

Introduction

- 1.1 At its first meeting of the 43rd Parliament on 28 October 2010, the Procedure Committee resolved to adopt the wide ranging reference ‘The maintenance of the standing and sessional orders’. This inquiry, usually adopted each parliament, allows the Committee to efficiently fulfil its important monitoring and ‘problem solving’ role.
- 1.2 The inquiry enables the Committee to identify and examine minor irregularities and problems in the sessional and standing orders which arise from time to time and also to propose necessary adjustments and possible improvements.
- 1.3 At the beginning of the 43rd Parliament, proposed amendments to standing and sessional orders incorporating a package of reforms were adopted by the House of Representatives, with wide-ranging implications for House practice and procedure. The Committee’s (separate) ongoing review of the implementation of those procedural changes has highlighted a number of issues that the Committee has identified in its reports.¹ Some issues have yet to be addressed.
- 1.4 This report reconsiders those issues and, in addition, examines minor anomalies and inconsistencies that the Committee has identified in the standing orders in operation in the 43rd Parliament. It also refers to a range of procedural policy matters that have been brought to the Committee’s attention.

1 Standing Committee on Procedure, *Interim Report: Monitoring and review of procedural changes implemented in the 43rd Parliament*, April 2011; Standing Committee on Procedure, *Monitoring and review of procedural changes implemented in the 43rd Parliament: 4th Report*, November 2012.

Scope of the inquiry

- 1.5 As stated, the inquiry reviewed some issues raised during the review of the procedural changes in the 43rd Parliament. It also examined a number of minor, technical irregularities within the standing orders that have come to the Committee's attention.
- 1.6 Due to time constraints, the Committee was unable to consult as broadly as it may have wished or to obtain information from all interested parties. Nonetheless, the Committee believes that it is important to address the issues, anomalies and inconsistencies that it has identified over the 43rd Parliament and propose amendments to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the standing and sessional orders.

Structure of the report

- 1.7 Chapter 2 reviews matters specifically raised in the Committee's previous reports of its inquiry into the procedural changes implemented in the 43rd Parliament.
- 1.8 Chapter 3 examines minor technical irregularities within the standing orders that have been brought to the Committee's attention, including amendments to recognise recently developed, but now firmly entrenched, House practice.
- 1.9 Chapter 4 considers four additional issues that have been proposed to the Committee: the format for consideration in detail of the Main Appropriation Bill; the party role of the Speaker, Deputy Speaker and Second Deputy Speaker; the current provision for questions to be asked of Members at the end of their speeches during the second reading debate of a Government bill; and aspects of the work of House committees.
- 1.10 Appendix A lists the draft proposed amendments in detail.