



Parliament of the Republic of Fiji

STANDING COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS

There are three types of Committees in Parliament and these are the Standing Committees, Select Committees and Special Committees.

There are six Standing Committees and their respective mandates are as follows-

- (a) **Standing Committee on Economic Affairs** – including matters related to economic development, finance, banking and taxation;
- (b) **Standing Committee on Social Affairs** – including matters related to health, education, social services, labour, culture and media;
- (c) **Standing Committee on Natural Resources** – including matters related to forestry, agriculture, mining, environment, fisheries, water and marine services;
- (d) **Standing Committee on Public Accounts** – including examining the accounts of the Government in respect of each financial year and reports of the Auditor-General, and for any other matter relating to the expenditures of the Government or any related body or activity (whether directly or indirectly) that the Committee sees fit to review;
- (e) **Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence** – including matters related to Fiji's relations with other countries, development aid, foreign direct investment, oversight of the military and relations with multi-lateral organisations; and
- (f) **Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights** – including matters related to crime, civil rights, courts and their administration, the Constitution, policing and human rights.

Functions of Standing Committees:

The Standing Committee consists of small groups of Members from both the Government and Opposition. Their functions are as follows -

1. examine each Bill referred to the committee by Parliament, and make amendments to the Bills, to the extent agreed by the Committee;
2. examine any subordinate legislation tabled in Parliament within its category of affairs;
3. scrutinise the government departments with responsibility within the Committee's subject area;
4. consider petitions and papers;
5. review international treaties and conventions ratified by the Government and monitor their implementation; and
6. perform any other functions and duties assigned by Parliament.

How a Standing Committee carries out its duties?

1. Committee meetings are usually held in the Committee meeting rooms at Parliament House, Suva, unless the Committee is undertaking public consultations/hearing, site visit or field trip.
2. The Chair of the Committee is responsible for proposing meeting arrangements. This is done as soon as the Committee receives Bills, Annual Reports, Petitions, Treaties and Audit Reports.
3. The frequency and timing of meetings depends on a Committee's workload. Business may only be transacted at a Committee meeting when there is a quorum.
4. During the course of an inquiry, a Committee will compile a list of relevant Government departments, local agencies, non-government organisations and other stakeholders to be contacted and invited to make submissions or attend a public hearing or site visit on the subject matter. Public hearing is advertised in the Media.
5. Committees hold public hearings to obtain evidence from key witnesses which may include key stakeholders and experts on an inquiry's subject matter.
6. Committee meetings are usually open to the public and media unless its a matter of National Security, Third party confidential information, personnel or human resources or deliberations and discussions conducted in the development and finalisation of Committee recommendations and reports.
7. Committee has the power to issue a formal summons for documents or witnesses.
8. A Committee may take evidence by electronic means, such as audio or video links which provides evidence for what is needed in the inquiry.
9. A question put to a resolution at a Committee meeting must be determined by a majority of votes of the members present.
10. A Committee must report back to Parliament on a Bill referred to the Committee not later than 30 days after the referral unless Parliament resolved otherwise or extends.
11. A Committee may report back to Parliament on other matters as soon as it has completed its considerations and deliberations.

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