



***PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES
COMMITTEE***

**REPORT ON THE SITTING TIMES OF
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**REPORT NO. 4
2009**

Presented by:
Mr Michael Sutherland, MLA
Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
on
Thursday 20 August 2009

Published and printed by the Legislative Assembly, Parliament of Western Australia,
Perth, 2009.



Procedure and Privileges Committee

Title: Report on the Sitting Times of the Legislative Assembly.

ISBN: 978-1-921355-65-3

(Series: Western Australia. Parliament. Legislative Assembly. Committees.
Procedure and Privileges Committee. Report No. 4 of 2009)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman

Hon. Grant Woodhams, MLA
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Members

Mr M. McGowan, MLA,
Deputy Chairman of the Committee
Member for Rockingham

Mr M.W. Sutherland, MLA
Member for Mount Lawley

Mr F.A. Alban, MLA
Member for Swan Hills

Mr F.M. Logan, MLA
Member for Cockburn

STAFF

Principal Research Officer and Clerk to the Committee

Dr Julia Lawrinson

Adviser

Mr Peter McHugh
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Adviser

Mr John Mandy
Deputy Clerk of the Legislative
Assembly

COMMITTEE ADDRESS

Procedure and Privileges Committee
Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
Harvest Terrace
PERTH WA 6000

Tel: (08) 9222 7222
Fax: (08) 9222 7818
Email: lappc@parliament.wa.gov.au
Website: www.parliament.wa.gov.au

COMMITTEE'S FUNCTIONS AND POWERS

Legislative Assembly Standing Order No. 284 provides the following functions, powers and terms of reference to the Procedure and Privileges Committee -

Procedure and Privileges Committee

284. (1) A Procedure and Privileges Committee will be appointed at the beginning of each Parliament to -
- (a) examine and report on the procedures of the Assembly; and
 - (b) examine and report on issues of privilege; and
 - (c) wherever necessary, confer with a similar committee of the Council.
- (2) Membership of the committee will consist of the Speaker and four other members as the Assembly appoints.
- (3) Standing Order 278 will apply except that where possible any report of the committee will be presented by the Deputy Speaker.
- (4) When consideration of a report from the committee is set down as an order of the day it will be considered using the consideration in detail procedure.

REPORT

Background

On 9 June 2009, the Independent member of the Legislative Assembly, Dr Janet Woollard, gave notice that at the next sitting of the House she would move:

- (1) That the following terms of reference be referred to the Procedure and Privileges Committee for its investigation and report to the house:
 - (a) the sitting hours of the house be reviewed to ensure the house sits more appropriate business hours; and
 - (b) recommendations be made to amend the standing order for the days and times of meeting of the Assembly.
- (2) That the committee report to the Legislative Assembly by 13 August 2009.

The motion was not formally moved, but the matters raised were aired in debate in the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday 10 June 2009. Despite the lack of a formal referral from the House, the Procedure and Privileges Committee elected to investigate the matter at its own instigation, and on 22 June 2009 individual Committee members were authorised to seek input from individual members to inform the Committee's views.

Matters arising

The Committee considered that the rationale behind the present sitting hours includes:

- the requirement to balance the sittings of the House with other parliamentary and related duties, such as attendance in committee, Cabinet and party meetings;
- Members' ability to attend to their electorate duties; and
- the need to provide hours and days equitable for regional Members.

At present, the parliamentary working week is broadly comprised of:

Monday	Cabinet
Tuesday morning	Party meetings
Tuesday 2pm-10pm	Parliamentary sitting
Wednesday morning	Committee meetings
Wednesday 12pm-7pm	Parliamentary sitting
Thursday 9am-5pm	Parliamentary sitting
Friday	Electorate duties

In addition to these considerations, the Committee had only received two letters supporting a change in sitting hours, one from Dr Janet Woollard, and one from Ms Adele Carles, but no other significant negative feedback on current hours.

The Committee noted the sitting times of other jurisdictions, but also noted that the size and population distribution of Western Australia means that the Legislative Assembly's needs are unique and not easily comparable to other states and territories. That being said, the Committee did not consider that the Assembly's sitting times varied significantly from other jurisdictions.

The Committee was also of the view that the current schedule is an improvement on the sitting hours in previous times, when extremely late sitting nights on Tuesday and Wednesday were commonplace.

Recommendation

Your Committee recommends –

That the sitting times of the Legislative Assembly remain unchanged.

HON. GRANT WOODHAMS, MLA
CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE
20 August 2009