

SUBMISSION TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PROCEDURE  
COMMITTEE

FROM

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE AUSTRALIA INC.

39 Wakefield Street, Adelaide, South Australia

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Catholic Women's League Australia Inc. recognizes petitions as a valuable part of the democratic process.

In answer to specific questions we list the following comments:

1. The present guidelines for the preparation of a petition are clear and comprehensive but have some restrictive aspects (see 3,4 & 5 below)
2. The rules regarding form and content seem adequate.
3. It is entirely appropriate for a Member to present a petition but there ought to be an alternative route for the presentation of a petition to the House.
4. A petition should be tabled and made available to interested members for study and comment.
5. Other Members of the House should be able to respond to a petition.
6. It is simply impossible to reply to every individual, but a message acknowledging receipt of the petition should be made to the person who presented it accompanied by a comment indicating that the Minister has sighted it.
7. The space allowed for identification, address and signature is cramped and needs to be expanded.
8. It is important to ensure that petitions are genuine and not fraudulent.

Electronic petitions could prove difficult to verify.

There is no indication of what consequences apply for submitting a falsified document.

We agree with Chair of Committee Margaret May that "Petitions have a long history and are one of the ways that various groups in the community can directly advise the parliament what they think about an issue".

Petitions are a valuable means of alerting MPs that their constituents want something done on a particular matter.