

Procedure Committee

Third report of 2014

The committee reports to the Senate on the following matters discussed at its meeting on 4 September 2014.

Routine of business—proposals for discussion

Members of the committee provided feedback on the proposals presented for consultation in the committee's Second report of 2014. While there were some reservations about the proposals to change the arrangements for the adjournment debate, the committee agreed that the proposals should be tested on a trial basis.

The committee agreed that it should **recommend** that the Senate adopt as temporary orders the various changes to standing orders contained in Attachment 1, with effect from 30 September, in relation to the following procedures:

- the consolidation of opportunities for tabling and considering documents and committee reports – designed to simplify the current arrangements which can be a source of confusion for senators;
- streamlining of procedures to manage routine extensions of time for standing committees and routine authorisation for committees of all kinds to meet while the Senate is sitting;
- removal of the standing order 75 opportunity on Thursdays;
- relocation of the open-ended adjournment debate with its three-level speaking time limits to Thursdays and extension of the adjournment debate on Tuesdays to a fixed time of 2 hours and 10 minutes with senators able to speak for 5 minutes (or 10 minutes when all 5 minute speakers have finished);
- the renaming of Matters of public interest at 12.45 pm on Wednesdays to “Senators’ statements” and the imposition of a 10 minute speaking time limit to allow more senators to participate.

A new routine of business chart showing the effect of adopting the proposed changes is at Attachment 1A.

The committee will draw these proposals to the attention of those cross-bench senators not represented on the committee and has instructed the Clerk to offer briefings to those senators and any others who may be interested.

The committee intends to give notice on 22 September 2014 (for 24 September 2014) of motions to adopt these temporary orders with effect from 30 September 2014.

Photography in the Senate chamber

This matter was referred to the committee by the President of the Senate pursuant to standing order 17(3). The issue is described in a background paper at Attachment 2.

The committee agrees that the order of the Senate of 21 March 2002, restricting media photographers to taking photographs only of senators with the call, creates difficulties for the media because of different rules applied by each House. The committee also agrees that the order may be seen as unduly restrictive and inconsistent with the unrestricted broadcasting of the complete proceedings of the Senate through the internet.

The committee therefore **recommends** that the order of the Senate of 21 March 2002 should cease to have effect on and from 30 September 2014 and will be giving notice to this effect on 22 September 2014 (for 24 September 2014). The committee also urges the President of the Senate to inform senators in a prominent fashion of the change in procedure.

Seating for members of the House of Representatives on the floor of the Senate chamber

An order of the Senate of 18 May 1993 requires the President to provide chairs on the floor of the chamber in front of the broadcasting booth as a gallery for visiting members of the House of Representatives.

The committee notes that the space provided for advisers of cross-bench senators at the eastern end of the chamber has expanded since 1 July 2014 to accommodate advisers for a larger number of cross-bench senators. There is now little demarcation between seats for advisers attending in the chamber to advise senators, and the gallery for members of the House of Representatives attending to observe Senate proceedings.

The committee considers that it would assist the President of the Senate (in consultation with senators) to consider more effective arrangements for a Members' Gallery if the requirement for it to be located in front of the broadcasting booth were removed.

The committee **recommends** that the order be amended accordingly, and indicates that it proposes to give notice of a motion to this effect on 22 September 2014 (for 24 September 2014).

The committee thanks the President of the Senate for bringing this matter to its attention.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gavin Marshall', with a large, stylized initial 'G'.

Senator Gavin Marshall
(Chair)

