

## A Quick Guide to the Committee Role-play House of Representatives

Role-play stages	<i>Interpretation</i>
<p><b>Opening</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The <b>committee members</b> enter the room and sit at the committee table.</li> <li>2. The <b>committee chair</b> declares the meeting open, gives the time and the date and states the purpose of the inquiry.</li> <li>3. The <b>committee chair</b> names the witness groups giving evidence.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A committee of inquiry is not held in a chamber. It is held in a committee room in APH or in various venues across Australia.</i></li> <li>• <i>House committees usually investigate issues of general concern to the community and therefore to the Parliament.</i></li> <li>• <i>Witness groups are made up of individuals or organisations, lay people or experts.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Witness statements</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The <b>committee chair</b> calls the representatives of the first witness group to the witness table.</li> <li>2. The <b>witness group</b> sits opposite the committee members.</li> <li>3. The <b>committee chair</b> asks the witnesses to state their full names for the <i>Hansard</i> record.</li> <li>4. The <b>committee chair</b> asks for the witness statement to be read to the committee.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Witnesses who give evidence are protected by the rules of parliamentary privilege.</i></li> <li>• <i>Witnesses are expected to tell the truth.</i></li> <li>• <i>Statements to the committee outline the witness group's position on the issue.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Examination of witnesses</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The <b>committee chair</b> invites a member to ask a question of a witness.</li> <li>2. The <b>committee member</b> asks a question.</li> <li>3. The <b>witness</b> answers the questions.</li> <li>4. The <b>committee chair</b> repeats the process till the members' questions are exhausted.</li> <li>5. The <b>committee chair</b> thanks the witnesses for their time and calls the next witness group.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Questions asked by members are designed to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>clarify witness statements</i></li> <li>○ <i>extract detailed information about the issue</i></li> <li>○ <i>allow the witness to fully explain their position on the issue.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p><b>Continuing the inquiry</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The <b>committee chair</b> calls the representatives of the second witness group to the witness table and repeats all the 'Witness statements' and 'Examination of witnesses' steps.</li> <li>2. The <b>committee chair</b> calls the representatives of the third witness group and repeats the process until all witnesses have been heard.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>By hearing evidence from many different groups the committee gathers a range of opinions on the issue and becomes better informed about the likely impact of the issue.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Adjourning the inquiry</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The <b>committee chair</b> announces that the meeting has ended and that the committee will consider the evidence presented when preparing the report.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>All of the evidence presented during a committee of inquiry is recorded.</i></li> <li>• <i>A committee is the Parliament at work—just not in a chamber.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Report writing</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The <b>committee members</b> meet in private to consider the evidence.</li> <li>2. The <b>committee members</b> write a report including recommendations on the issue.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A committee report summarises all the evidence presented to the committee.</i></li> <li>• <i>Committee report may include a range of recommended actions such as a change in policy, legislation or community awareness.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Tabling the report</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The <b>committee chair</b> tables the report in the House.</li> <li>2. By leave of the chamber, the <b>committee chair</b> speaks about the report and the committee recommendations.</li> <li>3. The <b>government</b> responds to the report's recommendations.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The tabling of the report occurs at a time after the hearings are complete.</i></li> <li>• <i>The government does not have to accept the committee recommendations.</i></li> </ul>