

# STANDARD DIRECTIONS FOR PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS

**March 2021**

These directions apply to the conduct of a public examination by the ACT Integrity Commission ('**Commission**'). They should be read in conjunction with the *Integrity Commission (Examination Conduct) Guidelines 2021* ('**Examination Conduct Guidelines**') issued by the Commission under s 142(2) of the *Integrity Commission Act 2018* ('**Act**').

## **Sitting times**

1. The Commission ordinarily sits from Monday to Friday each week. Usual hearing hours are from 10:00am to 4:00pm, with a luncheon adjournment from 1:00pm to 2:00pm. The Commissioner may direct that sitting hours be varied as required.

## **Use of mobile phones and technology**

2. Mobile phones, laptop computers and tablets are allowed in the examination room but must be turned on silent while Commission examinations are being conducted.
3. The following is strictly prohibited on Commission premises:
  - a. taking photographs; and
  - b. making an audio or video recording.

## **Authorisation to appear and legal representation**

4. The Commissioner may authorise a person to appear at a public examination or a specified part of a public examination if it is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that the person is substantially and directly interested in any subject-matter of the public examination. Authorisation can be granted subject to conditions.
5. The Commissioner may withdraw authorisation to appear or make the authorisation subject to altered or additional conditions, at any time.
6. Authorisation to appear entitles the person to whom it is granted to participate in the public examination subject to the Commissioner's control and to such extent as the Commissioner considers appropriate.

7. The Commissioner may authorise:
  - a. a person authorised to appear; or
  - b. a person giving evidence at the public examination to be legally represented at the public examination or at a specified part of the public examination.
8. Where it is proposed that an application will be made for authorisation to appear and/or for a party or witness to be legally represented, the application must be made in writing (this may be by email) to the Commission in the first instance. The application should provide the name of the party or the witness, the name(s) of the legal representatives who seek authorisation and the reason(s) why the party or the witness has a sufficient interest.
9. The Commission prefers that each person seeking to be legally represented have separate and independent representation. The Commissioner will, however, receive and consider applications that a single lawyer or team of lawyers be permitted to represent more than one person where:
  - a. it can be demonstrated that there is some reasonable purpose for seeking representation of that kind;
  - b. the most senior lawyer involved is able to assure the Commission that no conflict of interest is anticipated; and
  - c. all of the lawyers involved give an undertaking, through the most senior lawyer, to inform the Commission immediately upon recognising that a conflict of interest has arisen.

#### **Conduct of the public examination – witnesses**

10. Subject to the direction of the Commissioner, Counsel Assisting will determine which witnesses to call at a public examination and the order in which they are called. It may be necessary to call some witnesses to give evidence on more than one occasion. In determining what evidence to place before the Commission, Counsel Assisting will consider the credibility, relevance and significance of that evidence and the extent to which such evidence will assist the Commission to make factual and other findings.
11. The Commissioner may decide to receive the evidence of a witness orally or by statement. The Commissioner will decide whether to require a witness giving evidence by statement to attend for examination or cross-examination.
12. Persons required to give evidence will be provided with appropriate notice of the time the Commission will call upon their summons to attend and give evidence. Witnesses with a particular period of unavailability are required to give notice of that unavailability to the Commission at the earliest possible opportunity.
13. The Commission will regularly publish on its website a list of witnesses proposed to be called each day of the public examination.

14. All witnesses will be called to give evidence by Counsel Assisting, and then examined by Counsel Assisting. If there is more than one Counsel Assisting, there may be circumstances in which a witness might be examined by more than one of the Counsel Assisting. The witness may then be cross-examined by or on behalf of any person considered by the Commissioner to have sufficient interest to do so. The witness may then be examined by his or her own legal representative. Counsel Assisting may re-examine. Duplication and repetition must be avoided.
15. In determining whether a person has sufficient interest to cross-examine a witness, the Commissioner may call upon the cross-examiner to:
  - a. identify the purpose of the cross-examination;
  - b. set out the issues to be canvassed; and
  - c. state whether a contrary affirmative case is to be made, and if so the details of that case.
16. Where, in the opinion of the cross-examiner, public disclosure of any of the matters referred to in paragraph 15 would substantially undermine the forensic utility of the cross-examination, the cross-examiner may, with the leave of the Commissioner, address those matters in writing. To that end, the cross-examiner must be in a position to do so when called upon by the Commissioner.
17. The Commissioner may:
  - a. limit the particular topics or issues upon which a party can examine or cross-examine; and
  - b. impose time limits upon examination or cross-examination.
18. Save as set out in paragraphs 19 to 21 of these Directions, the Commission will not apply the rule in *Browne v Dunn* (1893) 6 R 67.
19. The Commission expects that, where it is to be invited to reject or not accept the evidence of a witness on a material fact or issue, on the grounds the witness deliberately gave false evidence, the evidence is unreliable, or the witness has made a mistake on a significant issue, the material grounds of such contention must be put to the witness to allow the witness an opportunity to offer an explanation.
20. What is stated in paragraph 19 is not intended to mean that:
  - a. mere inconsistencies and unimportant differences in the evidence should be raised;
  - b. once the grounds for rejecting or not accepting the evidence of a witness have been put by one party, other parties need to put them again; or
  - c. the grounds for rejecting or not accepting the evidence of a witness need to be put where the Commission is on notice from statements made during the public examination by or on behalf of a party, or that party's evidence, or from the general way in which the party

has conducted its previous questioning, or some similar source, that the witness's evidence is under challenge on those grounds.

21. Once a witness has been cross-examined on a particular issue, no further cross-examination on that issue will be allowed unless the person wishing to cross-examine the witness on that issue can demonstrate:
  - a. the proposed cross-examination differs to a significant degree from the cross-examination that has taken place; or
  - b. some new matter has arisen which, in fairness, should be put to the witness.
22. The procedure to be followed by any person seeking to place evidence before the public examination is set out in the Examination Conduct Guidelines.

#### **Conduct of the public examination – documents**

23. The Examination Conduct Guidelines set out the circumstances and procedure by which access will be given to documents prior to the commencement of the public examination.
24. Subject to the direction of the Commissioner, Counsel Assisting will determine which documents are tendered, and the time at which they will be tendered.
25. A copy of any document proposed to be put to a witness in cross-examination must be provided to Counsel Assisting as soon as possible after a decision is made to use the document for such a purpose. In all cases, the document must be provided to Counsel Assisting prior to the commencement of the cross-examination.
26. Any person wishing to have a document placed before the public examination must notify the Commission by providing a copy of the document. Commission staff may require the production of other documents. Counsel Assisting will decide whether or not to tender any document. An application may be made directly to the Commissioner to tender a document only after the above procedure has been completed, and Counsel Assisting has refused to tender the document.

#### **Suppression orders**

27. Suppression orders may be made relating to names and identifying details of persons who have a legitimate need for protection.
28. Parties granted confidential electronic access to documents should notify the Commission lawyer with carriage of the matter of any application for a suppression order in relation to any document or part of a document. Such notification is to be in writing and must be made as soon as possible. The application should clearly identify the material sought to be suppressed and the public interest grounds on which the material should be suppressed.

29. The Commissioner will determine whether or not to hear oral submissions in support of such written applications.
30. Those making such written applications for suppression orders will be advised once the applications have been determined.

#### **Publication of, and access to, evidence**

31. In respect of all evidence, oral and documentary, the following ruling will apply until vacated either generally or in respect of particular evidence:
  - a. the testimony of any witness before the Commission may be published unless an order is made suppressing the publication of particular evidence;
  - b. any person (or the legal representative of that person) having leave to appear before the Commission will have access to any book, document or writing tendered in evidence for the purpose only of appearance before the Commission and subject to any other direction made by the Commission;
  - c. for the purpose of and to the extent necessary for the public reporting of the proceedings of the Commission, any authorised representative of a newspaper, magazine, radio station, online publication or television channel may inspect and take extracts from any book, document or writing tendered in evidence only after it has been notified as available for inspection by Counsel Assisting, subject to the conditions that:
    - i. it not be used or permitted to be used for any purpose other than the public reporting of the proceedings of the Commission; and
    - ii. any part of the contents thereof indicated by Counsel Assisting as unsuitable for publication must not be published without the leave of the Commission. Such leave can be sought, for example, if there is a restriction which is believed to obstruct proper reporting of any matter of significance. Any application for leave should be made in writing, in the first instance, to the Senior Director Legal of the Commission.

#### **Submissions**

32. Unless otherwise ordered, oral submissions will not be allowed at the conclusion of the evidence, but orders will be made for the making of written submissions. The Commission may limit the particular topics or issues which may be addressed and impose time or page limits on submissions. Ordinarily, orders will be made requiring Counsel Assisting to provide written submissions within 14 days of the close of evidence and all other parties to provide their written submissions 14 days thereafter.
33. In accordance with Commission practice, a suppression order under s 154 of the Act will usually be made in relation to all written submissions. Ancillary orders may be made to permit publication of certain submissions to specified parties to ensure procedural fairness.

**Commission Reports**

34. In many cases the most convenient way for the Commission to discharge its procedural fairness obligations is to prepare a draft report and provide the draft report to interested parties for comment. Such cases may arise where the issues are relatively clear and the facts are of a short compass.

**Liaison with the Commission**

35. Any contact with the Commission made necessary by these directions, or other enquiries in respect of the conduct of the public examination, should be made through the Commission lawyer with carriage of the relevant investigation to which the public examination relates.

The Hon Michael F Adams QC  
Acting Commissioner  
ACT Integrity Commission