



# Parliamentary Committees

## What is a committee?

A parliamentary committee is a body established by legislation or by the Parliament to inquire into specific matters. Committees have significant powers to inquire into matters for the Parliament and will generally seek information and views from people and organisations.

In Queensland, most parliamentary committees are established permanently by legislation, usually the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*.

The size of membership of a portfolio committee and the numbers of government and non-government members depends on the political composition of the Legislative Assembly at the time. The formulae determining this composition is set out in Section 91 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*. The Chair of each portfolio committee is nominated by the Leader of the House. The Parliament will occasionally establish additional temporary committees to inquire into specific 'select' issues. These temporary committees are called 'select committees'.

## What do committees do?

Generally, the main task of committees in Queensland is to ensure government administration is accountable to the parliament and to the people of Queensland. Committees are able to do this in a way that the whole parliament cannot as they have more time, are more flexible, and can gather evidence by speaking to relevant persons and organisations in communities throughout Queensland.

Committees carry out the responsibilities assigned to them by legislation or the parliament. They consider and report on bills introduced into the parliament and subordinate legislation, consider the annual state budget Appropriation Bills (the estimates process), investigate issues of public importance, consider whether policies or past decisions could be improved and make sure that public money is used appropriately.

Committees also have an oversight role to monitor and review the performance of government entities (these offices and organisations are listed under the individual committee sections on page 3 and 4 of this factsheet).

## What is a committee inquiry?

When a committee inquires into a matter, it will usually:

- invite stakeholders to send relevant information and views
- meet with people and organisations for face-to-face discussions
- obtain expert or technical advice
- examine all relevant facts or issues in detail and
- report to the parliament in writing, setting out its findings and recommendations for action.

Ministers whose portfolios are subject to recommendations for action are required to provide parliament with written responses to any committee recommendations within three months of a committee report being tabled (published).



*A parliamentary committee meets at Parliament House*

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### What powers do committees have?

Parliamentary committees have significant powers, privileges and immunities. They can:

- hear evidence
- order people to come to committee hearings
- order documents or other items be provided and
- publish evidence and documents.

### How can I get involved?

Each committee has a webpage that details their current inquiries with information on how you can be involved. For example:

- where you can send submissions
- how to attend upcoming hearings and
- when to watch live and replayed broadcasts of committee hearings and briefings.

### Each committee webpage also details:

- who the committee's members are
- what the committee's responsibilities are
- what the committee's current activities are and
- copies of committee publications such as reports, issues papers, hearing transcripts and received submissions.

When you visit a committee website, you can subscribe to receive email updates from the committee about their work. Committee subscribers are notified of upcoming hearings and activities. Email subscription is free and the privacy of your personal information will be protected. Committee webpages are listed on the parliament's website at:

[www.parliament.qld.gov.au/committees](http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/committees)

### A committee snapshot-

#### Legal Affairs and Safety Committee

The Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee is a portfolio committee with responsibility for:

- Justice and Attorney-General, and
- Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence
- Police, Corrective Services, Fire and Emergency Services.

In relation to its areas of responsibility, the Committee:

- examines Bills to consider the policy to be enacted;
- examines the estimates of each department;
- examines Bills for the application of the fundamental legislative principles set out in section 4 of the Legislative Standards Act 1992;
- considers matters under the Human Rights Act 2019;
- considers the lawfulness of subordinate legislation;
- assesses the public accounts of each department in regard to the integrity, economy, efficiency and effectiveness of financial management by:
  - examining government financial documents, and
  - considering the annual and other reports of the auditor-general
- considers Departments' public works in light of matters including, but not limited to the:
  - suitability of the works for the purpose,
  - necessity for the works,
  - value for money of the works,
  - revenue produced by, and recurrent costs of, the works, or estimates of revenue and costs,
  - present and prospective public value of the works,
  - procurement methods used for the works, and
  - actual suitability of the works in meeting the needs in and achieving the stated purpose of the works.

The Committee also has a monitor and review function in relation to the performance of the functions of the Ombudsman and the Information Commissioner, the Queensland Family & Child Commission, and must be consulted regarding senior appointments to the Electoral Commission of Queensland.

The Committee must also investigate any issue referred to it by the Legislative Assembly or under an Act, whether or not the issue is within the Committee's areas of responsibility.

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### What committees are there?

There are seven portfolio committees and three statutory committees. Each of these and their responsibilities are detailed below.

#### Community Support and Services Committee

The committee has responsibility for the following areas:

Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts; Housing; Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services.

#### Economics and Governance Committee

The committee has responsibility for the following areas:

Premier and Cabinet, Olympic and Paralympic Games; Treasury, Trade and Investment; Tourism, Innovation and Sport.

#### Education, Employment and Training Committee

The committee has responsibility for the following areas:

Education, Industrial Relations and Racing; Employment, Small Business, Training, Skills Development and Youth Justice.

#### Health and Environment Committee

The committee has responsibility for the following areas:

Health, Mental Health, Ambulance Services and Women; Environment, Great Barrier Reef, Science and Multicultural Affairs.

#### Legal Affairs and Safety Committee

The committee has responsibility for the following areas:

Justice and Attorney-General and Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence; Police, Corrective Services, Fire and Emergency Services.

#### State Development and Regional Industries Committee

The committee has responsibility for the following areas:

State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning; Agricultural Industry Development, Fisheries and Rural Communities; Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water.

#### Transport and Resources Committee

The committee has responsibility for the following areas:

Transport, Main Roads and Digital Services; Energy, Renewables, Hydrogen, Public Works and Procurement; Resources.

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### Statutory committees

#### Committee of the Legislative Assembly

The committee has the following areas of responsibility—

- (a) the ethical conduct of members;

Note—

However, under section 104C(2), a complaint about a particular member not complying with the code of ethical conduct for members may be considered only by the Assembly or the Ethics Committee.

- (b) parliamentary powers, rights and immunities;
- (c) standing rules and orders about the conduct of business by, and the practices and the procedures of, the Assembly and its committees;
- (d) any other matters for which the committee is given responsibility under the standing rules and orders;
- (e) any matter referred to the committee by the Speaker.

#### Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee

The principal functions of the committee are:

- to monitor and review the performance of the functions, and the structure of the Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC or the Commission);
- to report to Parliament on matters relevant to the Commission; and
- to participate in the appointment of Commissioners and the Chief Executive Officer of the Commission.

#### Ethics Committee

The committee's areas of responsibility as set out in section 104B of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 are as follows:

- dealing with complaints about the ethical conduct of particular members; and
- dealing with alleged breaches of parliamentary privilege by members of the Assembly and other persons.