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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

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# THIRTEENTH ASSEMBLY

## SESSIONAL ORDERS

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Sessional Orders for adoption 26 October 2016

1 Pairs

2 Right of Reply

3 Committee of Members' Interests

4 Prayers

5 Ministerial Statements

\* Including Routine of Business as adopted 18 October 2016

\* Including Wednesday Question Time adopted 25 October 2016

# SESSIONAL ORDERS FOR THE 13th ASSEMBLY

## 1. Routine of Business

Pursuant to Standing Orders 60 and 63 the Routine of Business for the 12th Assembly is:

Tuesday and Thursday:

1. At 10.00am  
Prayers
2. Government Business – Notices and Orders of the Day
3. At 2pm  
Notices  
Petitions  
Questions
4. Government Business
5. Ministerial Statements
6. Papers
7. Consideration of Committee Reports and Government Responses and Auditor-General's Reports
8. Discussion pursuant to Standing Order 66 (Matter of Public Importance)

Wednesday

1. At 10.00am  
Prayers
2. Government Business –, Notices and Orders of the Day
3. At 2pm  
Notices
4. Petitions
5. Questions
6. General Business – Notices and Orders of the Day
7. At 7pm  
Government Business

## 2. Wednesday Question Time

That notwithstanding anything in the Standing Orders, during the conduct of Question Time on each Wednesday when the Assembly meets, no Government Member will ask a Minister or a Committee Chair a question without notice, but no single Minister may be asked consecutive questions without an intervening question being asked of a different Member who is a Minister, Committee Chair, Speaker or other Member who is able to be asked a question without notice pursuant to Standing Orders, however one Supplementary Question is permitted, in line with Standing Order 106, 4(b).

### **3. Parliamentary Pairs**

Unless otherwise ordered, the existence of a pair arrangement will be noted in the division lists in the Minutes of Proceedings and the Parliamentary Record when the relevant whips or non-party aligned Members have advised the Table Office that a pairing arrangement is in place.

### **4. Right of Reply for persons who are referred to in the Legislative Assembly**

(1) Where a person who has been referred to by name, or in such a way as to be readily identified, in the Assembly, makes a submission in writing to the Speaker:

- (a) claiming that the person has been adversely affected in reputation or in respect of dealings or associations with others, or injured in occupation, trade, office or financial credit, or that the person's privacy has been unreasonably invaded, by reason of that reference to the person;
- (b) requesting that the person be able to incorporate an appropriate response in the parliamentary record

and if the Speaker is satisfied

- (c) that the subject of the submission is not so obviously trivial or the submission so frivolous, vexatious or offensive in character as to make it inappropriate that it be considered by the Standing Orders Committee and
- (d) that it is practicable for the Standing Orders Committee to consider the submission under this resolution,

the Speaker will refer the submission to that Committee.

- (2) The Committee may decide not to consider a submission referred to it under this resolution if the Committee considers that the subject of the submission is not sufficiently serious or the submission is frivolous, vexatious or offensive in character, and such a decision will be reported to the Assembly.
- (3) If the Committee decides to consider a submission under this resolution, the Committee may confer with the person who made the submission and any Member who referred in the Assembly to that person.
- (4) In considering a submission under this resolution, the Committee will meet in private session.
- (5) The Committee will not publish a submission referred to it under this resolution or its proceedings in relation to such a submission, but may present minutes of its proceedings and all or part of such submission to the Assembly.
- (6) In considering a submission under this resolution and reporting to the Assembly the Committee will not consider or judge the truth of any statements made in the Assembly or of the submission.
- (7) In its report to the Assembly on a submission under this resolution, the Committee may make either of the following recommendations:

- (a) that no further action be taken by the Assembly or by the Committee in relation to the submission; or
  - (b) that a response by the person who made the submission, in terms specified in the report and agreed to by the person and the Committee, be published by the Assembly or incorporated in the *Parliamentary Record*,  
and will not make any other recommendations.
- (8) A document presented to the Assembly under paragraph (5) or (7):
    - (a) in the case of a response by a person who made a submission, will be succinct and strictly relevant to the questions in issue and will not contain anything offensive in character
    - (b) will not contain any matter the publication of which would have the effect of:
      - (i) unreasonably adversely affecting or injuring a person, or unreasonably invading a person's privacy, in the manner referred to in paragraph (1)
      - (ii) unreasonably adding to or aggravating any such adverse effect, injury or invasion of privacy suffered by a person.
  - (9) The Committee may agree to guidelines and procedures, not inconsistent with this resolution, to apply to the consideration by it of submissions.
  - (10) This resolution will continue in force unless and until amended or rescinded by the Assembly in this or a subsequent Assembly.

## **Procedure and Development of Guidelines**

### *Submissions from persons referred to in debate*

A person who has been referred to in a debate in the Assembly may make a submission, claiming that he or she has been adversely affected in reputation or in respect of dealings or associations with others, or injured in occupation, trade, office or financial credit, or that his or her privacy has been unreasonably invaded, by reason of that reference, and requesting that an appropriate response be incorporated in the parliamentary record. Submissions must be sent to the Speaker. If the Speaker is satisfied that the matter is not obviously trivial, or frivolous, vexatious or offensive, and that it is practicable for the committee to consider the submission under the procedure, he or she must refer it to the Standing Orders Committee.

The Standing Orders Committee may decide not to consider a submission if it considers that the submission is not sufficiently serious or that it is frivolous, vexatious or offensive. Such a decision must be reported to the Assembly.

When it considers a submission, the Standing Orders Committee:

- may confer with the person who has lodged it, and the Member(s) who referred to the person
- may meet in private session

- may not consider or judge the truth of any statements made in the Assembly or in the submission
- may not publish the submission or its proceedings in relation to the submission, but may present minutes of its proceedings and all or part of the submission to the Assembly.

In a report under the procedure the committee can only recommend that a response by the person, in terms agreed by the person and the committee and specified in the report, be published by the Assembly and incorporated in Hansard, or that no further action be taken by the Assembly or the committee. The committee may not make any other recommendation. A recommended response must be succinct and strictly relevant to the questions in issue and must not contain anything offensive in character. A recommended response must not contain any matter the publication of which would unreasonably adversely affect or injure a person, or unreasonably invade a person's privacy; nor may it contain material which would unreasonably add to or aggravate any such adverse effect.

The Standing Orders Committee is authorised to agree to guidelines and procedures, not inconsistent with the resolution establishing the procedure, to apply to the consideration of submissions.

#### **Adopted Guidelines**

- an application must be received within three months of the making of the statement to which the person wishes to respond unless, because of exceptional circumstances, the committee agrees to consider an application received later
- applications should only be considered from natural persons, they should not be considered if lodged by or on behalf of corporations, businesses, firms, organisations or institutions
- applications should only be considered from persons who are Australian citizens or residents
- an application must demonstrate that a person, who is named, or readily identified, has been subject to clear, direct and personal attack or criticism, and has been damaged as a result
- applications must be concise, be in the character of a refutation or explanation only and must be confined to showing the statement complained of and the person's response and must not contain any offensive material
- applications should not be considered from persons who wish to respond to a statement or remarks made in connection with the proceedings of a standing or select committee—such persons should contact the committee direct on the matter
- in considering applications, the committee will have regard to the existence of other remedies that may be available to a person referred to in the Assembly and whether they have been exercised.

## **5. Committee of Members' Interests**

This Assembly, pursuant to section 3 of the Legislative Assembly (Disclosure of Interests) Act 2008, assign the Standing Orders Committee to act as the Committee of Members' Interests for the purposes of this Act.

## **6. Prayers**

Pursuant to Standing Order 7 the prayer to be said at the commencement of each sitting day is as follows:

*Almighty God we humbly beseech thee to vouchsafe thy blessing upon this Assembly. Direct and prosper our deliberations to the advancement of thy glory and the true welfare of the people of the Northern Territory.*

*Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed by thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on 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, forever and ever, Amen.*

## **7. When a Ministerial Statement may be made**

1. Standing Order 117 is suspended and:

A Minister may make a statement on:

1. government policy
2. a government decision
3. government action, or
4. proposed government action,

At any time when there is no question before the Assembly; provided that copies of the statement are distributed to the Members by 5.00pm the day before the statement is made.

Such statements when circulated are to be treated with confidence.