



Australian Government

Australian Government response to the
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Procedure
report:

Maintenance of the standing orders

April 2019

Response from the Government to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Procedure report *Maintenance of the standing orders*

Opening Statement

The Government thanks the Committee for its work in inquiring into the practices and procedures of the House and its committees.

The Government's response to the recommendations is as follows:

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the House adopt the 'general principles relating to the selection of private Members' business' at Appendix B of this report by resolution with continuing effect.

Response:

The Government does not support the recommendation, considering the current arrangements relating to the selection of private Members' business' are working well.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that SO 222 be revised as outlined in Appendix A.

Response:

The Government supports the removal of clause (a)(iv) from SO 222 which was implemented in the changes to the Standing Orders adopted by the House on 13 September 2016.

However, the Government considers the current membership of the Selection Committee is appropriate and does not support the changes proposed to SO 222(b) as outlined in Appendix A.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that standing order 229 be amended to insert new part (d) to read:

(d) any Member appointed as a minister immediately ceases to be a member of all committees.

Response:

The Government supports the recommendation which was implemented in the changes to the Standing Orders adopted by the House on 31 August 2016.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that standing order 232 be omitted and be replaced with standing order 232 outlined in Appendix A.

The Committee further recommends that standing order 137A as outlined in Appendix A be adopted to give effect to the provisions of standing order 232.

Response:

The Government does not support the recommendation, considering the current arrangements for the appointment of Chairs to House Standing Committees are appropriate.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that standing order 1 be amended to omit the time limit for valedictory remarks.

Response:

The Government supports the recommendation which was implemented in the changes to the Standing Orders adopted by the House on 31 August 2016.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that Standing Order 197 be amended to omit 'a Minister' and insert 'any Member' in its place.

Response:

The Government does not support the recommendation, considering the current arrangements do not restrict the return of items from the Federation Chamber.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that standing order 131(a) be amended to provide that if a division is called following a division and there is no intervening debate, the Speaker shall appoint tellers immediately and the bells shall be rung for one minute.

Response:

The Government supports the recommendation which was implemented in the changes to the Standing Orders adopted by the House on 13 September 2016.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that standing order 131(b) be amended to provide that, in a successive division, the tellers may record each Member's vote as being the same as it was in the previous division unless a Member reports to them.

Response:

The Government supports the recommendation which was implemented in the changes to the Standing Orders adopted by the House on 13 September 2016.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that Standing Order 217 be omitted.

Response:

The Government supports the recommendation which was implemented in the changes to the Standing Orders adopted by the House on 13 September 2016.

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that standing orders 2, 34, 192, 198, and 247 be amended as outlined in Appendix A.

Response:

The Government supports the recommendation which was implemented in changes to the Standing Orders adopted by the House on 31 August (SOs 34 and 247) and 13 September 2016 for the remainder