

Business of the House – Legislative Council

Prorogation

A session is terminated by a prorogation of Parliament, which is put into effect by proclamation of the Governor on the advice of the Executive Council. Prorogation has the following effects:

- all business of the two houses lapses;
- any temporary orders cease to have effect;
- resolutions or orders made by either House cease to have effect, unless otherwise determined;
- bills not passed by both houses must be reintroduced in the next session as if for the first time, unless restored to the notice paper of the house in which the bill lapsed. On restoration, the bill proceeds from the stage it had reached in the previous session of Parliament;
- bills that have completed their passage through the Parliament may lawfully be assented to after prorogation; Legislative Assembly Committee
- standing committees appointed by either house still exist, although they may not meet and transact business; and
- select committees cease to exist. If a select committee inquiry is to continue in the next session, the committee must be re-established. Legislative Council Committee

In recent times, the Parliament has been prorogued and the Legislative Assembly has been dissolved simultaneously, immediately before a state general election.

Dissolution

Dissolution of the Legislative Assembly occurs when the Governor, acting on the advice of the Executive Council, calls for the current Legislative Assembly to end all business and be subject to a general election.



Recess

The period between a prorogation of Parliament and the commencement of a new session is known as a recess.



Adjournment

An adjournment occurs when a house stands adjourned, by its own motion, for any period of time—for example, between the end of one sitting day and the commencement of the next or between blocks of sitting weeks. An adjournment does not affect the continuation of the business of the house.



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Sitting Patterns

The way the Legislative Council conducts its business has evolved over time to suit changing needs. For example, the Legislative Council used to sit only in the evenings, reflecting a time when members were unpaid and had other occupations to attend to. Although the current sitting hours may appear peculiar compared with a conventional working day, they have been retained because members find them effective. The sitting patterns may suit regional members who need to divide their time between their electorate and Parliament. By sitting later in the day, mornings can be used for committee and other related work. Committees (and the work of members involved with them) have grown substantially in recent times. Standing committees are a comparatively recent arrangement; the Council previously formed select committees to examine particular matters, although not very often.



The decisions about which matters listed on the notice paper will be dealt with on any particular day are generally not announced until shortly before a sitting. After discussions between the Leader of the House and other parties, decisions about the day's business are published in the Daily Business Program. Although the Council can potentially consider any matter, each sitting day is generally arranged according to an agreed pattern. This is reflected in the sitting timetable (see other page). The day starts with "Formal Business", which includes members giving notice of an intention to do something in the future, such as introduce a new bill or initiate debate on a topical matter.

Giving notice of the intention to do something is an important feature of how business is conducted. It ensures members are not taken by surprise and are able to consider how they might respond when the matter is moved. "Orders of the Day" refers to matters that are under consideration by the Legislative Council but not finalised, such as a bill that is being debated. Question Time, when the government is queried on any aspect of its functions, occurs each sitting day and is one of the traditional uses of Parliament to keep governments accountable. A time is also reserved for the consideration and debate of reports produced by Legislative Council committees.

Work of the Chamber

The business before the house is listed in a publication called the notice paper, which is published each sitting day. The notice paper contains matters currently being debated and a range of matters waiting to be considered. It is possible a matter may sit on the notice paper for years without being debated. The particular business dealt with on any day is negotiated by party leaders and members. As the parliamentary term continues, the notice paper may grow longer as unresolved matters accumulate.

Although the house operates according to a set of rules known as "Standing Orders", many other influences can affect the conduct of business. The President will issue a "ruling" to clarify the meaning of particular rules and how they apply. There are also many traditions or conventions, where there is general acceptance of unwritten rules of behaviour. For example, applying the "gag" or curtailing debate on a subject is very rarely used in the Legislative Council, as that is regarded as incompatible with the role of a "house of review".



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TIMES	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	TIMES
10.00am 10.15am			HOUSE MEETS FORMAL BUSINESS *	10.00am 10.15am
10.15am 11.35am			NON-GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (80 minutes)	10.15am 11.35am
11.35am 12:35pm			PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS (60 minutes)	11.35am 12.35pm
12.35pm 1.00pm			ORDERS OF THE DAY	12.35pm 1.00pm
1.00pm 1.15pm		HOUSE MEETS FORMAL BUSINESS *	LUNCH	1.00pm 1.15pm
1.15pm 2.00pm				1.15pm 2.00pm
2.00pm 2.15pm	HOUSE MEETS FORMAL BUSINESS *	MOTIONS ON NOTICE (120 minutes)		2.00pm 2.15pm
2.15pm 3.15pm			ORDERS OF THE DAY	2.15pm 3.15pm
3.15pm 4.15pm	ORDERS OF THE DAY	CONSIDERATION OF COMMITTEE REPORTS (60 minutes) ¥		3.15pm 4.15pm
4.15pm 4.30pm		AFTERNOON TEA	AFTERNOON TEA	4.15pm 4.30pm
4.30pm 5.00pm	QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE	QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE	QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE	4.30pm 5.00pm
5.00pm 5.20pm	ORDERS OF THE DAY	ORDERS OF THE DAY †	ORDERS OF THE DAY †	5.00pm 5.20pm
5.20pm 6.00pm			MEMBERS' STATEMENTS Δ	5.20pm 6.00pm
6.00pm 6.20pm				6.00pm 6.20pm
6.20pm 7.00pm	DINNER	MEMBERS' STATEMENTS Δ		6.20pm 7.00pm
7.00pm 7.30pm				7.00pm 7.30pm
7.30pm 9.45pm	ORDERS OF THE DAY †			7.30pm 9.45pm
9.45pm 10.25pm	MEMBERS' STATEMENTS Δ			9.45pm 10.25pm

Note: Time periods above are not to scale, and many times are estimates only [see below].

* **Formal Business** is: prayers, condolence motions, reporting of Governor's messages, presentation of petitions, statements by Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries, presentation of papers for tabling, giving notices of questions, giving notices of motions to introduce Bills, giving notices of motions to disallow statutory instruments, giving notices of motions, and motions without notice (see SO 14).

No **maximum** time is set for Formal Business - the House proceeds to other business **after** Formal Business has concluded.

¥ When the 60 minutes allocated for Consideration of Committee Reports concludes **prior** to 4.15pm (afternoon tea), Orders of the Day will commence at that time.

† When in Committee of the Whole House immediately prior to the time for Members' Statements to commence, debate will be interrupted shortly prior to the assigned time to allow for reporting to the Council.

Δ Members' Statements may be extended by an additional 10 minutes, and Assembly Messages may be taken after Members' Statements, pursuant to Standing Order 5(5).

