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

General

34 Order of business

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

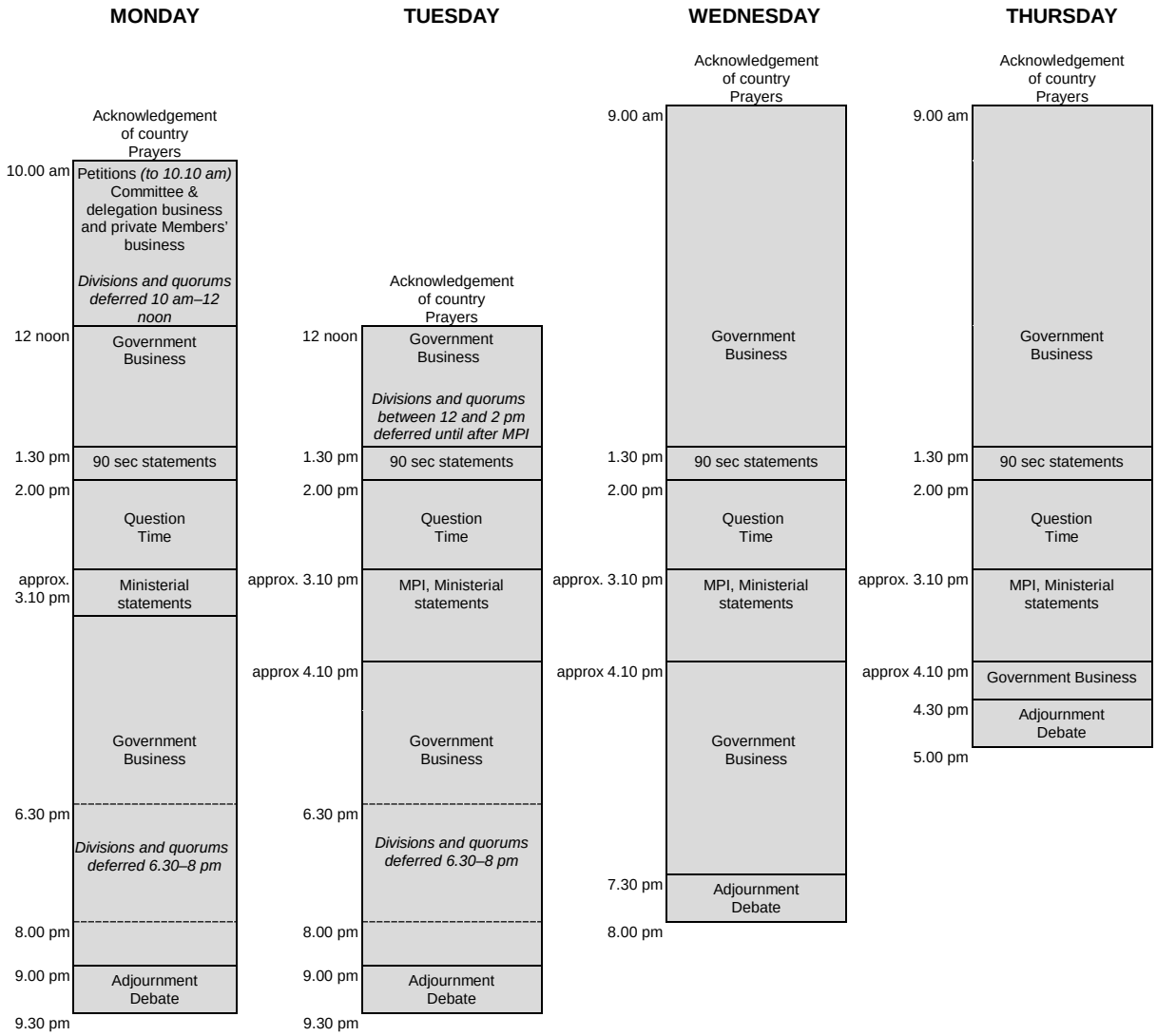
35 Priority of business

Government business shall have priority over committee and delegation business and private Members' business except on Mondays as provided by *standing orders 34 (order of business) and 192 (Federation Chamber'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 Acknowledgement of country and prayers

On taking the Chair at the beginning of each sitting, the Speaker shall make an acknowledgement of country in the following terms:

> *I acknowledge the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples who are the traditional custodians of the Canberra area and pay respect to the elders, past and present, of all Australia's Indigenous peoples.*

The Speaker shall then 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 business

39 Announcements concerning inquiries and presentation of reports

(a) The Chair or deputy Chair of a committee may make a statement to inform the House of matters relating to an inquiry during the periods for committee and delegation business on Mondays (*standing*

order 34). The Selection Committee shall recommend time limits for such statements.

(b) Members may present reports of committees or delegations:

(i) as determined by the Selection Committee, during the periods for committee and delegation business on Mondays in the House and Federation Chamber (*standing orders 34 and 192*); or

(ii) in the House at any time when other business is not before the House.

(c) Members may make statements in relation to these reports:

(i) during the periods for committee and delegation business on Mondays in the House and Federation Chamber *(standing orders 34 and 192)*; the Selection Committee shall determine time limits for statements, of not more than 10 minutes for each Member; or

(ii) in the House at any other time, by leave.

(d) 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 and the resumption of the debate may be referred to the Federation Chamber.

(e) Unless otherwise ordered, a committee report presented in accordance with this standing order shall be made a Parliamentary Paper.

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 Selection Committee shall determine:

(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 periods provided by *standing order 192* proceedings may be resumed in the Federation Chamber on motions in relation to committee and delegation reports referred that day or on an earlier day.

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Private Members' business

41 Private Members' business

(a) In the periods set for committee and delegation business 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 determined by the Selection Committee ends, the Speaker shall interrupt proceedings and the matter shall be listed on the Notice Paper for the next sitting.

Private Members' bills—priority

(b) The Selection Committee, in making determinations:

(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 and second reading

(c) Subject to this standing order, the first and second reading shall proceed in accordance with *standing orders 141 and 142*. The Member who has presented the bill may speak to the second reading for no longer than 10 minutes at the time of presentation and 5 minutes on resumption of the debate. The Selection Committee may determine times for consideration of the remainder of the second reading debate.

Priority following second reading

(d) 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 Selection Committee may determine times for consideration of the remaining stages.

Alternation of notices

(e) Subject to paragraph (b)(i), the Selection Committee shall provide for the consideration of private Members' notices to alternate between those of government and non-government Members.

Participation of Speaker and Deputy Speaker

(f) The Speaker and Deputy Speaker may participate in private Members' business.

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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.

43 Members' statements

(a) In the House at 1.30 pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, the Speaker shall interrupt business and call on statements by Members. The period allowed for these statements may extend until 2 pm.

(b) In the Federation Chamber at 4 pm on Mondays, the Deputy Speaker shall interrupt business and call on statements by Members. The period allowed for these statements may extend until 4.45 pm.

(c) During these periods, when called on by the Chair, a Member, but not a Minister (or Parliamentary Secretary*), may make a statement for no longer than 90 seconds.

Government business

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45 Order of government business and programming declarations

(a) 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.

(b) The Leader of the House or the Chief Government Whip may make a programming declaration in the House in relation to one or more items of government business.

The declaration may refer a government business order of the day to the Federation Chamber, or may require a government business order of the day to be returned from the Federation Chamber for further consideration in the House. The matter must be set down for consideration at a later hour that day.

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).*

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* Including Assistant Ministers who are Parliamentary Secretaries.

(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.