

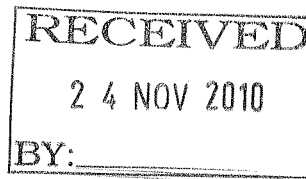


Dr Mal Washer MP

Federal Member for Moore



22nd November 2010



Ms Julie Owens MP, Chair and
Members of the Procedure Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Ms Owens and Members,

I am writing to you about the new working arrangements operating in the 43rd Parliament. The working hours in the 43rd Parliament have increased by four hours above the working hours of 42nd Parliament.

These additional hours are having an adverse effect on the mental and physical health of Members, their staff and the staff of the Parliament.

The result is mental and physical fatigue leading to altered mood with higher levels of anxiety and depression, poor concentration and often abnormal sleep patterns. Physically there is a drop in fitness levels and reduced immunity which would affect resistance to infection and malignancy and exacerbate chronic disease. There is a greater tendency for the use of medication to assist with sleeping and with some increased alcohol consumption.

Many Members have time zone differences up to 3 hours during Eastern Daylight Saving further compounding the problem and are fatigued by up to 7 or more hours of travelling to Canberra. We all have a duty to care for ourselves and our staff.

The hours were increased to allow greater time for Private Members Business. This increase could be accommodated by more efficient timing of speaking and greater use of the Main Committee, to prevent the problems that will undoubtedly occur as a result of these longer working hours.

I urge the Committee to make every effort to reduce the working hours to the hours of the 42nd Parliament.

Yours sincerely

Dr Mal Washer MP, M.B.B.S.
Members for Moore

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