

Chapter 6. Business and proceedings of the House

Chapter outline

This chapter sets out the House's order of business and describes arrangements for:

- general order of business
 - committee and delegation reports
 - private Members' business
 - government business
 - discussion of matter of public importance
 - suspension of orders, and
 - censure of or no confidence motion in the Government.
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General

[Sessional order—for superseded standing order see p.107]

34 Order of business

The order of business to be followed by the House is shown in figure 2.

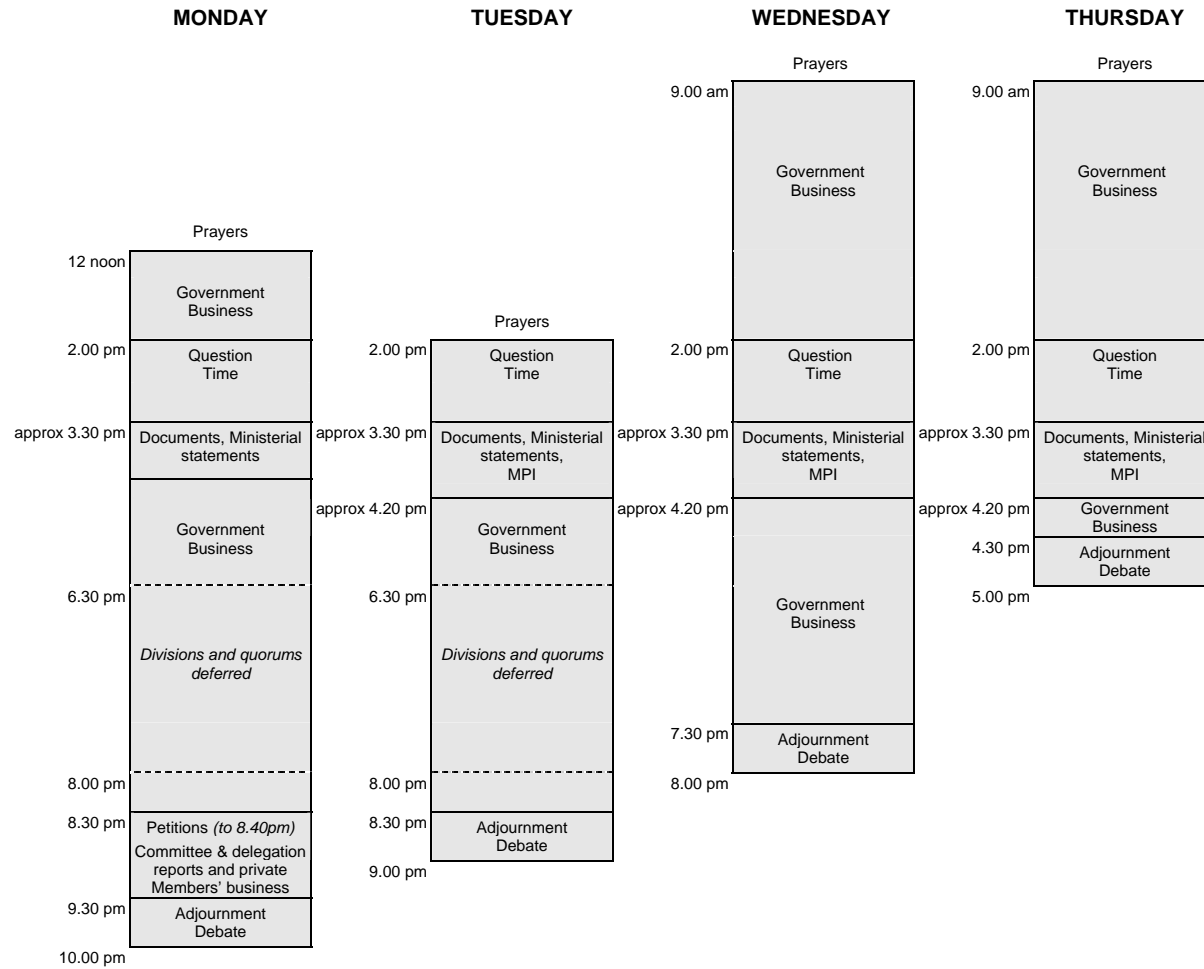
35 Priority of business

Government business shall have priority over committee and delegation reports and private Members' business except on Mondays as provided by *standing orders 34 (order of business) and 192 (Main Committee's order of business)*.

36 Notice Paper

Business before the House shall be published on the Notice Paper for each sitting, in accordance with standing and sessional orders.

Figure 2. House order of business



37 Orders of the day

- (a) The Notice Paper shall state the sequence in which orders of the day are called on.
- (b) An order may be postponed on motion moved without notice by the Member in charge of the order or, in his or her absence, by another Member he or she has asked.
- (c) After an order has been read, the Member in charge of the order may move, without notice, that the order be discharged.
- (d) If any orders of the day on the Notice Paper have not been called on before the adjournment of the House, they shall be listed on the Notice Paper for the next sitting.

38 Prayers

On taking the Chair at the beginning of each sitting, the Speaker shall read the following prayers:

Almighty God, we humbly beseech Thee to vouchsafe Thy blessing upon this Parliament. Direct and prosper our deliberations to the advancement of Thy glory, and the true welfare of the people of Australia.

Our Father, which art in Heaven: Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Committee and delegation reports

39 Presentation of reports

- (a) Members may present reports of committees or delegations:
 - (i) as recommended by the whips, during the period for committee and delegation reports on Mondays (*standing order 34*); or
 - (ii) at any time when other business is not before the House.
- (b) Members may make statements in relation to these reports:
 - (i) during the period for committee and delegation reports on Mondays in the House (*standing order 34*); the whips shall recommend time limits for statements, of not more than 10 minutes for each Member; or
 - (ii) at any other time, by leave of the House.

(c) The Member presenting a report may move without notice, a specific motion in relation to the report. Debate on the question shall be adjourned to a future day.

(d) If, on Mondays, the Speaker presents a report referred to in this standing order, the following steps are deemed to have occurred in respect of the report — a motion to take note of the report, debate on the motion to be adjourned to a later hour and the order of the day to be referred to the Main Committee for further consideration within any parameters adopted by the House on the recommendation of the whips.

40 Resumption of debate on reports

(a) After presentation of reports on Mondays proceedings may be resumed on motions in relation to committee and delegation reports moved on an earlier day.

(b) For debate in accordance with paragraph (a) the whips shall recommend:

- (i) the order in which motions are to be considered;
- (ii) time limits for the whole debate; and
- (iii) time limits for each Member speaking, of not more than 10 minutes.

(c) During the period on Mondays provided by *standing order 192*, proceedings may be resumed in the Main Committee on motions in relation to committee and delegation reports referred that day or on an earlier day.

Private Members' business

41 Private Members' business

(a) In the periods set for committee and delegation reports and private Members' business under *standing orders 34 and 192*, private Members' notices and orders of the day shall be considered in the order shown on the Notice Paper. When the time set by *standing orders 34 or 192* or recommended by the whips ends, the Speaker shall interrupt proceedings and put the question.

(b) If

- (i) the whips have recommended that consideration of a matter may continue on a future day;

then

- (ii) at the time set for interruption of the item of business or if debate concludes earlier, the Speaker shall interrupt proceedings and the matter shall be listed on the Notice Paper for the next sitting.

Private Members' bills—priority

- (c) The whips, in making recommendations to the House:
- (i) shall give priority to private Members' notices of intention to present bills over other notices and orders of the day; and
 - (ii) shall set the order in which the bills are to be presented.

First reading

(d) When each notice is called on by the Clerk, the Member in whose name the notice stands may present the bill, together with an explanatory memorandum (if available), and may speak to the bill for no longer than 5 minutes. The bill shall be then read a first time and the motion for the second reading shall be set down on the Notice Paper for the next sitting.

(e) If, on Mondays, the Speaker presents a bill for which notice has been given by a private Member, the first reading of the bill is deemed to stand referred to the Main Committee. When the bill is called on in the Main Committee by the Clerk, the Member sponsoring the bill may present an explanatory memorandum (if available), and may speak to the bill for no longer than 5 minutes. The bill shall be then read a first time and the motion for the second reading shall be set down on the Notice Paper for the next sitting.

Second reading

(f) If the motion for the second reading is agreed to by the House, further consideration of the bill shall be accorded priority over other private Members' business and the whips may recommend times for consideration of the remaining stages.

Alternation of notices

(g) Subject to paragraph (c)(i), the whips shall provide for the consideration of private Members' notices to alternate between those of government and non-government Members.

Private Members' motions

(h) If, on Mondays, the Speaker presents a copy of the terms of a motion for which notice has been given by a private Member, the following steps are deemed to have occurred — the motion is deemed to have been moved and debate on the motion adjourned to a later hour and the order of the day referred to the Main Committee for further consideration in accordance with any parameters adopted by the House on the recommendation of the whips.

41A Selection of private Members' and committee business

(a) For the period for committee and delegation reports and private Members' business on Mondays, the whips shall recommend the order of consideration of the matters, the times allotted for debate on each

item and for each Member speaking, and the matters to be considered in the Main Committee.

(b) The Chief Government Whip shall report the recommendations of the whips to the House and shall move without notice the motion—

That the House adopt the report.

(c) The Chief Government Whip must report to the House under paragraph (b) in time for the report to be adopted by the House and published on the Notice Paper of the sitting Thursday before the Monday being considered. The report shall be published in Hansard.

(d) The House may grant leave for the order of consideration of the matters, and the times allotted for debate on each item and for each Member speaking, set by the House to be varied.

42 Removal of business

The Clerk shall remove from the Notice Paper items of private Members' business and orders of the day relating to committee and delegation reports which have not been called on for eight consecutive sitting Mondays.

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Government business

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45 Order of government business

The Leader of the House may arrange the order of notices and orders of the day for government business on the Notice Paper as he or she thinks fit.

Other business

46 Discussion of definite matter of public importance

(a) On Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays a Member may propose a definite matter of public importance be put to the House for discussion.

(b) The Member must give a written statement of the matter to be discussed to the Speaker by 12 noon. If the Speaker decides that it is in order, the Speaker shall read the statement to the House at the time provided in *standing order 34 (order of business)*.

(c) The proposed discussion must be supported by eight Members, including the proposer, standing in their places. The Speaker shall then call on the Member who proposed the matter to speak first.

(d) If more than one matter is received for the same day, the Speaker shall select the matter to be read to the House that day.

(e) At any time during the discussion, any Member may move—

That the business of the day be called on.

This question shall be put immediately and decided without amendment or debate. If agreed to, the business of the day shall be proceeded with immediately.

(f) A motion to adjourn the discussion or to move a closure of the question is not in order.

47 Motions for suspension of orders

(a) A Member may move, with or without notice, the suspension of any standing or other order of the House.

(b) If a suspension motion is moved on notice, it shall appear on the Notice Paper and may be carried by a majority of votes.

(c) If a suspension motion is moved without notice it:

(i) must be relevant to any business under discussion and seconded; and

(ii) can be carried only by an absolute majority of Members.

(d) Any suspension of orders shall be limited to the particular purpose of the suspension.

48 Censure of or no confidence in the Government

A motion on notice or an amendment of a motion which expresses censure of or no confidence in the Government shall have priority of all other business until it is disposed of by the House, if it is accepted by a Minister as a motion or amendment of censure or no confidence.

49 Motion of condolence or thanks

As a courtesy, the House will ordinarily grant precedence to a motion moved without notice for a motion of condolence or thanks of the House.

50 Motion of Minister to discuss special matter

(a) At any time when other business is not before the House a Minister may state to the House a proposal to discuss a matter of special interest in preference to moving a specific motion.

(b) The Minister may first move a motion specifying the time to be allotted to the debate. The Minister must then move—

That [stating subject matter] be considered by the House.

(c) At the end of the time allotted to the debate, a Minister may withdraw the motion, without leave.