



**Legislative Assembly  
Parliament of Victoria**

## **Fact Sheet B4**

### **Personal Explanations**

In some situations, a member can make a statement in the Chamber about an issue affecting them personally. This usually happens when someone questions the member's integrity, or the member wants to correct something they said earlier. A member must get the Speaker's approval to make a statement. Members cannot debate the statement.

Purpose of personal explanations

Getting the Speaker's approval

Making a statement in the Chamber

Statements about comments in the Legislative Council

### **Purpose of personal explanations**

Personal explanations are a chance for members to explain to the Legislative Assembly something which affects them personally. They are not an occasion for members to merely take issue with remarks about them.

Members make a statement to explain something publicly. Hansard records the statement.

Members use statements to:

- correct statements they have made in a debate, which they later realise are wrong
- apologise to the Assembly, for example for inappropriate comments they made in an earlier debate
- explain when the press misquotes what they said in the Chamber
- explain how another member misrepresented them in the Chamber.

### **Getting the Speaker's approval**

A member does not have an automatic right to make a statement. They need to get the Speaker's permission first. Only the member concerned can ask for permission to make a personal statement. One member cannot ask on another's behalf.

The Speaker checks the wording of the proposed statement. It must be brief, and only state facts. The Speaker will remove any arguments or commentary from the draft. The statement must not include attacks against other members, or raise new issues.

As the statement is about issues directly affecting a member, it must only cover personal issues. A member cannot use a statement to talk about matters relating to their party generally.

### **Making a statement in the Chamber**

Members can make a statement between debates, this is known as 'at a change of business'. The Speaker, Clerk and member discuss the timing, but it depends when there is a convenient change of business.

When the member makes the statement, they must only read the wording approved by the Speaker. If the member tries to change the wording, the Speaker can stop them from finishing the statement.

Other members must listen to the personal explanation silently, and not interject. Members cannot debate the statement.

### **Statements about comments in the Legislative Council**

Members are not allowed to comment on current or pending debates in the Legislative Council.

There is an exception, if the Speaker believes a member was seriously misrepresented during Council debates. The member may then try to make a statement to the Legislative Assembly, explaining or rejecting the comments.

The procedure is the same as above, but with one extra step. The member must get 'leave' (the Assembly's permission), as well as the Speaker's approval. If any member refuses permission, the member cannot make the statement.

Members cannot debate personal statements.

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#### **Fact Sheets**

The Legislative Assembly Procedure Office has produced a series of Fact Sheets that explain parliamentary procedure and terminology. All Fact Sheets are available on Parliament's website [www.parliament.vic.gov.au](http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au) or through the Procedure Office.

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