have terms of reference, which set out the scope of the inquiry (exactly what the committee will be looking into). The terms of reference will be available on the committee’s website.

Committees want to hear the views and opinions of people and organisations who know about the inquiry topic. To do this, committees usually ask for written submissions. Committees may also do an online survey, have a roundtable discussion, or talk to experts face to face in hearings.

Requirements for submissions

Because committee inquiries are part of the formal work of the Parliament, there are rules on the form and content of a submission. Submissions must:

- be prepared for the purpose of the inquiry only
- not have been published anywhere else
- be relevant to the terms of reference
- be received by the committee before due date
- include the name, postal or email address, and contact number of the person or organisation making the submission.

What should be in a submission?

Submissions are usually written documents, but they can also be pictures or short videos. There is no set format for a submission. Submissions can include facts, opinions and recommendations. They can address only some or all of the terms of reference.

Useful submissions make a clear argument, contain recommendations for action and list sources for any references. If the submission is more than a few pages long it is helpful to include a summary.

During an inquiry, additional evidence or comment can be provided to the committee by providing a supplementary submission.

We remove personal details – such as email addresses – from a submission before publishing it on the website. If possible, include your personal details in a cover letter rather than in the body of the submission.

Who can make a submission?

Any interested individual or organisation can make a submission to a parliamentary inquiry.

Inquiry process at a glance



How to lodge a submission

Submissions can be lodged online from the link on the inquiry home page. First you must create a *My Parliament* account. This account can be used again for future submissions, and for tracking committees and the progress of inquiries and bills. You will need to provide your name and a valid email address to create a *My Parliament* account.

More information about online submissions can be found here: www.aph.gov.au/committee/submissions.

Submissions can be uploaded in Microsoft Word, PDF (portable document format) or plain text format. You can upload multiple documents as part of your submission: e.g. a covering letter, public submission and a confidential attachment can be uploaded at the same time.

An acknowledgement email will be sent to the email address you provided confirming your submission has been received.

Submissions can also be sent directly by email or post. Individual committee addresses are available on the [Australian Parliament's website](http://www.aph.gov.au).

Process of a submission

Once the submission has been received, it is assessed by the secretariat. The committee then decides whether to accept the submission and authorise its publication. The committee can also decide to only publish part of a submission.

Once a submission is accepted and authorised for publication, personal details are removed and the document is placed on the website. It now forms part of the formal record of the inquiry.

If you are unsure about the status of your submission, please check with the committee secretariat.

Your obligations

Publication of submissions

After a submission is received by a committee, you cannot publish or disclose it to another person unless or until the committee has authorised its publication.

You cannot withdraw or change your submission without the committee's permission. If there are additional matters you wish to raise, you can lodge a supplementary submission.

If your submission includes confidential information about another person, you should speak to the committee secretariat before lodging the submission.

Confidential submissions

Committees prefer that evidence is given in public if possible. However, you can ask that all or part of your submission remain confidential. Please note this clearly on the front of your submission, and include the reason for requesting confidentiality.

A confidential submission will not appear on the website or be quoted in the inquiry report.

Instead of asking for the submission to be confidential, you can ask that it be anonymous. The submission can then appear on the website and be quoted in the report, but your name is not published. The submission will be marked as 'Name withheld'.

You could also consider putting any confidential information in an appendix to the submission, and allow the body of the submission to be published and publicly referred to by the committee.

Contact the committee secretariat in the first instance if you are considering lodging a submission you would like to be confidential, either completely or in part.

The committee will consider individual requests for confidentiality, but retains the authority to publish any submission.

Your protections

The presentation or submission of a document to a committee is privileged under the *Parliamentary Privileges Act 1987*. 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 by a committee for publication, its distribution is also immune from legal action.

Submission checklist

- Has my submission been written specifically for the inquiry?
- Have I checked that this is not material that has been published previously?
- Have I commented on some or all the terms of reference?
- Have I provided a summary of the submission at the front and numbered the pages (for long submissions)?
- Have I provided my return postal or email address and contact details with the submission?
- Have I made sure that my personal details are not contained in the body of the submission?
- If I want to make a confidential submission, have I made this clear on the front page of the submission and included reasons for requesting confidentiality?

Further information

More detailed information on making a submission is on our website: www.aph.gov.au/Committees.

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

Office of the Clerk Assistant (Committees)
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Tel: 02 6277 4397

Email: ClerkAssistant.Committees.reps@aph.gov.au

There are also pamphlets available on parliamentary committees:

- Appearing at a Public Hearing
- Dealing with Parliamentary Committees — this pamphlet also lists contact details for each committee secretariat.

You can keep up with the work of parliamentary committees on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and the media alert service, and by using the Track Committee facility, available on the [House of Representatives committee webpage](#).