



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Parliament of Tasmania, Hobart, TAS 7000
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20 November 2025

Ms Sharon Claydon MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Procedure
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Procedure.Committee.Reps@aph.gov.au

Dear Chair

I acknowledge receipt of your letter and the terms of your inquiry into disrespectful behavior towards other Members in the Chamber.

Part 15 of the Legislative Council Standing Orders provides rules for the conduct of debate and how a Member may be dealt with if they commit an offence against the President or the Chair by disregarding the authority of the Chair or abusing the rules of Council by persistently or willfully obstructing the business of the Council. Specifically, if a Member is 'named' they may be suspended and must withdraw from the Chamber. The Standing Orders may be accessed at <https://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/legislative-council/lcstandingorders>.

In practice, the naming of and suspension of Members has not occurred in the Legislative Council in living memory. This is perhaps a reflection of the size, constitution and the role of the Council as a house of review.

The Tasmanian Legislative Council is the upper house of the Parliament consisting of fifteen Members from fifteen single member electorates. The Council does not dissolve, even at State or general election. The Legislative Council has periodic elections each May for two to three electorates where Members are elected for 6-year terms on an annual basis. As an upper house it serves as a house of review and a check and balance of the Government of the Day.

Historically, the Council was made up of predominately conservative non-party aligned Members (gentlemen). Over time this has changed but no one party has ever had a majority in the Chamber. The Council has a plurality of Members made up of three Government Liberal party Members, three (Opposition) Labor party Members on the floor, an independent Leader

for Government Business, a Member of the Greens party and seven independents. I myself am the fifteenth member, elected by my constituency as a Labor party member and elected by my peers as President. As President I serve the Council in accordance with Westminster traditions presiding over debates in a neutral and impartial manner.

As a house of review, Members undertake their role differently to lower house Members where government is formed. Debate is generally quite orderly, and Members take time to forensically analyse legislative, policy, expenditure and budget proposals as part of their scrutiny functions. From time-to-time debate can become heated, especially in relation to controversial projects or policies that attract divergent or polarised community views. In these debates, Members may push the envelope with interjections and controversial statements. During late sittings or where there are heavy or contested legislative agendas these circumstances can challenge Members to keep their tempers, interjections and comments in check. However, overall if these matters are raised through a point of order or by me calling for order including issuing a warning these skirmishes tend to subside and can be managed without having to name a Member. To date in my time as President since 2019 and as Member of the Legislative Council since 2011 no Member has ever been suspended or brought before the Privileges Committee.

The House tends to regulate itself with Members forming professional and cordial connections in and outside the Chamber regardless of political persuasion. This is perhaps reflective of the small size of the House, the professional networks Members build with each other through their committee work, social interactions at parliamentary and other events and being in close proximity to each other in terms of office accommodation. My rooms are available for Members to use during and after sittings for meetings and social gatherings which enhances their personal connection, and I believe this all has a positive influence in terms of behaviour of Members in the Chamber.

I trust this contribution is of assistance with your inquiry. If you require any further information, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

HON CRAIG FARRELL MLC
President of the Legislative Council