



INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

E-Petitions

Petitioning is one of the traditional methods by which members of the public can make a formal request to the Parliament. Petitions can be made in traditional paper form, or by way of “E-Petition”.

Information on E-Petitions is available on the Tasmanian Parliament web site at www.parliament.tas.gov.au. You can locate E-Petitions, and if you wish join a current E-Petition, through this web site. If a Minister responds to an E-Petition you will also be able to read the response on the web site.

E-Petitions and paper petitions

If you wish to start a petition you can choose to circulate either a paper petition or an E-Petition. As the "Principal Petitioner", you will also have the option of running both processes in order to reach the widest audience.

Who is eligible to join an E-Petition?

Most people are eligible to initiate or join an E-Petition. The people who can petition the House of Assembly is quite broad, and includes:

- Tasmanian residents;
- Tasmanian citizens; or
- Tasmanian electors (the relevant electorate will be specified on the petition).

The Principal Petitioner will identify who may have an interest in, and may want to support the petition. The group of eligible petitioners will be identified on the web site.

How are E-Petitions started?

Step One: Approach a Member of the House of Assembly to sponsor your petitions.

The key difference between the paper-based and electronic process for petitions relates to how the process is started. In the case of E-Petitions, you must seek the sponsorship of a Member of the House of Assembly as the first step. (Paper petitions are usually circulated for signatures prior to locating a sponsoring MP. Only an MP can present the petition to the House of Assembly).

You may approach any MP to sponsor an E-Petition, however you should approach only one MP at a time. Information on how to contact MPs is available through the Parliament's web site at www.parliament.tas.gov.au or you can contact the Tasmanian Parliament for this information on (03) 6212 2200.

Step Two: Complete an E-Petition request form.

An E-Petition request form is included with this brochure and is also available on the Parliament's web site. You may choose to use this form when seeking an MP to support your proposed E-Petition. The form records:

- the precise wording of the E-Petition;
- the eligibility criteria for persons wishing to join, e.g. Tasmanian residents;
- the period the E-Petition will be on the web site;
- the sponsoring MP's details; and
- the Principal petitioner's details.

It is not compulsory to use this form to request an MP to support your proposed E-Petition. However, an E-Petition request form must be filled out once an MP agrees to sponsor the E-Petition, which both the MP and you are required to sign.

The MP may request changes before agreeing to sponsor an E-Petition. If you originally used the E-Petition request form to seek the MP's support, you would need to fill out and sign a revised version of this form that reflects the MP's changes.

Step Three: The MP then submits the signed E-Petition request form to the Clerk of the House.

The Clerk of the House will check that it meets the requirements set out in the Standing Orders (SO's). If these requirements are satisfied, the E-Petition is posted on the web site until the specified closing date.

How long can an E-Petition be posted on the web site?

All current E-Petitions will be accessible from the web site. An E-Petition can be posted on the web site for a minimum period of 1 week and a maximum period of 6 months.

The Principal Petitioner, together with the sponsoring MP will decide the length of time the E-Petition will remain open for people to join.

Who will promote an E-Petition?

As with paper petitions, the Principal Petitioner will be responsible for raising awareness in the community about the availability of the specific E-Petition. (The name and address of the Principal Petitioner will be provided on the web site.)

The role of the House of Assembly is only to facilitate the E-Petitions process.

What happens after the E-Petition is closed?

Once the posting period for an E-Petition has passed, the E-Petition will be made available in hard-copy format for presenting in the House. The Clerk of the House will give the petition to the sponsoring MP who will seek to Table it at the first available opportunity.

Will the Government respond to E-Petitions in Parliament?

Under the SO's, the Government must present a response to the House within 15 sitting days. In the case of E-Petitions the response will be posted on the web site at *www.parliament.tas.gov.au*. You will be given the option when you join an E-Petition to be automatically notified by e-mail that a response to the petition is available on line.

Conditions of Use

If you wish to join an E-Petition, you will need to accept the E-Petition's Conditions of Use, which outlines:

- the eligibility requirements;
- the requirement that a person may only join an E-Petition once; and
- the prohibition of the use of false names.

A breach of the Conditions of Use may amount to contempt of the House. Actions that may be considered to be a contempt of the House include:-

- presenting a forged or falsified document to the House or a committee;
- submitting a petition containing false, scandalous or groundless allegations; or
- inducing a person to sign a petition by fraud and misleading the House.

Once you accept the Conditions of Use, you will be provided with a random identification number. You will be required to record this number when joining an E-Petition, along with your name, address (including post code) and email address.

What about privacy?

Only the name and address of the Principal Petitioner will be made public on the web site as required by the SO's.

The personal details of people who join E-Petitions will not be published in any form on the web site. The web site will only show a tally of the number of signatures collected. However, access to the details of all petitions presented to Parliament (including the names, addresses and email addresses of signatories) may be accessed from the Clerk of Papers office.

A Privacy Statement on the website details how your personal information will be protected.

Ministerial Responses

Standing Orders provide that the Clerk shall refer a copy of the text of every petition presented to and received by the House to the Premier.

A Government response to each Petition shall be laid before the House within 15 sitting days of its communication to the Premier.

Once such response is tabled the Clerk

- forwards a copy of the response to the Member of Parliament who presented the petition; and
- ensures the response is published on the Parliament's Internet web site.

Rules concerning Petitions

The following Standing Orders provide rules for petitions:-

PETITIONS

51 *Petitions.*

A Petition shall:-

- be fairly written or printed and shall before presentation, be forwarded for examination not less than one hour before the time of meeting of the House to the Clerk of the House, who, in returning the Petition to the Member in charge thereof, may require its amendment, in accordance with the Rules of the House;
- contain a request at the end thereof;
- be signed by at least one person on the sheet on which the Petition is written or printed;
- be in the English language, or be accompanied by a translation, certified by the Member who presents it; and
- be signed by the parties whose names are appended thereto, by their names or marks, and by no one else, except in the case of incapacity by sickness.

52 *Signatures to be written, not attached.*

Every signature shall be written upon the Petition itself, and not pasted upon, or otherwise transferred thereto.

53 *Petitions of Corporations.*

Petitions of Corporations aggregate shall be under their Common Seal.

54 *Petition of a Public Meeting, signed only by Chair.*

A Petition signed by the Chair of a Public Meeting on behalf of such meeting, shall be received as the Petition of the person signing it only.

55 *No letters, affidavits, &c., shall be attached.*

Letters, affidavits, or other documents shall not be attached to any Petition.

56 *Debates shall not be referred to.*

References shall not be made in a Petition to any Debate in Parliament conducted within the previous twelve months, except that a request to repeal a Bill or a vote be rescinded may be made.

57 *Petitions for losses contingent on passing of Bills may be received.*

Petitions requesting that provision may be made for the compensation of the Petitioners for losses contingent upon the passing of Bills pending, may be received.

58 *Member responsible.*

A Member presenting a Petition to the House shall:-

- affix the Member's name at the beginning thereof;
- take care that the same is in conformity with the Rules and Orders of the House; and
- ensure that such Petition is respectful, decorous, and temperate in its language, and free from any disrespectful reference to the Sovereign or the Governor, of offensive imputations upon the character or conduct of either House of Parliament, or the Courts of Justice, or other tribunal or constituted authority.

- 59 *Petition presented by a Member only.*
A Petition shall only be presented to the House by a Member.
- 60 *Petition from a Member.*
A Petition from a Member shall not be presented.
- 61 *Member presenting Petitions confined to statement of certain facts.*
A Member offering to present a Petition to the House shall state the number of signatures attached to it and certify that such Petition complies with the Standing Orders.
- 62 *No Debate upon proceedings on presentation.*
When a Petition is presented which contains no matters in breach of the privileges of the House and which is in accordance with the Rules and Practice of the House, it shall be read by the Clerk of the House, without a Question first put; after which a Question shall be put, "That the Petition be received", but no other Question relating to such Petition shall be then entertained.
- 63 *Government response to Petitions.*
(1) The text of each Petition which the House has received shall be communicated to the Premier by the Clerk of the House.
(2) A Government response to each Petition shall be laid before the House within 15 sitting days of its communication to the Premier.
- 64 *Electronic petition ('E-petition').*
(1) An E-petition is a petition:
(a) in the correct form, stating a grievance and containing a request for action by the House;
(b) sponsored by a Member and lodged with the Clerk for publication on the Parliament's Internet Website for a nominated period ("posted period");
(c) persons may elect to indicate their support of ("join the petition") by electronically providing their name, address (including postcode) and signifying their intention to join the petition.
(2) The posted period for an E-petition is to be a minimum of one week and a maximum of six months from the date of publication on the Parliament's Internet Website.
(3) The Member sponsoring the E-petition must provide the Clerk with the details of the petition in the correct form; the posted period and a signed acknowledgment that they are prepared to sponsor the E-petition.
(4) Once published on the Parliament's Internet Website an E-petition cannot be altered.
(5) Only one E-petition dealing with substantially the same grievance and requesting substantially the same action by the House shall be published on the Parliament's Internet Website at the same time.
(6) Once the posted period for an E-petition has elapsed, a paper copy of the petition shall be printed by the Clerk in full (including the details of the persons who joined the petition) and presented to the House by the Member who sponsored the E-petition.
(7) An E-petition published on the Parliament's Internet Website, but not presented to the House prior to the dissolution of the Parliament, may be presented to the subsequent Parliament to become a petition of the subsequent Parliament.
(8) An E-petition cannot be sponsored after the dissolution of the Parliament and until the new Parliament has been summoned and Members sworn.

- 65 *General Rules for E-Petitions.*
- (1) Persons must join an E-petition by filling out their correct details and personally agreeing to join the e-petition, and by no one else, except in case of incapacity from sickness.
 - (2) A person cannot sign or join the same e-petition more than once.
- 66 *Duties and powers of the Clerk and Speaker regarding E-petitions.*
- (1) The Clerk may decline to publish an e-petition on the Parliament's Internet Website not in conformity with these Orders and advise the sponsoring Member accordingly.
 - (2) The Clerk or a Member may seek a ruling from the Speaker about the conformity of any petition with these Orders.
 - (3) The Clerk is authorised to create and maintain an appropriate Internet Website on which to publish electronic petitions, responses to petitions and explanatory information and do all things necessary in order to give effect to these Orders.
 - (4) The Clerk must dispose of all electronic personal data related to the posting and joining of an e-petition within six months after an electronic petition is printed and presented to the House.
- 67 *Application of Standing Orders to E-Petitions.*
The Standing Orders and Rules for Petitions apply to E-petitions in-so-far-as they can be applied.

The text of each Petition which the House has received shall be communicated to the Premier by the Clerk of the House.

A Government response to each Petition shall be laid before the House within 15 sitting days of its communication to the Premier.

The House of Assembly can be contacted on:

Phone (03) 6212 2200 Fax

(03) 6212 2369

Email: assembly@parliament.tas.gov.au