

Submitting a Remit to the TESOLANZ AGM

1. Constitution

There are two clauses in the Constitution relevant to submitting a remit.

Annual General Meeting

c] The business of the annual general meeting shall be:

- v. To discuss business of which notice shall have been given to the National Secretary at least four weeks before the meeting and distributed by the National Secretary to all members at least two weeks before the meeting*

Voting at Annual General Meetings and Special General Meetings of TESOLANZ Incorporated

- i. Resolutions may be proposed by any member either prior to or at any annual general meeting or special general meeting and shall be seconded by another member before being put to the vote.*

These clauses mean that any member or branch can send in a remit. The remit must be received by the Secretary (secretary@tesolanz.org.nz) no later than 4 weeks before the AGM so that it can be circulated and added to AGM business, but the earlier the better. Clause (i) above also allows remits from the floor, but the lack of time to discuss and understand them means that they are more likely to be rejected or at least delayed.

Changes to the Constitution

There is a separate and more rigorous set of rules relating to constitutional changes. You should consult the Constitution (<https://www.tesolanz.org.nz/about/> and scroll down) if you want to make constitutional change.

2. What is a remit?

A remit is a proposal that TESOLANZ (usually, the Executive on behalf of TESOLANZ) must do something. This means that the action must be within TESOLANZ's power. So,

That TESOLANZ strongly urge the Ministry to Education to ... is within our power, but

That the Ministry of Education should ... is clearly not.

“Doing something” can take various forms, starting with simply agreeing with or supporting a position. So the proposal *That TESOLANZ support the efforts of to*” would simply result in a supportive letter from the Executive. If you are hoping for something more practical or specific, then this needs to be specified in the remit, such as *offer financial support ...* , or *arrange for volunteers to ...*

Actions resulting from a remit could be internal or external. They could ask for changes to internal TESOLANZ practices, organisation, forming a working party, conducting a survey (but see above if this requires a change to the Constitution). External actions could include *send a representative to ... , make representations to ... , affiliate with ...* and so on.

3. Constructing a Remit

As with any written communication, think of your AUDIENCE (other TESOLANZ members) and PURPOSE (what do you hope they will do?) So your remit should not be just an expression of concern but should specify your desired outcome.

Background Information

Provide supporting information for those who want to read it in detail, but it's very helpful to have an "abstract" of a couple of sentences for a quick overview. Assume that readers know nothing of the issue.

Work back from the outcome

The AGM is over and the Executive are reading their next agenda. What do you want them to do? Any remit beginning *That TESOLANZ (do something)* is a directive for the Executive to take action. Consider what it is in the power of the Executive to do in order to work towards your outcome. They could

- Express concern about ...
- Ask to meet someone / some organisation about ...
- Establish an expert group to comment on ...
- Call on an organisation to do something

and so on. So your remit should clearly and simply express the course of action you want taken.

4. Pitfalls

The most common problems for remits are complex background explanations, poor expression, or insufficient time for delegates to examine what is being proposed.

Sometimes delegates attending the AGM have responded that they don't understand the remit and so it has been referred back to the proposing branch for explanation. This then wastes months for this process to complete.

The constitutional requirement of two weeks for distribution is an absolute minimum but does not allow time for branches to understand a complex proposal. The proposer should circulate the remit throughout branches as early as possible to get feedback and support.

In the end, it is the branch delegates who must vote on the remit, and they will not support something they do not understand, or which they feel might be controversial within their branch.