

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES**

*Thirty-fifth Report — “Legislative Council Prayer” — Motion*

Resumed from 18 June on the following motion moved by Hon Adele Farina —

That recommendation 1 contained in the thirty-fifth report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges, “Legislative Council Prayer”, be agreed to.

**HON SALLY TALBOT (South West)** [12.50 pm]: On behalf of the opposition I indicate that we will support this motion and the change to the Legislative Council prayer. As honourable members know, we start every day of our proceedings with two prayers: the prayer that we are proposing to amend and the Lord’s Prayer. This motion refers to only that first prayer. When I first put forward my proposition that the gendered references in the parliamentary prayer should be removed—that is, the references to “man” and “men”—I looked to history and found that previous changes to the prayer have been devised by a specially constituted committee, the liturgy committee, and have generally taken a couple of decades to produce something that bore more of a resemblance to a camel than to a horse, so I abandoned that idea. I took the following steps: first, I wrote to the President; and, second, I made a submission to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges review of the Legislative Council’s standing orders. I then moved motions in the Parliament. I say “motions”, plural, because my first motion lapsed with the proroguing of Parliament so I had to re-move it. Finally, after some considerable debate on that motion, I moved, with the support of Hon Peter Collier, Leader of the House, that that motion be referred back to the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges. It is that committee’s recommendation that the opposition supports today—that is, a motion that gender inclusive language be substituted for the words of the current prayer.

The gender inclusive version of the prayer we adopt today is perhaps not the most elegant solution, but is certainly in line with contemporary grammatical practice and the expectation that language should not be exclusive or inappropriately gendered. I think my decision not to reconvene the liturgy committee was the right one and it has taken only seven years and five months from the time I first raised this matter to get an outcome that will be welcome by all those in our community who understand how much these things matter, and that includes everyone in this Parliament.

In supporting this motion I convey my thanks to Hon Sue Ellery and Hon Peter Collier. As leaders of opposition and government business in this place, they have supported the passage of this motion and this change. I must also thank every member of the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges, as well as members of my party who have walked this somewhat tortuous road with me in lock step.

I also want to thank members of the Christian religious community in Western Australia who have supported this move to put gender inclusive language into the prayer. They are Maria Parkinson from the Catholic Women’s League of Western Australia; Rosemary Hudson Miller from the Uniting Church in Australia; and the Right Reverend Kay Goldsworthy, the Assistant Bishop of Perth.

Madam Deputy President, this may be a small step for Parliament but it is a large step, laden with significance and symbolism for girls and women in WA. On behalf of the WA Labor opposition, I support the motion.

Question put and passed.