

PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE

Second Report — The conduct of divisions in the Legislative Assembly — Tabling

MR S.J. PRICE (Forrestfield — Deputy Speaker) [3.22 pm]: I present for tabling the second report of the Procedure and Privileges Committee of the forty-first Parliament titled *The conduct of divisions in the Legislative Assembly*.

[See paper [952](#).]

Mr S.J. PRICE: By way of brief background on the temporary methods of conducting divisions in this chamber, members may remember that back in 2020, with the emergence of COVID-19 in WA, we were faced with the need to ensure that we had social distancing in the chamber. The Legislative Assembly adopted a temporary order that introduced a new socially distanced form of divisions. The Legislative Assembly sat on 4 December 2020 and was then prorogued. The temporary order then expired. Following the state election on 13 March 2021, we resumed sittings in April 2021. The Leader of the House moved a motion on the opening day of the forty-first Parliament proposing that stand-sit divisions be adopted for the duration of 2021.

As members will remember, towards the end of the last sitting year, the Procedure and Privileges Committee issued a survey to Legislative Assembly members. Fifty-eight surveys were returned by members—I wonder who did not! Obviously, there were two questions on that survey and the one that I am referring to is whether divisions in the chamber should continue to take the form of stand-sit divisions or should revert to the walk-through method of divisions that was used in 2020. Of the 58 responses, 31 members chose to revert to walk-through divisions, 24 opted for the retention of stand-sit divisions and three did not indicate a preference. Interestingly, a majority of the 24 members who opted for stand-sit divisions were elected in 2021 and had experienced only the stand-sit divisions. The three members who did not indicate a preference were also new members. By contrast, 29 of the 31 members who preferred walk-through divisions had been members in 2020 and therefore had experienced both methods of conducting divisions.

As we head into the 2022 parliamentary sitting year, the impact of COVID-19 is increasing in our community and the need to ensure that there is social distancing in the chamber due to the COVID-19 pandemic when a division is called is still very present. I commend the report to the house.