Who can make a submission?
Any person or organisation can make a submission to a parliamentary committee.

What should I put in my submission?
Each inquiry has terms of reference which set out the issues the committee will consider. Your submission should address one or more parts of the terms of reference. You can get a copy of the terms of reference from the committee’s website or from the committee’s office.

It’s up to you what you put in your submission, provided it is relevant to the terms of reference. You may include facts, experiences, opinions or arguments. You may wish to make specific recommendations or suggest solutions to the issues the committee is considering.

How should I format my submission?
There is no set format for submissions. Your contribution can take the form of a letter, paper or report. When writing your submission, please:
Make your submission brief and clear. All submissions should have a clear structure and be as short as possible. If your submission is long, it is helpful to include a summary of your key points on the first page. Don’t forget to number the pages in your submission.

Make sure your submission is readable. Committees prefer submissions to be typed on A4 paper and submitted electronically in Word or PDF format. If making a handwritten submission, please make sure your handwriting is clear.

Sign your submission. Please sign your submission. If you are sending your submission electronically, please provide your name and contact details (such as address or phone number).

Make it clear who the submission is from. If you are making a submission on behalf of an organisation, please indicate your position in the organisation. Please also state at what level the submission has been authorised, for example, branch, executive, president, sub-committee, state branch or regional group.

Include additional material if appropriate. You may wish to support your submission with additional material. Written material such as articles or letters may be attached to your submission. If you wish to give or lend the committee other material such as DVDs, photographs or books, please contact the committee’s office. Any material borrowed by the committee will be returned when the inquiry is completed.

Be relevant and appropriate. A committee may not accept a submission that is not relevant to the terms of reference, is frivolous or contains offensive language or remarks.
When are submissions due?
Committees have tight timelines for completing inquiries. Therefore it is important that you send your submission by the advertised due date. If you are unable to meet the submission deadline, please contact the committee’s office as early as possible.

How do I send my submission?
You can make your submission online, by email, or in hard copy.

To make a submission online, visit the e-submissions area of the committee’s website at www.parliament.vic.gov.au/committees.

To make a submission by email, please look at the website or call 03 8682 2800 to obtain the correct email address.

Hard copy submissions should be sent to:
[Committee name]
[Inquiry title]
Parliament of Victoria
Spring St
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002.

Will my submission be published?
In general, all submissions accepted by a committee are public documents. This means that the submission may be published on the committee’s website and quoted in the committee’s report to the Parliament.

How will my rights be protected?
Confidential submissions. If you wish to have your submission kept confidential, please say so clearly at the top of the submission or in a covering note and explain why you want it to be kept confidential. If you want part of the submission to be confidential, please put that part on a separate page. The committee will consider requests for confidentiality but cannot make promises in advance. If you have concerns about confidentiality, please discuss these with the committee’s staff before you make a submission.

The committee will not disclose or publish any submission which it has accepted on a confidential basis. However, confidential evidence will be kept and, in some circumstances, may be released after 30 years.

Withholding submitters’ names. Committees usually publish the names of all people who make submissions to an inquiry. However, if you want to make a public submission but feel that revealing your name would cause you vulnerability or distress, you may request that the committee not publish information in the submission that identifies you. Please explain clearly at the top of your submission or on a covering note why you want your name to be withheld. If the committee agrees to withhold your name, it will usually only publish those parts of your submission that do not contain specific allegations against other people or organisations.

Parliamentary privilege. Written submissions that are accepted by a committee are protected by parliamentary privilege. This means that no legal action can be taken against you in a court of law in relation to the evidence in your submission. However, parliamentary privilege applies only to submissions published by the committee. If you choose to publish your submission in another form, for example on your website, that publication will not be protected by parliamentary privilege. You can, however, refer others to your submission on the committee’s website.

With the protection of parliamentary privilege comes your responsibility to not deliberately mislead the committee, which may be punishable as a contempt of Parliament.

Will I get to speak to the committee about my submission?
In addition to receiving written submissions, committees may conduct public hearings to gather evidence by speaking to people directly. If you have made a submission to an inquiry, the committee may contact you and invite you to give evidence at a public hearing. For more information about appearing at a public hearing see the brochure Giving evidence to a parliamentary committee at a public hearing.

How can I get more information?
For more information about parliamentary committees, including terms of reference and submission due dates, please go to www.parliament.vic.gov.au/committees or call 03 8682 2800.

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