

SUBMISSIONS PARTICIPATE IN PARLIAMENT

HAVE A SAY IN MATTERS THAT AFFECT YOU

The South African Constitution makes provision for public involvement in lawmaking, oversight and other processes of Parliament.

South Africa's democratic system not only provides for citizens to elect their representatives, but also allows citizens to have a say in matters that affect them.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

One of the ways that the public can make their voices heard is by making submissions to the National Assembly Committees, the National Council of Provinces Committees or Joint Committees.

For submissions from the public to be effective, content and format need to be considered carefully.

It is important that a submission is easily read and understood by the Members of committees.

WHAT IS A SUBMISSION?

A submission is the presentation of views or opinions on a matter or piece of legislation under consideration by a committee of Parliament.

Submissions may be presented in your language of choice

Submissions are usually in written form. They can be reinforced through oral representation to the committee, if the person or group who has made the submission is invited to make an oral presentation.

Making submissions creates an opportunity for any member of the public to propose changes or suggest possible actions to ensure that the laws passed by Parliament or any other matter being considered by Parliament, serve their purpose.



TAKE PART IN
PARLIAMENT. MAKE
YOUR VOICE HEARD



HOW TO WRITE A SUBMISSION?

While there is no set format for a submission to a committee, it should be well thought out and easy to read. The following suggestions may help to achieve this:

- **Heading** – Head your submission with the name of the committee to which it is addressed and the full title of the Bill or topic.
- **Who is it from?** – Clearly state whom the submission is from. State your name or give the name of the organisation you represent.
- **Contact Details** – Include a contact address and daytime telephone number. If for private reasons you do not wish those details to be publicly released with your submission, state this in a covering letter and leave it off the submission itself.
- **Do you wish to appear before the Committee?** – Clearly indicate whether you would like the opportunity to address the committee in person. If you represent an organisation and you wish others to appear with you before the committee, either for support or to speak, include their names and roles.
- **Your organisation** – If you are writing on behalf of an organisation, give brief details of the organisation's aims, membership and structure. Make sure that you have the authority to do so and note your position within the organisation.
- **Who else supports you?** – You may note how widely you have consulted during the writing of the submission. Your submission may have more standing if it has a wide support base.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When writing a submission to a committee, you will usually be making comments in relation to a Bill or topical issue. While there are differences in the way in which a submission is written for a Bill, there are basic principles that apply.• Language usage – Use respectful language. A submission which uses slanderous and disrespectful language will not be considered.• Relevant – Stick to the point. Your submission must be relevant to the matter being discussed. A committee may decide not to entertain a submission that is not relevant.• Clear – Arrange your sentences and paragraphs in a logical order. Try to present a clear and logically developed argument. A submission that jumps from one issue to another and back again or mixes unrelated issues together may be confusing and decrease its impact. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concise – Be simple and direct. Do not write more than is necessary. An overly long submission may weaken the key points you wish to address. The committee wants to know what you think and the evidence or arguments you have that support your view.• Accurate – Be accurate and complete. Gather and research all relevant information thoroughly. Make sure that your facts are correct. A submission with many errors will greatly reduce its impact.• Conclusion – Sum up or list the main points of your recommendations in a conclusion at the end of the submission or in an executive summary at the beginning.• Sending your submission – your submission should reach the committee by or before the closing date for submissions, and should be sent to the relevant committee secretary. |
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HAVE MORE TO SAY?



PRESENTING ORAL SUBMISSIONS

Oral submissions give you a chance to reinforce what you have said in your written submission and allow the committee to clarify points raised in the submission. If the committee has decided to hear your submission, the Committee Secretary will contact you to make arrangements to hear your oral submission.

Oral submissions can also be made at Public Hearings

These submissions are recorded at the Public Hearing and transcribed.

The relevant Committee/s looks at the evidence or opinions shared at the Hearing and discuss the contents thereof.

If the view is supported by many people and if it has merit, the idea or concern stands a good chance of being included into the work of the relevant Committee/s.

The Committee/s will make the final decision about the merit of an issue.

GUIDELINES FOR MAKING ORAL SUBMISSIONS

- Follow the same guidelines as for written submissions.
- Preparing for your oral submission – As committee meetings are generally open to the public and the media, you may wish to attend one of these meetings before you present your oral submission. On the day of your oral submission, arrive early. It is a good idea to plan your presentation so that you are able to present all relevant points and leave enough time for questions.
- Visual Aids – Parliament’s committee rooms are fitted with audio-visual equipment and your oral submission may have more impact if it is reinforced with audio-visual aids.
- Language – You may present your oral submission in any of the official languages of South Africa. Inform the Committee of your language choice before the time so that Parliament may make the necessary interpreting arrangements.
- Questions – Be prepared for questions from Members of the Committee. It is a good idea to think about possible questions that may be asked and be prepared to answer them.
- Time allocation – You can discuss the amount of time allocated to you with the Committee Secretary, beforehand. The committee makes the final decision on the time allocated for oral presentations.