
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

Motion to suspend standing orders and condemn a Member

Report on events of 10 October 2006

House of Representatives
Procedure Committee

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Canberra

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Foreword

This report examines the precedent established on 10 October 2006 (subsequently confirmed on 11 October 2006) of the use of a combined motion suspending standing and sessional orders and incorporating condemnation of a private Member.

In the heat of political battle, events in the Parliament often occur with little time to consider fully the implications of strategies employed or the nature of the language used. The events of 10 October 2006 are one such example. With the benefit of hindsight and time for more considered reflection and assessment, it is clear to the committee that the course followed was not the most desirable in terms of protection of the rights of individual Members or the maintenance of certain key parliamentary tenets.

The committee thanks all who made submissions to this inquiry and raised this matter either formally or informally with the committee. The committee hopes that the conclusions and recommendation in this report will assist the House in clarifying the nature of motions to suspend standing and sessional orders in future and avoid a recurrence of these events.

Margaret May MP
Chair



Membership of the Committee

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Recommendation

Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that standing order 47 be amended, to insert the following:

(e) When a suspension motion has been carried which provides for the alteration of the order of business and related machinery matters, the House's agreement to the proposed alteration shall be understood, without any further motion being necessary.

(f) A suspension motion in itself is not effective as a device for declaring the opinion of the House on a matter, including criticism of the conduct of a Member. The purpose of the suspension motion must be to enable the moving of a motion for such a purpose.