

## SUBMISSION-WRITING BASICS

### How should I structure my submission?

There is no prescribed format for a written submission – you can follow whatever structure feels easiest or most natural to you.

### How long should my submission be?

Your submission may be as short or as long as you like. If it's longer than a few pages, it can be helpful to include a brief summary at the beginning.

### What should my submission contain?

Your submission should contain facts, opinions, experiences, arguments and/or recommendations in the context of your ADHD experience or expertise.

**The most important thing is that your submission clearly tells your story** and conveys the reason that you're making a submission in the first place. It also has to be relevant to the scope of the inquiry, otherwise it could be rejected.

One way to help inform what to write in your submission is through the lens of the inquiry's **terms of reference**. These determine the scope/limitations of what the committee will inquire into – they're like the guiding parameters of the investigation. You definitely don't need to address the terms of reference in your submission directly or explicitly – though you can if you want to – but it can be a helpful frame through which to think.

### Some further helpful hints for writing a strong submission include:

Clearly address some or all of <b>the terms of reference</b> – you do not need to address each one	Be <b>relevant</b> and highlight your own perspective
Be <b>concise</b> – generally no longer than four to five pages	Begin with a <b>short introduction</b> about yourself or the organisation you represent
<b>Clearly emphasise your key points.</b> Don't bury the more important information	Outline not only <b>what the issues are</b> but <b>how problems can be addressed</b> , as the committee looks to submissions for ideas to make recommendations
Only include documents that <b>directly relate</b> to your key points	Only include information you would be happy to see <b>published on the internet</b>

### **Do I need to include my personal details?**

It's entirely up to you. No matter what format your submission takes, you have the option to make it confidentially or with your name publicly attached. Making a confidential submission requires a reason, but in the eyes of the committee it is reason enough that you're telling a personal story that you don't want your name published with.

### **Can I attach supporting documents to my submission?**

Yes! Feel free to include any documentation with your submission that supports your evidence.

For instance, your submission might be focused on your experiences of having successive healthcare professionals dismiss your suspicion that you have ADHD. If you had a doctor's report that shows a particularly egregious lack of understanding of ADHD, it might be useful to include it.

### **Does my submission need to be in electronic written format?**

If you're not able to provide a submission as a typed document, the committee can take it in other forms including audio recording, video recording and hand-written.

If you would like to make a non-written submission or you require assistance to enable you to participate in the inquiry, please contact the Committee Secretariat by calling (02) 6277 3515 or emailing [community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au)

If you are Deaf, hearing impaired or speech impaired and would like to make a submission, please call the Parliament House TTY service on (02) 6277 7799.

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

Barriers to consistent, timely and best practice assessment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and support services for people with ADHD, with particular reference to:

Term of Reference	Questions to consider when addressing the term of reference
<b>(a) adequacy of access to ADHD diagnosis;</b>	<p>Have you experienced any barriers to accessing an ADHD assessment? What are they?</p> <p>Eg cost, lack of support with executive function, not enough practitioners available in your area?</p> <p>Do you have any suggestions for how this could be fixed in a way that would work for you?</p>
<b>(b) adequacy of access to supports after an ADHD assessment;</b>	<p>If you've had an ADHD assessment/diagnosis, have you experienced any barriers to accessing follow-up care? This could include medication, ADHD coaching, provision of information, psychology etc.</p> <p>Do you feel the person who diagnosed you provided you with enough support afterwards?</p> <p>How do you think the barriers you've experienced could be addressed?</p>
<b>(c) the availability, training and attitudes of treating practitioners, including workforce development options for increasing access to ADHD assessment and support services;</b>	<p>Have you had any negative or harmful experiences with the healthcare professionals you've interacted with through your ADHD journey?</p> <p>Has your healthcare provider expressed outdated or offensive views about ADHD?</p> <p>Have you been gaslit, dismissed, laughed at?</p> <p>What kind of steps do you think the government should take to fix this?</p>

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Term of Reference	Questions to consider when addressing the term of reference
<b>(d) impact of gender bias in ADHD assessment, support services and research;</b>	<p>Have you been refused ADHD support based on your gender?</p> <p>Have you experienced medical misogyny?</p> <p>What would you suggest to address this?</p>
<b>(e) access to and cost of ADHD medication, including Medicare and Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme coverage and options to improve access to ADHD medications;</b>	<p>Have you struggled to access ADHD medication? Can you identify why?</p> <p>Is the cost of medication a barrier for you?</p> <p>Have you been left without medication because your healthcare provider wasn't available to prescribe it in a timely manner?</p> <p>What would help you to access medication more easily?</p>
<b>(f) the role of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in supporting people with ADHD, with particular emphasis on the scheme's responsibility to recognise ADHD as a primary disability;</b>	<p>If you are an NDIS participant, does the scheme support your ADHD needs?</p> <p>If you're not a participant, do you think you would pursue it if you could?</p> <p>How would getting support from the NDIS improve your life with regard to your ADHD?</p>

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<b>(g) the adequacy of, and interaction between, Commonwealth, state and local government services to meet the needs of people with ADHD at all life stages;</b>	<p>Through your ADHD assessment and support journey, have you noticed any clear gaps between different service providers?</p> <p>Is there anything substantively missing?</p> <p>How could each level of government improve its approach to ADHD services?</p>
<b>(h) the adequacy of Commonwealth funding allocated to ADHD research;</b>	<p>Do you feel the government should invest more into ADHD research? Why/why not?</p> <p>How would more/less funding impact outcomes for people with ADHD?</p>
<b>(i) the social and economic cost of failing to provide adequate and appropriate ADHD services;</b>	<p>In the context of the support you receive to manage it, how does your ADHD impact on your life more broadly?</p> <p>How does it impact on your education, employment and/or relationships?</p> <p>Have you lost jobs or income that could have been avoided if you'd had better access to ADHD services?</p> <p>How would better ADHD supports improve these parts of your life?</p>

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Term of Reference	Questions to consider when addressing the term of reference
<b>(j) the viability of recommendations from the Australian ADHD Professionals Association's Australian evidence-based clinical practice guideline for ADHD;</b>	<p>Do you feel strongly that the <u>AADPA guidelines</u> are a useful blueprint for how to address ADHD access in Australia? Why/why not?</p> <p>Do you have any experiences that you can correlate to the guidelines and your views on them?</p>
<b>(k) international best practice for ADHD diagnosis, support services, practitioner education and cost;</b>	<p>Do you have any exposure to ADHD assessment and support services in other countries?</p> <p>Have you sought out ADHD assessment or support elsewhere, and how does that process compare to Australia?</p> <p>Is there a particular jurisdiction you know of that has the legislation right and from which Australia could learn?</p>
<b>(l) any other related matters.</b>	

## SUBMISSION WRITING – STEP BY STEP

While you can approach writing your submission however you like, you might also like to follow this helpful formula below.

Step	Example
<p><b>Step 1:</b> Begin your submission with the <b>name of the inquiry</b> and by providing a <b>brief explanation of your experience</b> with or interest in access barriers to ADHD assessment and support services.</p>	<p>"I am writing in response to the call for submissions to the inquiry into Assessment and support services for people with ADHD. In 2016 I was formally diagnosed with ADHD after seeking an assessment for two years, during which time I experienced a range of challenging experiences with the healthcare system that I'd like to share with the committee."</p>
<p><b>Step 2:</b> Directly or implicitly <b>address the terms of reference</b>. What do you want to communicate to the inquiry about your <b>experience</b>, and how does it <b>relate to the terms of reference</b>?</p> <p>If you can't draw a parallel between a reference term and your experience, <i>that is entirely ok</i>. In this example, you could simply omit the first paragraph that identifies the reference term.</p>	<p>"The primary challenge I experienced in seeking an ADHD assessment pertains directly to reference term (c): <i>the availability, training and attitudes of treating practitioners, including workforce development options for increasing access to ADHD assessment and support services</i>.</p> <p>In the two years it took for me to get a diagnosis, I went through six different healthcare practitioners. Firstly, their availability was a significant issue – the longest wait I experienced for one of them was nine months. In instances where I did not have to wait quite that long, the attitudes I encountered were appalling. One psychiatrist told me ADHD is a made-up condition concocted by pharmaceutical companies, and another refused to assess me in the belief that if I "really" had ADHD it would have been picked up by now."</p>

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<b>Step 3:</b> Explain how these experiences have <b>made you feel, how they have affected you and your family financially or psychologically</b> , and/or how you think they have <b>impacted your health, wellbeing, and employment outcomes</b> .	“Encountering such attitudes by people who are supposed to be experts in human health has been incredibly upsetting for me personally, both in terms of compounding the stigma I felt and in terms of my progression to a diagnosis and therefore access to life-changing medication. After coming up against so many hostile doctors at one of the most vulnerable periods of my life, I lost all hope and motivation. My untreated ADHD meant I was already struggling at work, but ended up losing my job and becoming homeless.”
<b>Step 4:</b> After you’ve shared your experience, you might like to provide your <b>recommendations</b> for how the <b>barriers/issues</b> you’ve experienced <b>might be fixed</b> . It’s not mandatory, but it’s a valuable opportunity for people with lived experience to have their say on the <b>solutions</b> that will impact them directly.	“My experience shows me that there is a significant gap in understanding of ADHD among healthcare practitioners – one that poses a clear danger to people’s lives. I believe this needs to be addressed by mandating an ADHD assessment training module for all healthcare providers who will likely be dealing with people seeking support for ADHD. It’s also critical in my opinion that medicine courses at university need to provide clinical training on neurodiversity.”



## Resources

### Links to resources:

Official Parliament House  
ADHD inquiry webpage



ADHD inquiry - terms  
of reference



How to make a submission  
- helpful guidelines



## ADHD WA Submission Writing Workshops

ADHD WA are running eight (8) **Submission Writing Workshops** over the month of **May 2023**.

These Workshops will answer any questions and assist you in writing your own personal submissions.

These workshops are **free** and open to ADHD WA members and non-members.



Scan the QR for **Online and In-Person Workshop** dates and to register your attendance.

OR visit [www.adhd.org](http://www.adhd.org) and navigate to:  
Get involved > Senate Inquiry into ADHD Services

## Submissions Closing Date

Encourage you to **lodge your submissions by the end of May** - before the Friday June 9 deadline.

## How do I lodge my submission?

### TYPED SUBMISSIONS:

- Upload submissions directly on the [Inquiry Page Parliament of Australia Website](#)
- OR
- Email your submissions to: [community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au)

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