

INQUIRY INTO E-PETITIONS

Organisation: Legislative Assembly Northern Territory
Name: Hon Kezia Purick MLA
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SPEAKER

Ref: 14/134.77

Hon John Ajaka MLC
President
NSW Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr President

John,

I refer to your request for a submission into the Legislative Council's your inquiry into e-petitions.

In the Northern Territory Standing Order 119 provides at subclause (9):

"any petition signed by electronic means or which claims to have been electronically endorsed by petitioners will be certified by the presenting Member that to the best of his or her knowledge the petition has been endorsed by the number of petitioners claimed."

This simple approach has permitted Members to present and read petitions received from website campaigns and have then referred to Ministers for response pursuant to Standing Order 122.

A Member may present a memory stick to the Clerk and the Clerk's office would assist in the procedure for presentation so that the petition is 'laid on the table' pursuant to Standing Order 121. A motion would not table the memory stick itself.

The Clerk's Office advises there is no measurable difference in receipt of petitions, but we have permitted e-petitions for some years now.

I have attached Chapter Ten of the Standing Orders for the Committee's consideration.

CHAPTER TEN

PETITIONS

STANDING ORDER 119

Petitions

Petitions may be presented to the Assembly by any Member provided that:

- (1) every petition must be respectful and not contain irrelevant statements
- (2) every petition must be neatly written, printed or reproduced by mechanical (or other) process, without interlineation or erasure
- (3) every petition must contain a request or prayer at the end
- (4) every petition must be in the English language, or be accompanied by a translation certified to be correct by the Member who lodges it
- (5) every petition must be signed by at least one person on the sheet on which the petition is inscribed
- (6) every petition must be signed by the parties whose names are on the petition, by their own hand, and by no one else, except in the case of incapacity or sickness. Persons unable to write must affix their marks in the presence of a witness, who also affix their signature. For electronic petitions see (9) below
- (7) every signature must be written upon the petition or upon sheets containing the prayer of the petition, and not pasted or otherwise transferred upon. For electronic petitions see (9) below
- (8) no letters, affidavits or other documents may be attached to any petition
- (9) any petition signed by electronic means or which claims to have been electronically endorsed by petitioners will be certified by the presenting Member that to the best of his or her knowledge the petition has been endorsed by the number of petitioners claimed
- (10) a petition for presentation to the Assembly can be lodged with the Clerk only by a Member, but a Member cannot lodge a petition from themselves
- (11) every Member lodging a petition with the Clerk for presentation to the Assembly will affix their name at the beginning, and
- (12) every petition must be lodged with the Clerk at least two hours prior to the time of the meeting of the Assembly on the day on which it is proposed to present it, and when presented the petition must bear the Clerk's certificate that it conforms with the Standing Orders.

STANDING ORDER 120

Motion on Petition

Where any petition has been presented in accordance with Standing Order 119 any Member may move that the petition be read and, in moving confines their remarks to a brief statement of the persons from whom the petition comes, of the number of signatures attached to the petition, of the material allegations contained in the petition, and the meaning or substance as contained in the request or prayer. If the motion is carried, a Clerk reads the petition.

STANDING ORDER 121

Action on Petition

On presentation of a petition, no debate upon or relating to it is allowed. It is laid upon the Table of the Assembly and a Member may move, without notice, a motion to refer the petition to a committee of the Assembly and may also move "that the petition be printed".

STANDING ORDER 122

Terms of Petition referred to Minister

A copy of the terms of every petition lodged with the Clerk and received by the Assembly will be referred by the Clerk to the Minister responsible for the administration of the matter which is the subject of the petition.

STANDING ORDER 123

Response to a Petition

A Minister must respond to a petition forwarded by the Clerk within 12 meeting days of it being sent. The response will be lodged with the Clerk for presentation to the Assembly. The response will be announced at the end of the time for presentation of petitions. There is no requirement for a Minister to respond to a petition which is in similar terms to a petition previously presented to the Assembly and which has been responded to.