

Legislative Council Privileges Committee



Citizen's right of reply: Responding to Members' statements in the House

February 2026

Procedures for a citizen's right of reply

The Legislative Council has a citizen's right of reply procedure. This gives persons adversely named by a member in the House an opportunity to respond on the Parliamentary record, known as Hansard. This brochure outlines the procedure, as set out in the Legislative Council's Standing Orders 208 and 209.

Overview of the right of reply procedure

To request a citizen's right of reply, a person (including certain organisations) should write to the President within 12 months of the member's comments in the House, making a request to respond in Hansard.

The President will consider the request, and, if appropriate, refer it to the Privileges Committee. The Privileges Committee will consider requests referred to it and report to the House. On tabling of the Privileges Committee's report, the House may resolve to incorporate the response in Hansard.

Who may request a citizen's right of reply?

Standing order 208(1) provides that any person (including a corporation, body corporate or unincorporated association) referred to in the House by name, or in such a way as to be readily identified, may request a citizen's right of reply any of the following grounds:

- that they have been adversely affected in reputation or in respect of dealings or associations with others
- that that they have been injured in occupation, trade, office or financial credit, or
- that their privacy has been unreasonably invaded.

What should a right of reply request contain?

A person seeking a right of reply should write to the President. This letter should indicate the specific member's remarks to which the person objects, note the adverse effect of those remarks, and make a request to publish a response in Hansard.

The letter should include (as an attachment) a specific form of words that the person requests be incorporated in Hansard ('the response'). The response should identify explicitly the particular comment or

comments by the member, and provide a succinct and relevant response to each comment. The response should not seek to engage in a wider-ranging debate concerning the subject matter of the member's comments, the member's motives and past actions, or the motives and conduct of others.

Consideration by the President

Under standing order 208(2), the President must consider the right of reply request (submission) as soon as practicable and decide whether to refer it to the Legislative Council's Privileges Committee. A submission may not be referred to the Committee if its subject matter is trivial, frivolous, vexatious or offensive in character.

Consideration by the Privileges Committee

After the Privileges Committee receives a right of reply request referred by the President, it meets in private to consider whether the response should be published in Hansard.

Under standing order 209(5), a response which is to be published in *Hansard*:

- must be succinct and strictly relevant to the questions in issue
- must not contain anything offensive in character
- must not contain any matter where publication would have the effect of:
 - unreasonably adversely affecting or injuring a person, or unreasonably invading a person's privacy, or
 - unreasonably adding to or aggravating any adverse effect, injury or invasion of privacy suffered by a person.

The Privileges Committee may edit any proposed response which does not comply strictly with these requirements. If the Privileges Committee edits a response, the Committee will contact the person concerned to seek his or her approval in writing.

Importantly, under standing orders 209(3) and (4), the Committee's role is to consider whether a response meets the requirements and to make a recommendation to the House whether it should be published. The Committee does not inquire into or judge the truth of either the member's statements in the House or the citizen's response.

The Committee reports back to the House with its recommendation, and its report is published online. Copies of the report are also sent to the person concerned and the member.

Publication of citizen's response in Hansard

If the Privileges Committee's report recommends that a response be published in Hansard, the recommendation only takes effect if the House adopts the Committee's report. Usually, the House does not decide on this issue until several days after the report is tabled. This gives members of the House an opportunity to read and consider the report.

If the House resolves to adopt the report, the response is published in the Hansard on the day on which that resolution is passed. The response attracts parliamentary privilege.

Where to send a request for a citizen's right of reply

Persons seeking a citizen's right of reply should address their letter to:

The President
Legislative Council
NSW Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Via email: President@parliament.nsw.gov.au

How can I get further information?

If you have questions or would like further assistance, please email privilege@parliament.nsw.gov.au. Previous reports of the Privileges Committee dealing with citizen's rights of reply are available on the committee's website: www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcprivilege.



+61 2 9230 3389



www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcprivilege

For information and alerts about new, ongoing and recently completed Upper House committee inquiries, please follow us on:



[nswupperhouse](https://www.facebook.com/nswupperhouse)



[nsw_upperhouse](https://twitter.com/nsw_upperhouse)