



Department of
Education

MAKING SUBMISSIONS TO INQUIRIES

AND

ATTENDING PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

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1 BACKGROUND

Parliamentary committees for State and Australian Governments, various Commissions (e.g. the Productivity Commission) and agencies of the Australian, state/territory and local governments regularly conduct inquiries into matters of policy, government administration and public significance.

Requests are generally issued to the Premier, to public sector bodies or through general public invitation.

Policies and procedures govern Western Australian public sector bodies, including public schools, when making submissions and for public sector officers to appear as witnesses.

2 SCOPE

This document applies to all Department of Education employees and is consistent with Public Sector Commission instructions and Department policies and codes (see Related Documents).

3 MAKING SUBMISSIONS TO INQUIRIES AND ATTENDING PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

Selected employees may be called on, as part of their official duties or through general public invitation, to explain or provide information to Parliamentary committees or inquiries on agencies' policies and activities. In the course of their investigations, Parliamentary committees may seek the input of interested parties through written submissions, surveys, round tables, workshops and public hearings.

The Director General determines which officers shall be authorised to make public comment.

Those employees who are empowered to make written or verbal public comment should confine themselves to providing such information as is necessary to explain government policy or to provide factual, explanatory and background material pertinent to the question at hand.

In doing so, they should avoid making any comment which could undermine public confidence or disrupt the everyday administration of either the public service or the government of the-day. To this end, they should:

- Not provide personal opinions that could damage the credibility and/or reputation of schools, of public education in Western Australia, the Department of Education, the government of the day, any individual or political party.
- Not give their personal views on matters of government policy or administration, or on advice made to government
- Not speculate on future policy directions.
- Not publicly criticise any political party, its actions or its policies.
- Not prolong discussion or debate on an issue once a decision has been made, or a policy adopted.

3.1 SUBMISSIONS TO NATIONAL INQUIRIES

If employees are contacted to make a submission, or through general public invitation they wish to make a submission to a national inquiry, the employee needs to promptly seek written approval of the Director General before doing so.

The Premier's Circular 2017/06 indicates the following requirements before submissions are provided to national inquiries.

For non-contentious submissions:

- approval of the Minister for Education and Training; and
- copy provided to Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

For submissions that contain significant, contentious and/or emerging policy issues:

- approval by Cabinet; and
- lodgement by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet on behalf of the Premier.

3.2 STATE INQUIRIES AND COMMITTEES

If employees are contacted or invited to appear before a Parliamentary committee to supply documents or to give evidence, before doing so they need to promptly notify the Executive Director or Regional Executive Director to provide advice to the Director General.

- Non- contentious submissions require Minister for Education and Training approval.
- Staff appearing before committees are supported to prepare and appear before inquiries.

3.3 PUBLIC OFFICERS AS PRIVATE CITIZENS

Department of Education employees have the same rights as other citizens to write submissions to inquiries or appear before committees. However, it is important for staff to abide by the Department's Code of Conduct and refer to How to Comply with our Code of Conduct if they wish to contribute as private citizens.

4 RELATED DOCUMENTS

[Premier's Circular 2017/06: Making Written Submission to National Inquires](#)

[Public Sector Commission: Administrative Instruction 102 – Official Communications](#)

[Public Sector Commission: Administrative Instruction 711 – Official Information](#)

[Public Sector Commission: Administrative Instruction 728 – Media & Public Communications](#)

[Department of Education: Code of Conduct](#)

[Department of Education: How to Comply with our Code of Conduct](#)

Department of Education: Communication Arrangements between the Office of the Minister for Education and Training and the Department of Education

Department of Education: Correspondence Protocols

5 CONTACT INFORMATION

School and regional office staff: through line management to the Regional Executive Director.

Central Office staff: through line management to the Executive Director.