



How to speak at a public hearing

Hearings are public meetings where committees can find out more about the inquiry's topic. People who have written a submission may be invited to talk with the committee about it at a hearing. This lets MLAs ask questions to learn more about what you've shared with them.

Most hearings are public. They are live broadcast, recorded, and a transcript of what is said is published on the Assembly website.

If you need to share sensitive or confidential information, talk to the committee beforehand. They might be able to talk to you in private.



Anything you say while talking to the committee is legally protected by 'parliamentary privilege'. You cannot be sued for what you say. But you must not intentionally defame someone or lie to the committee, otherwise you could be fined

What will happen if I get invited to participate?

Before the hearing

We will contact you with the time and place of the hearing and how long you will have to talk with the committee. Most hearings are held at the Assembly building on Civic Square. We will also send you a form to fill out and send back to us before the hearing.

How should I prepare?

- Reread your submission – you might get asked about it.
- If you're a group or organisation, decide who will do the talking.
- Send any extra documents you want to share with the committee to us before the hearing.
- Let us know if you need any special arrangements like an interpreter or hearing loop.
- Think about what you want to say.

When you arrive at the Assembly building

You'll need to go through security when you arrive. Once you get to the committee room, take a seat in the chairs at the back of the room or in the waiting area if the door is closed. Other people may already be talking with the committee.

What to expect in the room

Committee members and the secretary will be seated at the table. Members of the public and journalists may be sitting watching. An audio-visual technician sits behind the black glass window and manages the hearing's broadcast and recording.

When it's your turn to talk

You will sit across the table from the committee. You will be asked if you have read and understand the privilege statement (if you don't, the committee can explain it to you).

They will then ask you to say your full name and whether you are talking to them as an individual or on behalf of a group.

Giving your evidence

You can make a short statement. This must be less than five (5) minutes long. You don't have to make one if you don't want.

MLAs will ask you questions about your submission or statement to find out more or understand something better.

If there's a question you can't answer on the spot, you can give an answer in writing later.

At the end, the committee will thank you for your time. You can choose to leave or take a seat again in the gallery to listen to other people.

After the hearing

What is said at a public hearing is recorded word-for-word and written as a transcript. You will be emailed a copy to review. The transcript will be published on the Assembly website.



Do you have questions about appearing at a committee hearing? Contact the Committee Support Office:



(02) 6205 0445



committees@parliament.act.gov.au