This should be read in conjunction with the associated ‘Principles’ document. The two documents are designed to assist departments to work together and apply a consistent approach to Inquiries and Reviews.

1. Initiation

A department becomes aware of an Inquiry/Review submission process and determines whether this process applies.

Submission requests may come in the form of a formal invitation to the Premier, a Minister, a department, or a referral from the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC). Departments may also become aware of an Inquiry or a Review through indirect or informal means, or through a general call for submissions. DPAC also monitors a number of websites for new Inquiries and Reviews.

To enable appropriate whole-of-government coordination of the inquiries process, all departments should advise DPAC of any Inquiries or Reviews as soon as they become aware of them by emailing inquiries@dpac.tas.gov.au. They will be added to the Inquiries Register maintained by DPAC.

When this process does not apply

Under some circumstances it can be appropriate for departments to respond to requests at an official or departmental level including:

- reporting on operational matters;
- discharging statutory reporting obligations;
- responding to requests for comment on draft documents or on matters of a technical nature; or
- an exemption has been granted by the Premier on advice from DPAC, in consultation with Treasury.

Where this is the case, it should be made clear that the submission is made by the relevant department or statutory officer and does not necessarily represent the views of the Tasmanian Government.

2. Assessment

Initiating department, in consultation with other relevant departments, assesses whether a submission is necessary.

See associated ‘Principles’ document on how to determine whether a submission is necessary.

Although sometimes the assessment process may be led by a line agency, it will most often be coordinated by DPAC, which will seek input from relevant departments. The principles should be discussed by officials and a decision made as soon as possible on whether a submission will be prepared.
If no submission will be made
If a decision is made not to make a submission, DPAC will advise the Premier’s Office via the fortnightly Inquiries Register (or separately if timeframes are short). DPAC will work with relevant departments if any additional information or correspondence is required.
Departments are responsible for advising portfolio Ministers as they see fit.

3. Allocation

Lead responsibility for preparing a submission is allocated by negotiation.

The departments involved in assessment should negotiate ongoing lead responsibility for the submission, taking into account issues such as expertise, portfolio responsibility, and capacity.

Subject to negotiation, if an Inquiry or a Review is primarily within the scope of one department’s operations, that department will generally lead the preparation of a submission and consult other departments as necessary. If an Inquiry or a Review has significant implications across multiple departments, DPAC (or Treasury) may be the appropriate lead.

4. Advice

DPAC advises Premier’s Office

DPAC will advise the Premier’s Office that a submission is being prepared, usually via the fortnightly Inquiries Register (or separately if timeframes are short). DPAC will work with relevant departments if any additional information or correspondence is required.

Although DPAC should always be involved to some degree in the initiation, assessment or allocation steps, if it has not been involved then departments will need to advise DPAC at this stage that a submission is being prepared so the Premier’s Office can be informed.
Departments are responsible for advising portfolio Ministers as they see fit.

5. Preparation of submission

Lead department prepares submission

The lead department must consult with all relevant departments and coordinate a whole-of-government response. DPAC and the Department of Treasury and Finance (Treasury) must be consulted in every instance.

If a department is providing material to another department for inclusion in a whole of government submission, and that material contains a commitment to significant new policy positions, it should ensure that material is cleared by its Minister prior to providing it to the lead department. If the material is based on existing policy or factual information, Head of Agency clearance may be sufficient.
### 6. Cabinet Clearance

**Submissions should be approved by Cabinet prior to lodgement**

A short Cabinet Minute should be prepared by the lead department, explaining why a submission is being made, summarising key aspects of the submission, and requesting Cabinet’s endorsement of the submission for the Premier or responsible Minister to sign and submit. Guidelines to support departments in preparing these Minutes will be available from DPAC.

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**Exemption to Cabinet consideration**

The need for Cabinet clearance is subject to a materiality test and risk assessment, as Cabinet consideration will not be possible or appropriate in all circumstances. The lead department should advise DPAC and Treasury at the earliest opportunity if any of the following exemptions are expected to apply:

- there are no significant cross-portfolio issues;
- the submission reflects existing Government policy that has previously been approved by Cabinet in some form;
- the submission contains factual information only; or
- the timeframe allowed for submissions is too tight for Cabinet consideration to occur.

Departments must make all reasonable efforts to allow Cabinet consideration to occur, including seeking approval for urgent Cabinet consideration. Whether the timeframe allows will also depend on the complexity of the drafting task and the time available to prepare each submission so there is no ‘rule’ as to when this will be the case.

Where time does not permit a significant submission to be considered in advance, senior officials should consider whether Cabinet should be briefed after it has been lodged.

Senior officials should use their judgment when considering these exemptions and may wish to consult relevant Ministers or other Heads of Agencies.

Where these exemptions do not appear to apply but the submission is considered insufficient to justify Cabinet consideration, or in circumstances where a submission provides factual information only, the lead department should reconsider:

- whether it in fact falls within the scope of these principles and process (‘Definition and Coverage’ in the Principles document); and
- if there is value for the Tasmanian Government in making a submission.

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### 7. Submission

**Approved submission is signed and submitted**

The Premier or appropriate Minister (as agreed by Cabinet or otherwise determined) formally sends the submission to the relevant organisation.

A copy of the final submission and any cover letter is provided to DPAC for information.