



**The Hon Tony Burke MP**  
**Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations**  
**Minister for the Arts**  
**Leader of the House**

Mr Shayne Neumann MP  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Procedure  
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**Inquiry into recommendations 10 and 27 of Set the Standard**

Dear Mr Neumann,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shayne".

Thank you for your correspondence of 6 October 2022 regarding the Committee's Inquiry into recommendations 10 and 27 of the Set the Standard report (the Inquiry). As you would be aware, the Albanese Government has made a number of changes to the standing and sessional orders since the commencement of the 47th Parliament aimed at improving the operation of the House of Representatives, many of which are directly relevant to the Inquiry.

Sitting Pattern

On the first sitting day of the 47th Parliament, the House of Representatives adopted the Government's proposed sitting pattern for the remainder of 2022. This sitting pattern addressed a specific concern raised in the Set the Standard report by aligning the parliamentary sitting pattern with the school holidays of all states and territories.

With the exception of the variation to the sitting pattern following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the 2022 sitting pattern adopted by the House means that Parliament will not sit during any school holiday period this year. It is the Government's intention to continue these arrangements in the sitting patterns for future years.

Hours of Sitting

On 27 July 2022, the House agreed to a number of amendments to the standing and sessional orders. Among these were a number of amendments that altered the Order of Business to make hours of sitting more suitable for parliamentarians with family and/or caring responsibilities. The principal improvements in this regard are the amendments to standing orders 50 and 133, which now provide that any divisions or calls for quorum after 6:30pm on a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday are deferred until the first opportunity the next sitting day. These amendments allow Members with family/caring responsibilities to leave Parliament at any time after 6:30pm if needed, while still allowing for debate on government business to continue to the usual time of 7:30pm.

Furthermore, the introduction of the urgent bills process under standing orders 82 and 85 now facilitates the expedited debate and passage of urgent legislation by extending sitting hours, while still deferring divisions until the following morning to ensure members are not forced to remain at Parliament late into the night.

### Remote Participation in the Federation Chamber

On 8 September 2022, the House passed a resolution allowing Members who have been granted a leave of absence to participate in debate in the Federation Chamber by video link, subject to certain conditions. While there is a variety of reasons a member may be granted a leave of absence by the House, in practice the most common reason is for parental leave purposes, and as such this resolution is another example of procedural changes aimed at creating a more family-friendly Parliament.

I thank the Committee for the opportunity to contribute to its Inquiry, and look forward to working with the Committee and all Members to continue to improve the operation of the Parliament.

Yours sincerely

**THE HON TONY BURKE MP**

21/10 2022