



Working with Select Committees

A step-by-step guide for officials



REFERRAL

When a bill passes its first reading, it is referred to a select committee for detailed consideration. The member in charge nominates the committee they think is the most appropriate. The House typically agrees to send the bill to this committee.



OPEN FOR SUBMISSIONS

When a bill is referred to a committee, they typically open for submissions as soon as possible. People can submit through the website. The secretariat arranges a press release and other communications to promote submissions. Submissions are normally open for 6 weeks.



INITIAL BRIEFING

You present a briefing to the committee at a private committee session. The Initial Briefing provides an overview of the bill as introduced and explains key issues.



HEARINGS OF EVIDENCE

Committees hear from submitters. This can be in person, over teleconference, or over videoconference. Hearings are almost always open to the public and media.



CONSIDERATION

Committees usually have a private consideration session after each Hearing of Evidence. During this time, committee members ask you for advice about the bill. They may also negotiate and have political discussions.



DEPARTMENTAL REPORT

The committee will ask you to prepare a departmental report once hearings have concluded. This report summarises the submissions, analyses the major themes, and makes recommendations to the committee about changes to the bill.



REVISION-TRACKED BILL (RT)

The Parliamentary Counsel Office (PCO) re-drafts the bill to incorporate the committee's recommended changes. These are often the changes you have proposed in your departmental report. This new version is called the Revision-Tracked bill, or the RT. Normally, the PCO will present the RT to the committee.



COMMENTARY

The Deputy Clerk of the Committee writes the committee's commentary. It summarises the committee's consideration of the bill, and explains the recommended changes. The Deputy Clerk presents the commentary to the committee.



DELIBERATION

The deliberation motion is the official vote that the committee takes to decide what changes to recommend to Parliament. After deliberation, the committee cannot make any more changes to the commentary or the RT.



PRESENTATION

The deliberated commentary and RT are officially presented to Parliament after going through a series of quality assurance processes. The committee report will be published on the Parliament website.

Presentation happens by 2pm on sitting days, and by 5pm on non-sitting days. The committee's secretariat will let you know when the report has been presented.

All the written advice you have provided to the committee will be published on the Parliament website.

Congratulations! The bill has completed the select committee process.

- ☐ Introduce yourself to the committee secretariat and the Parliamentary Counsel adviser.

- ☐ Talk to the secretariat to find out when you will get access to the submissions.
- ☐ You might suggest interested or relevant groups for the secretariat to contact.

- ☐ Prepare a written paper to accompany the initial briefing.
- ☐ Talk to the secretariat in advance if you want to use visual aids like PowerPoint.

- ☐ After each hearing, confirm with the secretariat that you have received copies of any supplementary evidence provided to the committee.
- ☐ Some hearings are recorded. You can get copies of these recordings from the secretariat.

- ☐ Respond to all information requests either orally or on paper, by the agreed deadline. Deadlines are normally negotiated with the Clerk of Committee.
- ☐ Contact the committee secretariat to confirm your understanding of all information requests that you are responding to in writing.
- ☐ Provide any resources or advice papers that the committee request.

- ☐ Prepare the departmental report for the committee.
- ☐ Provide hard copies of the report for the committee if asked to do so.
- ☐ Be prepared to present the report to the committee in detail.

- ☐ Assist the PCO to produce the RT.

- ☐ Fact-check the advance draft of the commentary when you receive it from the Deputy Clerk. Track any suggested changes and add comments explaining each change.
- ☐ In the committee meeting, you may be asked to help the committee make accurate changes to the commentary. But remember – ultimately the report is the committee's, and they can say what they like in it.

- ☐ It is worthwhile attending deliberation if you can.



DISCLAIMER: This resource is based on the progress of a standard Government bill. Select committee processes are flexible, and the committee may choose to do things differently. Stay in contact with the Clerk of Committee to keep on top of any changes.

KEY INFO: Papers are usually distributed at 2pm two days before the meeting. Provide any papers for the meeting to the secretariat before this time.

Committees need to know who is attending every meeting, and the secretariat needs accurate information for the Parliamentary record. Please send the secretariat a list of names and job titles before each meeting you attend.