

# Chapter 1. Time limits and definitions

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## **Chapter outline**

This chapter contains some basic standing orders:

- maximum speaking times for the Chamber and Federation Chamber,
  - definitions used throughout, and
  - a statement of how the standing orders apply in proceedings.
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## **Maximum time limits apply when speaking**

### **1 Maximum speaking times**

The maximum time limits that apply to debates, speeches and statements are as follows.

<i>subject</i>	<i>time (max)</i>
<b><i>Address in Reply</i></b> Each Member	20 mins
<b><i>Adjournment of the House or Federation Chamber – to end the sitting</i></b> Whole debate in House Whole debate in Federation Chamber Extended debate (if required by Minister to reply etc) Each Member – no extension of time can be granted Member who has already spoken to the motion may speak again for one period if no other Member rises to speak Minister in extension of debate <i>(standing orders 31 (House) and 191 (Federation Chamber))</i>	30 mins not specified 10 mins 5 mins 5 mins 5 mins
<b><i>Bills – Main Appropriation – second reading</i></b> Mover Leader of Opposition or Member representing	no limit no limit

<i>subject</i>	<i>time (max)</i>
<b><i>Bills – Other Government – second reading</i></b>	
Mover	30 mins
Leader of Opposition or Member representing	30 mins
Minister at conclusion of debate	15 mins
<b><i>Bills – Private Members’ – second reading</i></b>	
Mover	
At time of presentation	10 mins
In continuation, on resumption of debate (if required by mover)	5 mins
<i>(standing order 222)</i>	
<b><i>Bills – All – second reading</i></b>	
Any other Member not specified above	15 mins or lesser time determined by the Selection Committee
<i>(standing order 222)</i>	
<b><i>Bills – All – consideration in detail</i></b>	
<b><i>Bills – All – consideration of Senate amendments or requests</i></b>	
Each Member – unlimited number of periods	5 mins
<b><i>Censure of or no confidence in the Government</i></b> <i>(if accepted by the Government under standing order 48)</i>	
Mover	30 mins
Prime Minister or Minister representing	30 mins
Any other Member	20 mins
<i>(if otherwise, e.g. under suspension of standing orders, see Other debates – not otherwise provided for)</i>	
<b><i>Committee and delegation business on Mondays</i></b>	
<b><i>Announcements relating to inquiries</i></b>	
Committee Chair or deputy Chair	as determined by the Selection Committee
<b><i>Reports</i></b>	
Each Member	10 mins or lesser time determined by the Selection Committee
<i>(standing orders 39, 40, 192, 222)</i>	

<i>subject</i>	<i>time (max)</i>
<b><i>Condolence motion</i></b> Each Member <i>(standing order 49)</i>	no limit
<b><i>Dissent motion</i></b> Whole debate Mover Secunder Member next speaking Any other Member <i>(standing order 87)</i>	30 mins 10 mins 5 mins 10 mins 5 mins
<b><i>Elections of Speaker or Deputy Speakers</i></b> Each Member <i>(standing order 11)</i>	5 mins
<b><i>Extension of time</i></b> On motion, determined without debate, a Member may continue a speech interrupted under this standing order, for one period	10 mins, but extension may not exceed half of the original period allotted
<b><i>Grievances</i></b> Whole debate Each Member <i>(standing order 192B)</i>	1 hour 10 mins
<b><i>Interventions</i></b> Member <i>(standing order 66A)</i>	30 secs
<b><i>Matter of public importance</i></b> Whole discussion Proposer Member next speaking Any other Member <i>(standing order 46)</i>	1 hour 10 mins 10 mins 5 mins

<i>subject</i>	<i>time (max)</i>
<b><i>Members' statements</i></b>	
<b><i>90 second statements</i></b>	
In the House – whole period on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays	30 mins
In the Federation Chamber – whole period on Mondays	45 mins
Each Member (but not a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary)	90 seconds
<i>(standing order 43)</i>	
<b><i>3 minute constituency statements</i></b>	
Whole period	30 mins
Each Member	3 mins
<i>(standing order 193)</i>	
<b><i>Other debates – not otherwise provided for</i></b> <i>(e.g. censure of a Minister, reference to committee, approval of public works)</i>	
Mover of a motion	15 mins
Any other Member	10 mins
<b><i>Other statements – by leave of the House</i></b> <i>(e.g. ministerial statements and responses to them, committee reports)</i>	
Member	no limit
<b><i>Private Members' business on Mondays</i></b>	
Whole debate	as determined by the Selection Committee, subject to times set down for private Members' bills
Each Member	
<i>(standing orders 41, 192, 222)</i>	
<b><i>Question Time</i></b>	
Each question by a government or opposition Member	30 secs
Each question by a non-aligned Member	45 secs
Each answer	3 mins
<i>(standing orders 100 and 104)</i>	

<i>subject</i>	<i>time (max)</i>
<p><b><i>Statements by permission from the Speaker (by indulgence)</i></b>  <i>(e.g. adding to answer, personal explanation, privilege, valedictory remarks)</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Member</p>	at the discretion of the Speaker
<p><b><i>If further statements referred to the Federation Chamber</i></b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Any other Member</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(standing order 183)</i></p>	10 mins
<p><b><i>Suspension of standing or other orders on notice relating to the programming of government business</i></b></p> <p>Whole debate</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Mover</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Member next speaking</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Any other Member</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(standing order 47)</i></p>	25 mins 15 mins 10 mins 5 mins
<p><b><i>Suspension of standing or other orders without notice</i></b></p> <p>Whole debate</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Mover</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Seconder (if any)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Member next speaking</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Any other Member</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(standing order 47)</i></p>	25 mins 10 mins 5 mins 10 mins 5 mins
<p><b><i>Taxation or duty proposal</i></b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Mover</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Leader of Opposition or Member representing</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Any other Member</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(standing orders 178 and 179)</i></p>	20 mins 20 mins 10 mins
<p><b><i>Thanks motion</i></b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Each Member</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(standing order 49)</i></p>	no limit
<p><b><i>Urgent matters – allotment of time for debate</i></b></p> <p>Whole debate</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Each Member</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(standing order 84)</i></p>	20 mins 5 mins

## Definitions and application

### 2 Definitions

The following meanings apply throughout these standing orders.

***absolute majority*** is a majority of the membership of the House (including the Speaker).

***amending bill*** means a bill whose principal purpose is to amend an existing Act or Acts.

***Appropriation Bills*** are bills which appropriate money to fund annual government expenditure (other bills may appropriate money for special purposes).

***area of Members' seats*** means the area of seats on the floor of the Chamber reserved for Members. It does not include seats in the advisers' box or special galleries, but does include the seat where the Serjeant-at-Arms usually sits. The expression is used in *standing orders 128 and 129 (divisions)*. See figure 1.

***Assistant Minister*** see *Minister*.

***Chief Government Whip*** includes another government whip acting on behalf of the Chief Government Whip.

***Chief Opposition Whip*** includes another opposition whip acting on behalf of the Chief Opposition Whip.

***Clerk at the Table*** means the person performing the duties of the Clerk in the Chamber. This term is used when duties are performed during a sitting.

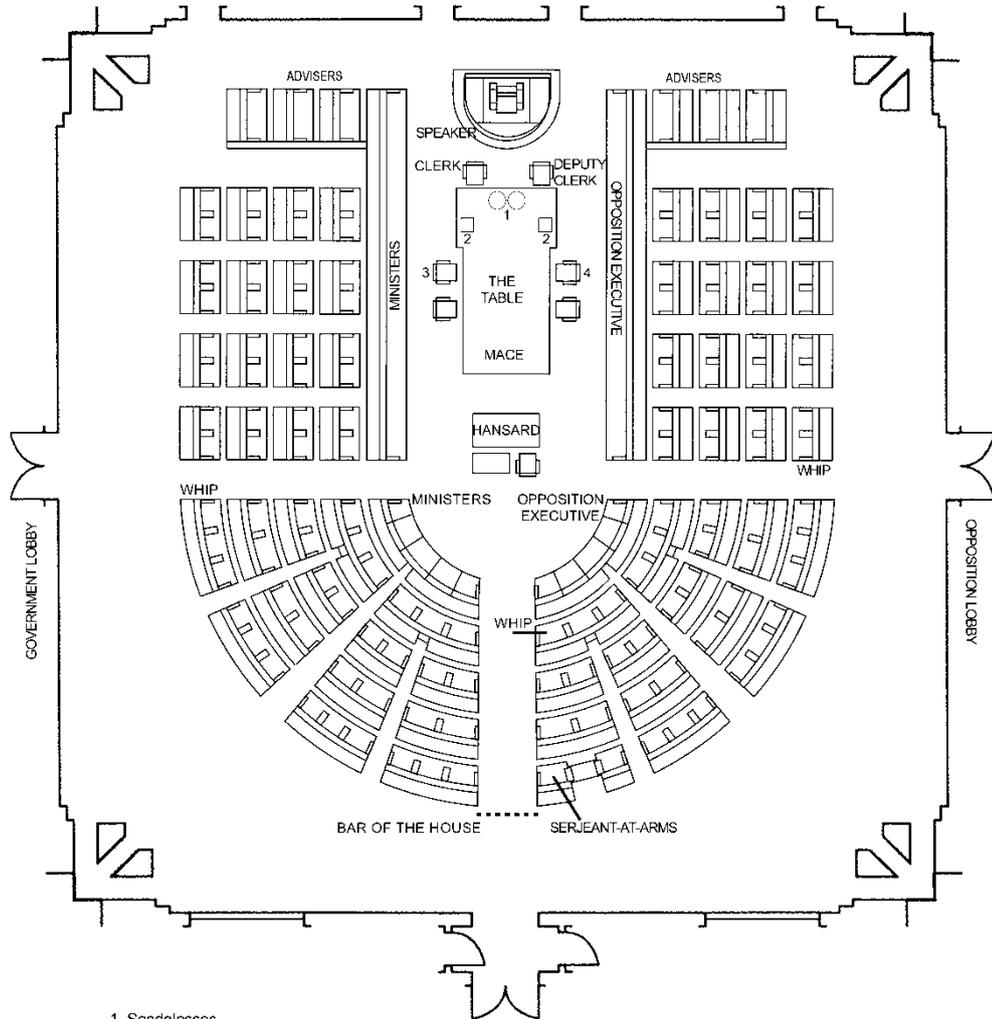
***committee*** includes a House or joint, standing or select committee.

***count out*** is the adjournment of the House because of the lack of a quorum of Members (30 Members).

***document*** means a paper or any record of information, and includes:

- (i) anything on which there is writing;
- (ii) anything on which there are marks, figures, symbols or perforations having a meaning for persons qualified to interpret them;
- (iii) anything from which sounds, images or writings can be reproduced with or without the aid of anything else; or
- (iv) a map, plans, drawing or photograph.

**Figure 1. The Chamber**



1. Sandglasses
2. Despatch Boxes
3. Prime Minister or Minister in charge of business
4. Leader of the Opposition or Member of the Opposition Executive

**evidence** means the information (whether or not confidential) provided by witnesses (whether or not under oath or affirmation) and inquiry contributors, to the House or a committee. It includes:

- (i) oral or written information provided by a witness in response to questions of the House or a committee, as relevant; and
- (ii) written submissions from inquiry contributors which address the terms of reference of a committee's inquiry and which have been formally accepted by the committee.

**Federation Chamber** means the Federation Chamber of the House of Representatives established by *standing order 183*.

**Governor-General** includes an Administrator of the Commonwealth.

**House bill** is a bill originating in the House.

**laid aside** means that the House has decided not to proceed with a particular proposal and has resolved to put an end to it.

**leave, by** means that no Member present objects.

**Main Appropriation Bill** means the main bill in a year appropriating money to fund expenditure for the ordinary annual services of government – that is, Appropriation Bill (No. 1).

**Member** means any Member of the House of Representatives.

**Private Member** means a Member other than the Speaker or a Minister. **Non-aligned Member** means a Member who is neither a government Member nor an opposition Member.

**Minister** includes Parliamentary Secretary,\* except in *standing order 98 (questions seeking information)*.

**notice** is a stated intention for a new item of business, such as a notice of motion to be moved or notice of intention to present a bill.

**order of the day** is a formal agenda item of business on a particular day, including a bill or other matter which the House has ordered to be considered on that day.

**Parliamentary Paper** means a document in the Parliamentary Papers Series.

**Parliamentary Secretary** see **Minister**.

**petition** is a formal request (in paper or electronic form) to the House to take action that is within its power to take. A petition for presentation to the House must comply with the standing orders. An **electronic petition (e-petition)** is a petition that persons may sign through the **House of Representatives e-petition website** (House website). A paper petition includes any petition that is not an electronic petition.

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\* Including Assistant Ministers who are Parliamentary Secretaries.

**petition terms** consist of the reasons for the petition and the request for action by the House.

**physical limits of the Chamber** means the area inside the Chamber walls, on the floor of the Chamber. It does not include the galleries on the upper floors. The expression is used in *standing order 56 (quorum)*. See figure 1.

**privilege** means the special rights and immunities belonging to the House, its committees and its members in accordance with section 49 of the Constitution, and as qualified by the *Parliamentary Privileges Act 1987*.

**present a document** means table a document. A document presented to the Federation Chamber is taken to have been presented to the House.

**prorogation** means the formal ending of a session of Parliament by the Governor-General.

**question**, in relation to a motion, means the matter before the House or Federation Chamber for decision. The question is proposed from the Chair to the House after a motion has been moved and, if necessary, seconded. During the debate the Speaker states the question to the House between speeches. At the end of the debate the Speaker puts the question by restating the question to the House and asking Members for and against the question to call 'Aye' or 'No'.

**Question Time** means the period of time set aside at every sitting during which Members may ask questions of Ministers or other Members (*standing order 97*).

**quorum of the Federation Chamber** is one government Member, one non-government Member and the Chair.

**quorum of the House** is one-fifth of the whole number of Members of the House (i.e. 30 Members).

**reading** of a bill, means the reading of the **title** of a bill.

**recess** means the period between sessions of a Parliament, or the period between the close of a session by prorogation and dissolution or expiry of the House.

**reply** is the closing speech of a debate in which the mover of a motion sums up or responds to the debate.

**Senate bill** is a bill originating in the Senate.

**service of the House** means attendance in the Chamber. Used in *standing order 26 (leave of absence)*, and *standing order 94(b) (Member suspended)*—but see also *standing order 94(e)*.

**session** means the period commencing on the first sitting day following a general election or a prorogation, and concluding by

prorogation, dissolution or at the expiration of three years from the first meeting of the House.

**sitting** means the period commencing with the meeting of the House and concluding at the adjournment of the House. (A sitting may extend over more than one day, and it is possible, although unusual, to have more than one sitting on a day.)

**Speaker** is defined in *standing order 3(d)*.

**substantive motion** means a self-contained proposal, drafted in a form capable of expressing a decision or opinion of the House.

**Supply Bills** appropriate money to fund government expenditure on an interim basis until Appropriation Bills have passed (now rarely necessary).

**title** of a bill means the long title, which usually begins 'A Bill for an Act . . . ' .

**visitor** means a person other than a Member or parliamentary official or an infant being cared for by a Member (*standing order 257(d)*).

**voices** means the oral votes of Members, 'Aye' or 'No', on a question from the Chair.

**witness** means a person who attends before the House or a committee to give evidence.

### 3 Application

(a) These standing orders are the rules of the House made under the power granted by section 50 of the Constitution. They are of continuing effect and apply until changed by the House in this or a subsequent Parliament.

(b) The standing orders apply in general to proceedings taking place inside the Chamber of the House. Some orders expressly provide for other parliamentary matters which take place outside the Chamber and the committees of the House, e.g. matters of privilege and petitions.

(c) The standing orders also apply to committees of the House to the necessary extent, subject:

(i) in the Federation Chamber, to the orders in Chapter 14 (*standing orders 183–198*), and

(ii) in standing and select committees, to the orders in Chapter 16 (*standing orders 214–247*).

(d) The Speaker is the principal officeholder of the House. References in the standing orders to the duties and actions for which the Speaker is responsible are to **Speaker**, notwithstanding the practice of relief arrangements under which the Deputy Speaker, the Second Deputy Speaker or a member of the Speaker's panel occupies the Speaker's Chair when the Speaker is not in the Chamber. Similarly, references to the duties and actions for which the Deputy Speaker is responsible in

relation to the Federation Chamber are to the Deputy Speaker notwithstanding relief arrangements.

Some matters are reserved only for the Speaker, or an acting Speaker: role in the election of Deputy Speaker and Second Deputy Speaker (*standing orders 13–14*); selection of the matter of public importance (*standing order 46*); decisions on matters of privilege (*standing orders 51–52*). The power to exercise a casting vote (*standing order 135*) is reserved for the Speaker, Acting Speaker, Deputy Speaker or Second Deputy Speaker.

(e) The Speaker (or other Member presiding) is responsible for ruling whenever any question arises as to the interpretation or application of a standing order and for deciding cases not otherwise provided for. In all cases the Speaker shall have regard to previous rulings of Speakers of the House and to established practices of the House.