



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Standing Orders Committee

First Report of the 10th Assembly
including
Amendments to Ministerial Reports
Amendments to Quorums for Committees

August 2005

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the Northern Territory
August 2005

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Standing Orders Committee

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Members of the Committee as at August 2005

The Honourable Paul Henderson - Chairman
The Honourable Jane Aagaard MLA
Mr James Burke MLA
Dr Richard Lim MLA
Mrs Fay Miller MLA
Mrs Loraine Braham MLA

Committee Secretariat

Mr Ian McNeill, Secretary
Ms Jane Gunner, Research/Administrative Officer

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Membership of the committee at the time of tabling of the Report:

The Honourable Paul Henderson MLA - Chairman

Appointed 16 August 2005
Australian Labor Party
Member for Wanguri: First elected 31 July 1999
Leader of Government Business
Minister for Business and Economic Development
Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Defence Support
Minister for Essential Services

The Honourable Jane Aagaard MLA

Appointed 16 August 2005
Australian Labor Party
Member for Nightcliff: First elected 18 August 2001
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Other Committees: House

Mr James Burke MLA

Appointed 16 August 2005
Australian Labor Party
Member for Brennan: First elected 18 June 2005
Other Committees: Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Subordinate Legislation

Dr Richard Lim MLA

Appointed 16 August 2005
Country Liberal Party
Member for Grotorex: First elected 4 June 1994
Opposition Whip
Other Committees: Public Accounts

Mrs Fay Miller MLA

Appointed 16 August 2005
Country Liberal Party
Member for Katherine: First elected: 14 October 2003
Deputy Leader of the Opposition
Other Committees: Legal and Constitutional Affairs; House; Subordinate Legislation; Youth and Sport; Select Committee on Substance Abuse.

Mrs Loraine Braham MLA

Appointed 16 August 2005
Independent
Member for Braitling: First elected 4 June 1994
Other Committees: Legal and Constitutional Affairs; Select Committee on Substance Abuse.

Recommendations

1. The adoption of an amendment to the Sessional Order for Ministerial Reports, clause (3):

A Member of the Opposition **and one independent Member** may **each** comment for no more than 2 minutes on a ministerial report. No other Member may speak, except that that the Minister who made the statement may reply to the matters raised. The Minister's reply shall not exceed 1 minute.

2. The adoption of an amendment to Standing Order 22:

Standing Order 22— QUORUM IN STANDING COMMITTEE

The quorum of a committee shall be a majority of the committee, unless otherwise ordered.

3. The adoption of an amendment to Standing Order 265

Standing Order 265— QUORUM

In all select committees a majority of the committee shall form a quorum, unless otherwise ordered; and, if at any time a quorum be not present, the Chairman shall suspend the proceedings of the committee until a quorum be present, or shall adjourn the committee.

Ministerial Reports

Background

On 30 June 2005 the independent Members of the Assembly Mrs Loraine Braham MLA and Mr Gerry Wood MLA jointly wrote to the Leader of Government Business the Honourable Paul Henderson MLA suggesting amendments to the Sessional Order for Ministerial Reports.

On 17 August 2005 the committee considered options to allow for independent members to comment on ministerial reports and the global time limit for ministerial reports.

Recommendation

The Committee at its meeting on 17 August 2005 recommended that the Sessional Order on Ministerial Reports, clause (3) be adopted as follows:

- (3) A Member of the opposition **and one independent Member** may **each** comment for no more than 2 minutes on a ministerial report. No other Member may speak, except that that the Minister who made the statement may reply to the matters raised. The Minister's reply shall not exceed 1 minute.

Quorum of the Committee

Background

On 16 August 2005 the Public Accounts Committee referred to the Standing Orders Committee for consideration the appropriate number of members to constitute a quorum for a parliamentary committee.

The committee considered whether the number of members constituting a quorum for committees should be increased to reflect the increased size of committee membership. During the 9th and 10th Assembly committee membership has increased from five to six members to facilitate membership of independents.

The committee took into consideration that, for committees where an independent did not nominate for a committee and the quorum was increased to four this could present some difficulty in convening meetings.

The Senate Standing Orders provide that a quorum should be a “majority of members”. The committee resolved that the Legislative Assembly Standing Orders be amended to reflect this Senate Standing Order provision.

Recommendation

The committee at its meeting on 17 August 2005 recommended that Standing Order 22 and Standing Order 265 be amended as follows:

Standing Order 22— QUORUM IN STANDING COMMITTEE

The quorum of a committee, unless otherwise ordered, shall be a majority of the committee.

Standing Order— 265 QUORUM

In all select committees a majority of the committee shall form a quorum, unless otherwise ordered; and, if at any time a quorum be not present, the Chairman shall suspend the proceedings of the committee until a quorum be present, or shall adjourn the committee.