



PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

Legislative Assembly

Standing Orders Committee

Inquiry into sitting hours and operation of the House

Interim Report

December 2015

Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1
58th Parliament



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This report is also available online at the Committee's website.

Report

1. On 6 August 2015, the Legislative Assembly referred a matter to the Standing Orders Committee including but not limited to:¹
 - (a) sitting hours and the operation of the House; and
 - (b) revising the standing orders to reflect the most recent changes to sessional orders including the removal of Dorothy Dixier questions, insertion of constituency questions and time limits.
2. The Committee is required to provide an interim report by 8 December 2015 and a final report by 30 June 2016.
3. The Committee has met on multiple occasions to consider the matters referred to it. The Committee has commenced the inquiry by considering the current sessional orders and which sessional orders can be incorporated to the standing orders.
4. The Committee believes the new sitting hours have improved a number of aspects of the operation of the House. They have provided benefits to members and staff by reducing the lateness of sittings without reducing overall debating time, and reducing health and safety risks related to fatigue. The Committee is still considering whether other adjustments should be made to the sitting hours and will make further comment in its final report.
5. Several sessional orders adopted for the 58th Parliament were also successfully used in previous Parliaments. These include incorporation of statements of compatibility and second reading speeches into Hansard and a 30 day time limit for responses to questions on notice. The Committee will make recommendations on sessional orders that could be incorporated into the standing orders in its final report.
6. The sessional orders have made significant changes to question time. Questions asked by government members have been removed and supplementary questions, ministers' statements and constituency questions have been introduced. Constituency questions have provided a further new opportunity for members to seek information about matters relating to their electorates. The Committee believes there may be opportunities to improve the operation of ministers' statements and constituency questions and will make further comment in its final report.
7. The Committee will make a final report to the House once it has completed its inquiry.

¹ Legislative Assembly, *Votes and Proceedings*, (2014-15), No 31, 6 August 2015, p 138.

Legislative Assembly Standing Orders Committee

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