

## Using the Committee System for Advocacy

Public inquiries can be used as a tool for organisations to influence important stakeholders on issues that are central to them. If used correctly they can be an opportunity for organisations to present their cases, 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.

Steps outlining this process are below.

### Step 1: Analyse the external situation

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

### Step 2: Analyse your internal environment

- Draw out key issues critical to your organisation
- Determine what your needs are
- 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

Preparation of submissions

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

Expected emphasis and direction of the inquiry

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

Coaching and advice on appearance before public hearings

### Professional Services

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

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

### Information Products

Daily Health Media Summary (Australia and NZ)

Committee Bulletin

Advocacy Update E-newsletter



## 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 the Federal Parliament.

Published by Client Solutions Pty Ltd

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Pocket Guide to:

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- Lobbying Tips
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- Key Canberra Health Contacts
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# THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM

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## Committee System

### Purpose

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

### 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 and stakeholder 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

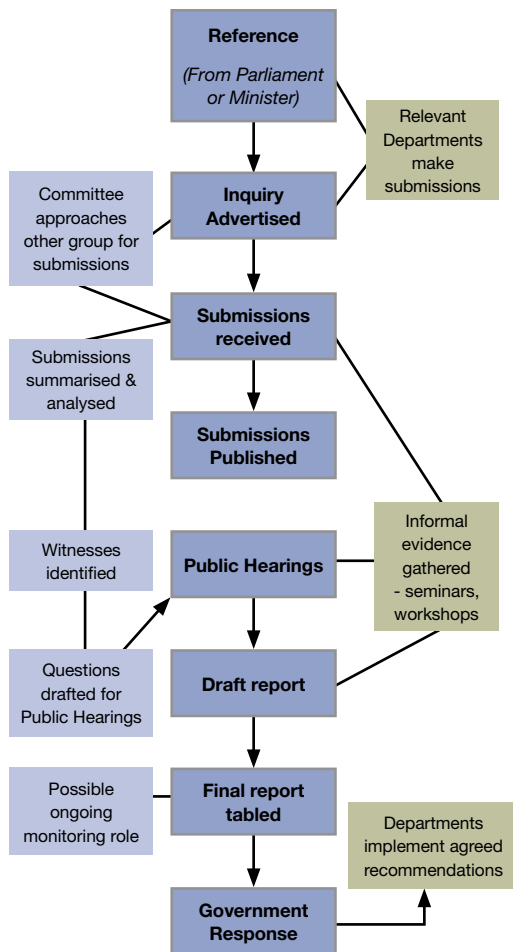
### Types of committees

There are several different types of committees within Parliament including:

- **Parliamentary**
- **Backbench/Caucus** – chief task is to review policy and legislative proposals and decisions. They generally match ministerial portfolios
- **Cabinet** – purpose is to ensure that decisions are made after thorough discussion and on the basis of consensus

## Inquiry Process

The diagram below explains the stages of an inquiry:



## Parliamentary Committees

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)

### Standing Committees

- Are appointed by resolution at the beginning of each Parliament and last for the life of the Parliament
- There are Senate, House of Representatives and Joint Standing Committees
- Together they cover all government portfolios

### Select Committees

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

### Statutory Committees

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

### Estimates

- Senate Standing Committees conduct Estimates hearings twice yearly to examine the past and proposed financial expenditure of government departments

## Writing a Submission

- Any person or organisation 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 or a more formal document
- 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
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)