



## PRIME MINISTER

### GUIDELINES TO APPLY TO APPEARANCES BY PUBLIC SERVANTS AND OFFICERS OF STATUTORY AUTHORITIES BEFORE PARTY COMMITTEES

1. Ministers may authorise officers of their departments, or of statutory authorities for which they are responsible, to appear before Government and Opposition Party Committees to provide briefings or background material on Government or Ministerial decisions and proposals, including details and/or explanations of proposed legislation.
2. Briefing of this nature will be authorised on the principle of promoting the freest possible flow of factual and background material to permit informed consideration by the committees and parties concerned of the issues involved, consistent with preserving the necessary confidences of Government and maintaining the traditional political impartiality of officials.
3. Committee requests for briefing in the above terms will be directed to the Minister concerned. If he agrees, the Minister will authorise the department or authority to put the necessary arrangements in hand. It will also be open for a Minister himself to initiate proposals for briefing of committees, where he considers this to be desirable.
4. Officials will not be expected or authorised to express opinions on Government policies, policy options or matters of a party political nature. The discussions may however include administrative arrangements and procedures involved in implementation of existing or proposed policies or legislation.
5. If matters are raised which in the judgement of officials, seek expressions of opinion of Government policies or on alternative policies, as distinct from factual explanations of existing or proposed policies, the officials would suggest that those matters be raised with the Minister.

6. Where considered necessary or desirable, Ministers may elect to be present at discussions with Government party committees, to deal with questions of a policy or party political nature.

7. Where the Minister does not attend the committee proceedings, he will have the right to be kept informed by officials of the nature of the discussions and of any matters not able to be resolved by the officials to the committee's satisfaction.

8. Where an official considers that questioning by a committee goes beyond the authorised scope of the briefing arrangements, he should so indicate to the committee, and before answering will be at liberty to raise the matter with the head of his department or authority, and the Minister, and if he so desires, with the Public Service Board.



## PRIME MINISTER

### GUIDELINES RELATING TO ACCESS BY MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT TO PUBLIC SERVANTS AND OFFICERS OF STATUTORY AUTHORITIES

1. Much will depend on the nature of the request. There will, for example, be occasions when a request by a Member of Parliament amounts to no more than a request for readily available factual information. In these circumstances, the information should obviously be provided.
2. There may be other occasions where, in the judgement of officials, a Member's request raises sensitive issues, for example, where expressions of opinion are sought on Government policies or alternative policies, as distinct from explanation of existing policies. Officials will not be expected or authorised to express opinions on Government policies, policy options or matters of a party political nature. Information provided may, however, include details of administrative arrangements and procedures involved in implementation of approved policies or legislation.
3. Where a request is made which seeks expressions of opinion on Government policies or policy options, it would be appropriate to suggest that the Member pursue the matter with the Minister. Similar action would be appropriate if a request raised other issues of a sensitive nature, or where the answering of a request would necessitate the use of substantial resources of the department or authority.
4. Care should be taken to avoid unauthorised disclosure of classified or otherwise confidential information, for example, where a breach of personal or commercial privacy could be involved.
5. An official should, as appropriate, inform the head of his department or authority or Minister of a request for information and of the outcome.
6. Where an official considers that the terms of a request would require him to go beyond the authorised scope of the above arrangements, he should so indicate to the Member, and will be at liberty to raise the matter with the head of his department or authority and the Minister and, if he so desires, with the Public Service Board.