

# Elections – frequently asked questions

## Making Public Comment

I'm an NT Government employee, how does the election affect me as an employee?

- Can I make public comments after work hours?
- What if I'm required to make public comment in my NTPS position?
- What do I do if I get a call from my Minister's office?
- What do I do if I get a call at work from the opposition or candidates?
- Do these procedures only apply when elections are on?

### Can I make public comments after work hours?

Generally, no matter what jurisdiction or level of election, NTPS employees have the same rights of free speech and independence in the conduct of their private affairs as every other member of the public. However, they also have a duty not to compromise their employer or their Minister by public criticism of, or comment on, Government policy. This is particularly important for those in senior positions or who are members of a profession that has significant public influence.

Whether you are at work or after hours, you are still covered by the Code of Conduct. For this reason, it is important to distinguish your comments as a private citizen from your employment within the NTPS.

It may also be a breach of discipline if you are making public comment through the radio, TV, or social media where you haven't distinguished between your role as a NTPS employee and your freedom to make comment as a private citizen. For example, if you conduct interviews in a NTPS uniform or if your social media account states that you are employed with the NTPS, any comments you make may be construed as comments made in your role as an NTPS employee, rather than as a private citizen.

### What if I'm required to make public comment in my NTPS position?

Within agencies, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) may authorise certain employees to respond to requests from the media or members of the public about aspects of Government policy, or its implementation or administration by the agency. Official comment on behalf of the agency should be made only by those employees authorised to do so.

### What do I do if I get a call from my Minister's office?

If you get a call from your Minister's Office you should check your agency internal agency procedures and, in most instances, notify your CEO.

## What do I do if I get a call at work from the Opposition or candidates?

If you get a call from a member of the opposition or candidate, you should refer the request to your Minister or your CEO.

## Do these procedures only apply when elections are on?

No, these procedures should be followed at all times.

## Where do I go for further information?

You can obtain further information by:

- contacting your agency's HR area
- going to the webpage [NTPS Employees and Elections](#)
- going to the webpage [Code of Conduct](#)
- going to the webpage [Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993.](#)