

## SESSIONAL ORDERS

Adopted by the House on 5 February 2019 and amended on 27 November 2019, 24 June 2021, 16 November 2021 and 8 February 2022.

### 1 Days and times of meeting

Unless otherwise ordered, the House will meet each Tuesday at 12.00 noon, and each Wednesday and Thursday at 9.30 am.

### 2 Interruption of business for adjournment

Standing Order 32 be suspended and the following to apply:

- (1) Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), the Speaker will interrupt the business before the House at:
  - (a) 7.00 pm each sitting Tuesday and Wednesday;
  - (b) 5.00 pm on any other sitting day.
- (2) If a division is taking place when the time for the interruption arises, the division will be completed and the result announced. If the division is on a closure motion, and the motion is agreed to, the question or questions then required to be put to close the issue before the House will also be dealt with. The Speaker will then interrupt business.
- (3) If the time for the interruption arises:
  - (a) at the same time as the completion time set by the government business program; or
  - (b) after the interruption for the completion time of the government business program, but before all business on the program has been dealt with —

all business on the government business program will be completed first. The Speaker will then interrupt business for the adjournment.
- (4) After the interruption:
  - (a) before a motion for the adjournment is proposed by the Speaker, a minister may move that the sitting be continued. That motion must be put immediately without amendment or debate. If it is agreed to, the House will resume debate at the point at which it had been interrupted; or
  - (b) if a motion is not moved, the Speaker will immediately propose the question 'That the House now adjourns'. Any business under discussion and any other business not concluded at the time of the adjournment will be listed on the notice paper for the next sitting day. Any member speaking at the time of the interruption may, when debate resumes, continue his or her speech.

### 3 Order of business

- (1) So much of Standing Orders 36, 38, 39, 41 and 55 be suspended so as to enable the following order of business on:

#### **Tuesdays**

Formal business

Statements by members

Government business

Question time (2.00 pm)

Government business *continued*

General business

#### **Wednesdays**

Formal business

Disallowance motions

Statements by members

Statements on parliamentary committee reports

Government business

Question time (2.00 pm)

Government business *continued*

Matter of public importance or grievance debate (4.00 pm)

Government business *continued*

General business

- (2) So much of Standing Orders 38 and 39 be suspended so as to enable:
- (a) at 4.00 pm on Wednesday, unless a division is taking place, the Chair interrupts the business before the House and the bells are then rung for one minute;
  - (b) if a division is taking place at 4.00 pm:
    - (i) it will be completed without interruption and result announced;
    - (ii) if the division is on a closure motion, and the motion is agreed to, the question or questions then required to be put to close the issue before the House will also be dealt with;
    - (iii) business is then interrupted following the procedure in sub-paragraph (a);
  - (c) the Chair announces the grievance debate or matter of public importance, whichever the case may be;
  - (d) any business under discussion and not completed at the interruption will be resumed immediately at the end of the grievance debate or matter of public importance, whichever the case may be, and any member speaking at the time of the interruption may then continue his or her speech.
- (3) In Standing Order 39(9) for 'statements on parliamentary committee reports under SO 41' read 'government business'.

#### **4 Answers to questions on notice**

A reply to a question on notice delivered to the Clerk under Standing Order 54(3) must be submitted within 30 days.

#### **5 Who may ask oral questions without notice**

Only non-government members may ask questions without notice under Standing Order 55.

#### **6 Supplementary questions without notice**

- (1) At the conclusion of each answer to an oral question without notice, the questioning member may ask the responding minister a supplementary question to elucidate or clarify the answer.
- (2) Supplementary questions must actually and accurately relate to the original question, must relate to or arise from the answer and must not be a separate question on the same topic.

#### **7 Ministers' statements**

After each oral question without notice and any related supplementary questions, any minister may seek the call to make a statement of up to two minutes.

#### **8 Constituency questions**

- (1) At the conclusion of oral questions without notice and ministers' statements, five government members and five non-government members may ask one oral question each to ministers relating to constituency matters.
- (2) Replies to constituency questions must be given in writing within 30 days by delivering a reply to the Clerk. The Clerk must give the response to the member who asked the question and electronically publish the response.

#### **9 Duration of question time**

Standing Order 55(2) is suspended and the following to apply:

Question time will last until five oral questions and related supplementary questions have been answered, up to five ministers' statements have been made and up to ten constituency questions have been asked and where a question is ruled out of order it is, for the purposes of this sessional order, deemed to have been answered.

#### **10 Time limits on answers and questions**

- (1) The time limit for each oral question, supplementary question and constituency question is one minute.
- (2) The time limit for the answer to each oral question is three minutes, and for the answer to each supplementary question is one minute.

## **11 Content of answers**

Standing Order 58(1)(a) is suspended and all answers to questions must be direct, factual, succinct and relevant.

## **12 Chair ordering member to withdraw — application during oral questions without notice and ministers' statements**

Where:

- (1) a member is ordered to withdraw from the House under Standing Order 124 during oral questions without notice or ministers' statements; and
- (2) the time for oral questions without notice and ministers' statements ends before the end of the suspension period —

the member may return to the Chamber after the time for oral questions without notice and ministers' statements but must serve the remainder of their suspension during the next question time, subject to Standing Order 124(2).

## **13 Time limit for lead speakers**

For the purposes of Standing Order 131, and subject to any agreement to the contrary, additional time provided for the lead speaker of any other party does not apply where such a party has advised the Speaker that it is in a coalition arrangement with another party.

## **14 Notices of motion**

Standing Orders 140(1) and 141 are suspended and the following to apply:

- (1) A member may only move a motion to discuss a subject if he or she has given notice of that motion on a previous sitting day.
- (2) Copies of all verbal notices must be provided to the Clerks at the table before notices are called on by the Speaker.
- (3) Copies of all written notices must be provided to the Clerks at the table before the conclusion of formal business.
- (4) All notices given by ministers must be verbal.
- (5) Verbal notices must be read to the House. They can only be given before the House proceeds to the business of the day as set out in the notice paper.
- (6) All notices, except notices given under paragraph (7) given by members who are not ministers, must be given in writing. Members may give notice by lodging a copy with the Clerks in accordance with paragraph (3).
- (7) A motion by a member expressing no confidence in the Premier and ministers, in the terms set out in s 8A of the *Constitution Act 1975*, may only be given verbally.

- (8) The Clerk must notify the Speaker of a notice of a motion by a member to disallow a statutory rule to which Standing Order 151 applies, and the Speaker will report details to the House at the first convenient opportunity.

## **15 Procedure for a division**

Standing Order 164(1) is suspended and the following to apply:

When a division is requested, the Clerk will ring the bells for four minutes as indicated by the timer.

## **16 Redactions**

The Standing Orders Committee (the Committee) is empowered to authorise redactions from a document published by the House, Assembly Hansard, official broadcast footage of the Assembly Chamber or an Assembly Committee, a petition, or a document tabled under Standing Order 171 on safety or security grounds using the following process:

- (1) A person, including a member of Parliament, may write to the Clerk and request the redaction including details of the nature of the safety or security risk and how redaction would reduce or remove this risk. The Clerk will then forward that request to the Committee as soon as practicable.
- (2) If the Committee is satisfied there is a safety or security risk and the redaction is warranted, the Committee may approve the request. All members present at the meeting must unanimously agree for the Committee's decision to be effective.
- (3) The Clerk will inform the person who made the request of the Committee's decision. Where the Committee unanimously approves the redaction, the Clerk must take all necessary steps to give effect to the Committee's decision.
- (4) A redaction does not affect the protections provided by ss 73, 74 or 74AA of the *Constitution Act 1975*.
- (5) The Clerk must include a statement of the number of redactions made and the type of document they were redacted from, excluding any identifying information, in the annual report of the Department of the Legislative Assembly.
- (6) The Committee may issue guidelines on the operation of this sessional order.

## **17 Electronic petitions**

- (1) A person (the sponsoring petitioner) may lodge a request to start an electronic petition (e-petition) with the Clerk for publication on the Parliament's website.
- (2) Standing Orders 45 to 52 apply except in relation to the requirement for a petitioner's signature.
- (3) The sponsoring petitioner must provide the following information to the Clerk:
  - (a) the issue (maximum 200 words) and action requested (maximum 120 words);

- (b) their full name and address; and
  - (c) the name of the member sponsoring the e-petition.
- (4) Before the e-petition is published, the Clerk will review the wording of the e-petition to ensure it conforms with standing orders and confirm that the sponsoring member has agreed to sponsor the e-petition.
- (5) The sponsoring member must nominate a period (the posted period) that the e-petition will be available to sign on the Parliament's website and:
- (a) the posted period must be a minimum of one week and a maximum of six months from the date of publication;
  - (b) if the Assembly is due to expire under s 28(2) of the *Constitution Act 1975* within six months from the date of publication of an e-petition, the Clerk will determine the maximum posted period;
  - (c) the sponsoring member may request the Clerk to change the posted period before it ends, provided the maximum period is not exceeded.
- (6) A member must not sign an e-petition they have sponsored.
- (7) Once published, an e-petition cannot be altered but the sponsoring member may request the Clerk withdraw it.
- (8) Residents of Victoria may become signatories to an e-petition by electronically providing their name, address and signifying their intention to join the e-petition.
- (9) The Clerk will table the e-petition on the next sitting day after the posted period has ended.
- (10) E-petitions about the same issue and requesting the same action are not allowed simultaneously. However, once an e-petition has been tabled, a new e-petition can be started.

### **18 Motion to disallow a pandemic order and requirement for a joint sitting**

- (1) After a member has given notice of a motion to disallow in whole or in part a pandemic order or instrument in accordance with s 165AU of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, a minister must move a motion to hold a joint sitting to consider the disallowance motion.<sup>◇</sup> The minister must move the motion by the end of the next sitting day after notice of the disallowance motion is given.
- (2) A motion to hold a joint sitting can be moved without notice or leave at any break in business.
- (3) Debate on a motion to hold a joint sitting will last for a maximum of 30 minutes or until six members have spoken, whichever is the shorter.

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<sup>◇</sup> Under s 165AU of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, a joint sitting must be held within three months of a member giving notice of a disallowance motion.