



PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY MEETING TIMES

Report No. 8

2004

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PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY MEETING TIMES

Report No. 8

Presented by:
Mrs Dianne Guise, Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly
on 17 June 2004

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COMMITTEE'S FUNCTIONS, POWERS AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Legislative Assembly Standing Order No. 282 provides the following functions, powers and terms of reference to the Procedure and Privileges Committee -

Procedure and Privileges Committee

282. (1) A Procedure and Privileges Committee will be appointed at the beginning of each session to —

- (a) examine and report on the procedures of the Assembly; and
- (b) examine and report on issues of privilege; and
- (c) wherever necessary, confer with a similar committee of the Council.

(2) The Procedure and Privileges Committee will have the powers of a select committee.

(3) Membership of the committee will consist of the Speaker and four other members as the Assembly appoints.

(4) Standing Order 278 will apply except that where possible any report of the committee will be presented by the Deputy Speaker.

(5) When consideration of a report from the committee is set down as an order of the day it will be considered using the consideration in detail procedure.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation No. 1.

That Standing Order No. 19 be amended by deleting “9.00 a.m.” and substituting the following -

“10.00 a.m.”.

The Standing Order will now read -

Days and times of meetings

19. Unless otherwise ordered, the Assembly will meet for business on each Tuesday at 2.00 p.m., each Wednesday at 12 noon and each Thursday at 10.00 a.m.

MINISTERIAL RESPONSE

In accordance with Standing Order 277, the Procedure and Privileges Committee directs the Leader of the House to report to the Legislative Assembly as to the action, if any, proposed to be taken by the Government with respect to the recommendation of the Committee.

INTRODUCTION

Following the release of the proposed new Legislative Council sitting times (which commenced from 20 March 2003), your Committee on 26 February 2003 agreed to review possible options for Legislative Assembly's sitting hours.

After the Committee prepared several options for sitting arrangements, various members of the Committee canvassed their respective parties for feedback. Following further discussion, your Committee decided that further consideration of the matter should be postponed until the new Legislative Council sitting hours had been trialled for a least 6 months.

The matter was again placed on your Committee's agenda after the new Legislative Council meeting times had been in operation for 12 months. Your Committee is aware of anecdotal evidence that the new meeting times had not significantly altered business in the Legislative Council such that the Legislative Assembly should follow suit. Your Committee was also concerned that, if the Legislative Assembly were to adopt similar meeting times, there would be significant additional pressure placed on Legislative Assembly members when undertaking their electorate responsibilities. Your Committee recognises that members who represent Legislative Assembly electorates have a far higher profile with the general public than Legislative Council members who jointly represent multiple member regions. While this places more pressure upon Legislative Assembly members' time, it would be further exacerbated if the number of sitting days in any week for the Legislative Assembly were increased.

Furthermore, anecdotal evidence also indicates the new Legislative Council times were proving to be problematic for the Executive members of that House. While ultimately all members are required to first give their attendance to the House, your Committee acknowledges that Assembly members with Executive responsibilities would find it more difficult to attend to their ministerial duties and electorate responsibilities under greatly altered arrangements.

Your Committee concludes that it is impractical to adopt meeting times for the Legislative Assembly similar to those of the Legislative Council.

1.1. Thursday meetings commencement time

However, your Committee believes a minor adjustment could be made to the commencement time for sittings on Thursdays. By adjusting the commencement time to 10.00 a.m. members with metropolitan electorates will be able to briefly visit their electorate offices and conduct other meetings prior to the House meeting on Thursdays.

Your Committee therefore proposes that an amendment be made to Standing Order 19 by amending the commencement time for Thursdays from 9.00am to 10.00am.

Recommendation No. 1.

That Standing Order No. 19 be amended by deleting “9.00 a.m.” and substituting the following -

“10.00 a.m.”.

The Standing Order will now read -

Days and times of meetings

19. Unless otherwise ordered, the Assembly will meet for business on each Tuesday at 2.00 p.m., each Wednesday at 12 noon and each Thursday at 10.00 a.m.

1.2. Thursday meetings adjournment time

Your Committee also reviewed the adjournment times for Thursday meetings of the Legislative Assembly and concluded that there were advantages in having a later adjournment time for Thursdays. It was acknowledged that members with country based electorates, who needed to travel by air or drive long distances, generally under current arrangements had access to pairs through their respective Whips that allows them to depart for their electorates at a reasonable time.

Your Committee acknowledges that at need, it is open for the Government through the Leader of the House, to extend the adjournment time on Thursdays by one hour, but indicates that the House should not adjourn later than 6.00 p.m.