

## Using Committee System for Advocacy

Public inquiries can be used as a tool for organisations to influence important stakeholders with issues that are central to them. If used correctly it can be an opportunity for organisations to present their cases, and feature as key participants in the debate and influence future agendas.

In order to achieve this organisations or individuals must maximise opportunities available through the committee system. These are outlined in detail below.

### Step 1: Analyse the external situation

- Background to inquiry
- Significance/ importance to your organization
- Impact of potential legislation

### Step 2: Analyse your internal environment

- Draw out key issues critical to your organisation
- What are your needs
- Define goals and objectives

### Step 3: Formulate Submission

- Support issues and arguments with facts and research
- Address terms of reference – you may address all or only a selection
- Convey messages effectively – make the message clear
- Make concise recommendations
- Present submission professionally

### Step 4: Follow-up

- Track progress of inquiry
- Support submission with further advocacy programs
- Lobby stakeholders

## Client Solutions Services

### Committee & Inquiry Services

Advice on the inquiry terms of reference,  
Political background to the issue from the perspective of the various parties,

Other parallel activities and Government inquiries,

Explanation of the type of committee established and the process of the inquiry,

Background information on main committee members and their background in the issue,

Details of committee advisers and staff,

Submissions received and a summary of the key points emerging from the submissions,

Expected emphasis and direction of the inquiry, and

Strategic advice on opportunities to influence the process at each stage of the inquiry.

Preparation of submissions

Coaching & advice on appearance before public hearings.

### Professional Services

- *Policy & Advocacy*  
Specialist consulting services to assist clients influence the outcome of government policy & delivery

- *Communications*  
A complete range of specialised communication services to public and private sector clients

### Information Products

- *Daily Health Media Summary*
- *Committee Bulletin*



### Inside the Parliamentary Committee System

*Committee Bulletin is an electronic newsletter published fortnightly that examines all areas of the parliamentary committee system reporting on current inquiry evidence, tabled reports, government responses and committee news in both houses of Parliament.*

*Committee Bulletin is circulated widely to decision-makers such as Federal Senators and MPs, senior private and public sector managers.*

**Subscription:** \$240 p/a

*For more information contact:  
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## Bold font "The Committee System"

KEY HEALTH CONTACTS



2005 POCKET GUIDE TO  
CANBERRA

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## Committee System

### **Purpose**

Parliamentary committees scrutinize government activity and conduct a range of inquiries to hold the government and the public service to account for their actions and decisions.

### **Value of the committee system**

Committees provide a formal channel of communication between parliament and the public, encouraging greater community participation in the parliamentary process. Committees assist parliament in its law-making and inquiry role and allow public comment on legislation and policy decisions.

### **Powers of committees**

Committees

- Can order people to attend
- Can penalise for non-attendance or interference
- Are protected by Parliamentary privilege

## Inquiry Process

The diagram below explains the stages of an inquiry:



## Committees defined

Both the House of Representatives and Senate each operate committee systems. Most committees are bi-partisan and operate across party lines. Information on all committees can be found at [www.aph.gov.au](http://www.aph.gov.au)

### **Joint**

- includes members of both the House of Representatives and the Senate
- 9 committees

### **Standing**

- are appointed by resolution at the beginning of each Parliament and last for the life of the Parliament
- Senate – Legislation and Reference
- House

### **Select**

Are appointed by resolution to report on a specific issue. After reporting they cease to exist

### **Statutory**

Are appointed by legislation and re-established at the commencement of each Parliament

### **Estimates (Senate only)**

Seven estimates committees are appointed by the Senate to examine the proposed financial expenditure of Government departments.

## Writing a submission

- Any person or organization can make a submission
- Address terms of reference of inquiry – you may choose to address all or only a selection in your submission
- Submission can be a letter, short document or paper
- Indicate if you wish your submission to be confidential

## Appearing as a witness

1. Upon arrival at the hearing venue, witnesses should introduce themselves to committee staff
2. The Chair will call witnesses who must then state their full name and the capacity in which they are appearing before the committee
3. Witnesses are given an opportunity to make a short opening statement
4. Questions then will be directed to witnesses through the Chair
5. If witnesses are unable to answer a question or provide information at the hearing, they may seek permission to provide a written answer to the committee at a later date
6. Hearings are recorded verbatim by Hansard. After the hearing, the witness will be provided with a proof transcript for correction of errors of transcription (but not content or style)