



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE STANDING COMMITTEE

TREATMENT OF EVIDENCE—HEARINGS

This document provides additional guidance to witnesses appearing before the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee as part of the Inquiry into the Protection of Crowded Places from Terrorist Acts. The *Giving oral evidence to a Parliamentary Committee of the Legislative Assembly* booklet, available on the inquiry page at www.parliament.wa.gov.au/cdjsc, provides further information about the hearing process and should be consulted prior to your appearance.

The Committee appreciates that, to fully address the inquiry terms of reference, you may be required to provide sensitive or confidential information during your appearance. It recognises that it is not necessarily in the public interest for such information to be provided in a public forum.

However, the Committee is an avenue of communication between Parliament and the Western Australian community; the Committee provides a forum through which the public can be involved in issues within the Committee's purview. Committees also assist the Parliament to monitor and review legislation, administration and expenditure. For the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, this involves reporting to the Legislative Assembly and necessarily involves a certain level of disclosure.

To balance the competing interests in this inquiry, the Committee has resolved that:

- It will conduct all hearings as public hearings in the first instance.
- If, in the course of the hearing, you believe some Committee questions require answers containing sensitive or confidential information, you can request that the Committee take that evidence in a closed session. You will need to explain briefly why you feel that it is necessary to close the hearing.
- Should the Committee accept your explanation, the Committee will receive your evidence in closed session.

If you feel that all of your evidence should be taken in a closed hearing, you will need to notify the Committee well in advance of your appearance and provide a brief explanation about why a closed hearing is necessary. The Committee will consider your request and inform you of its decision.

Evidence taken in a closed hearing is confidential, and no one may publish or disclose any part of the hearing transcript unless the Committee itself resolves to do so. If the Committee does not resolve to disclose or publish the transcript, that transcript may not be disclosed for at least ten years.

Evidence will only be taken *in camera* in extraordinary circumstances.

Should the Committee include any closed evidence in its final report, it will inform the relevant witness/es prior to publication. Any concerns about the publication of the information can be raised with the Committee at that time. However, the Committee may choose not to alter the content of its report.

If you would like further clarity about this process, please contact the Committee's A/Principal Research Officer prior to your appearance on 9222 7467.