



**Northern Territory  
Youth Parliament**

# **Training and Procedures Manual**

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**This document was prepared by the Table Office  
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# INTRODUCTION

WELCOME, YOUTH PARLIAMENTARIANS, to the Northern Territory Youth Parliament. The Territory's Youth Parliament is designed and run predominantly by young people for young people. This innovative program allows young people from the NT to have their say on issues that are important to them in a respectful forum whilst being supported and acknowledged by the Northern Territory Government.

This manual contains important information about the parliamentary component of the program, so please bring it to all training sessions and parliamentary sitting days.

The next six days of the parliamentary and recreation program will present you with many challenges — emotionally, physically and intellectually — therefore stretching all of you beyond your individual comfort zones. Best of all we are all, going to have a ball doing it !

Whilst a number of people are responsible for the administration of this program, however it is you, the youth parliamentarians, who will have the enthusiasm, dedication, commitment and willingness to take on the Youth Parliament challenge over the next six days.

Our Task Force will consist of several people:

Senior/Supervising Teacher; \_\_\_\_\_

Youth Administrator; \_\_\_\_\_

Immediate Past Youth Speaker; \_\_\_\_\_

Plus, after elections:

Youth Speaker; \_\_\_\_\_

Youth Chief Minister; and \_\_\_\_\_

Youth Leader of the Opposition. \_\_\_\_\_

It is anticipated that this group will be assisted by resource people attending with each of the teams.

# YOUTH LEADERSHIP ROLES

WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION teams, an elected Leader and Deputy Leader are required, as well as a Youth Chairman to preside over the Committee Stage for each Bill. Everyone is encouraged to nominate for a leadership role.

## Chief Minister and Leader of the Opposition

- lead the Government and Opposition groups respectively both inside and outside the Parliament;
- co-ordinate team meetings and facilitate amendment and passage of Bills through the legislative processes;
- represent the team at Task Force meetings;
- act as mentor and carer for team members;
- undertake media appointments/interviews on behalf of the NT YMCA Youth Parliament Program.

## Deputy Chief Minister and Deputy Leader of the Opposition

- assist their leaders in the performance of the above tasks;
- act as Chairman of Committees;
- facilitate the orderly passage of the Bills during the Committee Stage of the legislative process by presiding over the Assembly at this time with support from parliamentary staff;
- have a good understanding of the amendment process.

Each of these positions requires a number of well developed personal attributes, including:

- ability to communicate well with your peers;
- ability to relate to people;
- appreciation of Parliamentary procedure;
- commitment to the success of the Youth Parliament program;
- willingness to forego more enjoyable aspects of the program;
- willingness to work hard;
- dedication;
- a good sense of humor;
- good public speaking skills; and
- above all of these, a willingness to “have a go”.

# PARLIAMENTARY ETIQUETTE

THE FOLLOWING PARLIAMENTARY etiquette must be observed at all times in the Parliamentary Chamber. It is imperative that you have a good understanding of these basic principles in order to automatically apply them during your movement through the Chamber and to defer to the appropriate respect that is paramount during both sitting days and training session(s).

- **Bow to the Chair** - when entering, leaving or crossing the midline of the Chamber;
- **Stand** - when the Speaker enters the Chamber. Thereafter, if the Speaker stands, you must be seated and silent;
- **Address the Speaker** - always direct your comments through the Chair, therefore never address the Government, Opposition or other Honourable Members directly;
- **Movement** - do not move between the Speaker and the Member who is addressing the House, that is, through the Speaker's line of vision. Either wait or go the long way. Do not move behind the Speaker's Chair under any circumstances;
- **To Contribute to Debate** - stand up immediately after the opposing team's Member has resumed his/her seat. If you are recognised by the Speaker, acknowledge him/her (ie: "Thank you, Madam Speaker" or "Thank you, Mr Speaker") and introduce yourself before proceeding with your speech;
- **Other Members** – when you are speaking about other Members of the Youth Parliament, you must refer to them as "the Honourable Member" or "the Honourable Mr/Ms...". Under no circumstances should you use derogatory terms or references in respect of other Members of the House.

# CODE OF CONDUCT

PARTICIPATION IN THE YOUTH PARLIAMENT is premised upon your agreement and understanding that:

- you should be adequately prepared, giving your sponsoring Bill due consideration;
- you are committed to the educative process of this program and will actively participate in all training, sittings and recreational activities;
- you are willing to share your own perspectives and experiences and be respectful and tolerant to the debate and ideas of others;
- you will ensure that your behaviour is of the highest standard when in Parliament House, the company of guests and on any formal outings;
- participants must understand that, while on the program, the supervisors are responsible for their safety. You are required to act in accordance with their directions;
- you must inform a supervisor of your whereabouts and not leave the venues or accommodation unless you have received permission from a supervisor;
- you must be present at all programmed events and activities;
- the possession and/or consumption of alcohol and illegal substances is prohibited;
- mobile telephones are to be turned OFF during all training and during Parliamentary sittings;
- cars may be driven to the program, but keys must be handed to a supervisor on arrival and will be returned in order that students can travel home;
- should you wish to meet with friends or family during the program, they may visit Youth Parliament venues or accommodation; and
- understand that any breach of these guidelines will result in immediate expulsion from the program. Anyone who breaches the above will be sent home on the first available flight or parents/guardians will be called to collect the student. Any additional expenses incurred as a result will be the responsibility of the student/parent/guardian.

Though this may seem slightly harsh, it is for the benefit of both students and supervisors to abide by these rules. It assists in the smooth running of the program. While it may make the program seem rather dreary, it will not be. Most people come to Youth Parliament with doubts, but they always return!

# PUBLIC SPEAKING

HERE ARE A FEW INTRODUCTORY points on speaking in Parliament:

- remember to acknowledge the Speaker, then introduce yourself to the Speaker and the Assembly before beginning your speech;
- make sure you have something to say. Make notes on a piece of paper as a backup in case you lose your train of thought;
- direct your comments through the Chair. Never address other members directly;
- project your voice across the floor;
- stand up straight. Add dramatics if you are comfortable with them;
- try to finish strongly; and
- ignore interjections. Officially, they don't count.

# ROLES OF PARLIAMENTARY MEMBERS

EACH OF THE PARLIAMENTARY MEMBERS detailed in these pages is an elected member of parliament. That is, each is elected at a general election or by-election and represents a constituency in the Northern Territory until the next election is called.

## **Speaker**

THE SPEAKER MAINTAINS ORDER in the House and ensures that debates and proceedings are run fairly. The Speaker is usually a member of the governing party (currently, the Speaker is the Independent member for Brainting). The Speaker is elected by Members of the Assembly when the Assembly first meets after a general election. The Speaker ensures that all Members obey the Standing Orders (rules of the Assembly) and follow correct procedures. The Speaker acts as the umpire when there are disputes in the Assembly. The Speaker of the Assembly is also known as the Presiding Officer of the Parliament.

## **Chief Minister**

THE CHIEF MINISTER IS THE leader of the Government (known as Premier in the Australian States). The Chief Minister is the Leader of the party that wins a majority of seats at the general election for the Legislative Assembly. The Chief Minister is the key spokesperson for the Government. The Chief Minister oversees and co-ordinates the work of the other Ministers and has ministerial responsibilities. The Chief Minister takes a leading role in debates in the House. The Chief Minister and Government Members sit to the Speaker's right in the Legislative Assembly. The Chief Minister is assisted by the Deputy Chief Minister.

## **Deputy Chief Minister**

THE DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER is a member of the party that wins a majority of seats at the general election for the Legislative Assembly. The Deputy Chief Minister assists the leader of the Government (Chief Minister). The Deputy Chief Minister acts as the Chief Minister in his/her absence. The Deputy Chief Minister, together with other members of the Government, sit to the Speaker's right in the Legislative Assembly. The Deputy Chief Minister sits next to the Chief Minister in the Legislative Assembly. The Deputy Chief Minister assumes all other roles of a Government Member.

## **Leader of the Opposition**

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION is the person who leads the party with the second highest number of Members following a general election. The Opposition is the second largest political party after the Government party in the Legislative Assembly. The Leader of the Opposition could become Chief Minister should the opposition party win the next election. The Leader of

# ROLES OF PARLIAMENTARY MEMBERS

the Opposition and Opposition Members sit to the Speaker's left in the Legislative Assembly. The Leader of the Opposition is usually allowed the first right of reply by the Speaker. The Opposition has the task of scrutinising and questioning the government, opposing what it believes to be wrong with government policies and presenting an alternative point of view.

## **Deputy Leader of Opposition**

THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION is a member of the second largest political party in the Legislative Assembly. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition assists the Leader of the Opposition. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition acts as the Leader of the Opposition in the leader's absence. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, together with other members of the Opposition, sit to the Speaker's left in the Legislative Assembly. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition sits next to the Leader of the Opposition in the Chamber. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition assumes all other roles of an Opposition Member.

## **Whip**

WHIPS ARE MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY who are appointed by their parties to manage Members' participation in the business of the Assembly. The Whips make sure Members are in the Chamber when they are due to speak and organises the members of his or her party to take part in debates and votes in the Assembly. The Whip rounds up members to support the party in divisions. The Whip arranges meetings of the parliamentary party wing. There are two Whips in the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, one for the Government and one for the Opposition. The word 'whip' is taken from an English fox-hunting term 'whipper-in', the person responsible for keeping hounds from straying from the pack.

## **Government Members**

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS ARE MEMBERS of the party that has won a majority of seats at the general election. Government Members sit to the Speaker's right in the Chamber. Government Members listen to the problems, questions, opinions and ideas of the people who elect them (constituents). Government Members speak about matters that concern them or their constituents. Government Members are expected to speak in debates, present petitions, ask questions, serve on parliamentary committees and vote on various issues and bills. Government Members support their party's interest by attending meetings of the party or by publicising the party's policies and ideas. Government Members take part in the decision making within their party.

# ROLES OF PARLIAMENTARY MEMBERS

## **Opposition Members**

MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION are members of the party with the second highest number of Members. Opposition members sit to the Speaker's left in the Chamber. Opposition Members listen to the problems, questions, opinions and ideas of the people who elect them (constituents) and speak about matters that concern them or their constituents. Members of the Opposition are expected to speak in debates, present petitions, ask questions, serve on parliamentary committees and vote on various issues and bills. They support their party's interest by attending meetings of the party or by publicising the party's policies and ideas. Members of the Opposition take part in the decision making within their party.

# ROLES OF PARLIAMENTARY OFFICERS

PARLIAMENTARY OFFICERS ARE APPOINTED to their positions. They are not elected members of parliament. Their role is to ensure the efficient running of the Legislative Assembly and to ensure compliance with legal requirements in respect of the passage of legislation.

## **Clerk and Deputy Clerk**

THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY is the most senior official of the Assembly. The Clerk sits with the Deputy Clerk at the head of the central Table immediately in front of the Speaker. The Clerk sits to the right of the Speaker and the Deputy Clerk to the left. The Clerk provides unbiased advice to the Speaker and Members on procedures of the House. The Clerk is Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Legislative Assembly and manages the administrative, procedural and research support to the Assembly. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk wear wigs and gowns on ceremonial occasions.

## **Serjeant-at-Arms**

THE SERJEANT-AT-ARMS IS AN officer of the Department of the Legislative Assembly with ceremonial and administrative responsibilities. The office of the Serjeant-at-Arms dates from the reign of Richard II (1377-1399). The Serjeant-at-Arms precedes the Speaker into the Chamber and carries the Mace. This indicates the commencement of each day's sittings. The Serjeant-at-Arms removes the Mace at the end of a day's proceedings. The Serjeant-at-Arms carries out the formal orders of the Assembly at the direction of the Speaker and is responsible for control of the Public Gallery, Speaker's Gallery and Media Gallery.

# LEGISLATION (Bills)

## Parts of a Bill

### **PART 1**

Contains preliminary information, including:

<i>Short Title</i>	the name of the Bill.
<i>Commencement</i>	provides for the date on which the change in law will take effect. Usually, commencement is from “the day on which it receives Royal Assent”, although there may be reasons for an Act to commence at a later date.
<i>Definitions</i>	may include definitions specific to the purpose of the Bill.

### **PART II**

Contains details of the provisions of the Bill. Each clause should address an individual area in relation to the Bill topic.

# SAMPLE BILL

***A BILL***

**for**

**AN ACT**

*to establish an awareness program for the need to recycle and reduce waste.*

Be it enacted by the Youth Parliament of the Northern Territory as follows:

## PART I - PRELIMINARY

### 1. SHORT TITLE

This Act may be cited as the Recycling Policy Act 1998.

### 2. COMMENCEMENT

This Act comes into operation on the date it receives the assent of the Youth Administrator.

### 3. INTERPRETATION

In this Act, unless the contrary intention appears -

“Recycling” means the transformation of waste into something that can be used again.

## PART II

4 A recycling awareness program will be designed to promote the need to protect the environment from preventable pollution.

5 This program will be introduced into the Northern Territory Board of Studies Approved Curriculum at Year 1 and proceed sequentially through to the end of Year 10.

6 The focus of the program is to be on the individual’s understanding of the landfill crisis and the social and physical effects that inconsiderate disposal of refuse has on the community and how this can be rectified through recycling.

7 A “Northern Territory Recycling Authority” shall be appointed by the Minister to co-ordinate the program within the Ministry of Education. The authority will consist of seven members.

8 The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and the Environment will be responsible for determining what is recyclable and reusable.

# YMCA YOUTH PARLIAMENT LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

## **(I) First Reading**

Formal introduction to publicly present a Bill.

## **(II) Second Reading**

Debate on the Bill as a whole as printed. Sponsor then Refuter speak for five minutes. This is the Second-Reading Speech. Subsequent members have two minutes each for their second-reading speeches. Debate along party lines.

## **(III) Committee Stage**

Youth Chairman of Committees takes the Chair between the Clerks at the Table while the Speaker vacates the Chamber.

The Bill is examined in detail, clause by clause, with any proposed amendments in seriatim order. Debate along party lines, vote according to conscience.

## **(IV) Report to the House**

Speaker returns to the Chair and Chairman reports that: "The Youth Parliament has considered the Bill and agreed to the Bill with/without amendment(s)." The Speaker puts the question to the Youth Parliament: "The question is that the Bill be reported with/without amendment(s)". Once agreed to, the Youth Parliament proceeds to the third reading stage.

## **(V) Third Reading**

Sponsor of the Bill says "Mr Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a third time.". Further debate on Bill, as amended, if time permits according to Speaker's discretion. This is the time for you to register your final vote of acceptance or rejection of Bill – pay attention and don't waste your vote. Debate (if allowed) along party lines, vote according to conscience.

## **(VI) Assent**

Bills that have been passed must be accepted and signed by the Youth Administrator in order for them to become enacted.

# YOUTH PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

THE YOUTH PARLIAMENT WILL consider legislation using the Northern Territory Youth Parliament Procedure, which is modelled on Northern Territory Parliamentary procedure, though modified owing to time constraints. The Youth Parliament will be divided into a “Government” and “Opposition”. This division reflects the adversarial nature of our Westminster system of government.

## First Reading

Each Bill is first introduced to Parliament in the “First Reading” stage. This is merely a formality whereby the sponsor of the Bill announces that he/she is introducing a Bill. The short title of the Bill is then read by the Clerk.

## Second Reading

The “Second Reading” follows immediately and this is where we get into the real action. The “Sponsor” moves: – “That the Bill be now read a second time” and proceeds to speak on the Bill for a maximum of five minutes. At this stage, the Sponsor really needs to convince everyone that the Bill is absolutely necessary so try to use good, sound arguments.

Once the Sponsor has finished, the “Refuter” from the Opposition stands to refute the Bill and may speak for up to five minutes. The Refuter should try to counter the Sponsor’s arguments and show the House the Bill’s true meaning. Remember that, being second, your job is much harder so do it well.

Now that the Refuter has spoken, other “Honorable Members” of the House have their chance to speak, but only once each for a maximum of two minutes. You may speak only when the Speaker acknowledges you.

When everyone has had his or her say, or time runs out, the Bill is put to a vote on the question that the Bill be now read a second time. At this stage, the Bill can be voted out. However, owing to the amount of time and effort that each team has put into formulating their Bill, the aim of Youth Parliament is to produce the ‘Best Bill Possible’ and to give a young person the opportunity to play a leadership role as Chairman of Committees. It is therefore normal for the Youth Parliament to resolve the second reading vote in the affirmative.

## Committee Stage

Next we move into the Committee stage during which the Speaker vacates the Chair and a “Youth Chairman of Committees” takes the Chair between the Clerks at the Table. In the Committee stage, each clause of a bill is discussed individually. The question put by the Youth Chairman for determination by the Parliament on each Clause is: “That the clause stand as printed”. This is where either side gets to tidy up the Bill and modify it by either changing, adding, or deleting text. This is achieved through an “amendment”, which is submitted, at the latest, at 10.30 pm the night before Youth Parliament sits.

# YOUTH PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Remember that an important aim of Youth Parliament is to produce the best possible Bill to give to the Government regardless of whether or not you support the Bill in principle or whether or not the Bill is passed. Therefore, it is everyone's responsibility to suggest amendments to improve the Bill (even if it is your own team's Bill or you want to suggest an improvement to your refuting of the Bill).

To introduce an amendment, the amendment Sponsor (not necessarily the Bill Sponsor) must stand before the question is put (ie, the final vote on the clause as a whole) and after reading the amendment to the House, convince the House that this is for the better. The amendment can then be spoken for or against by anyone in the Chamber, for two minutes each time.

During the Committee stage, if there is an amendment moved to a clause, there will be a vote to determine whether that amendment is successful and, after all further amendments are considered (there may be more than one amendment moved per clause), there will be a vote on the clause as a whole (with the amendments if they have been agreed to).

Once discussion has ended, the amendment is voted on and, if successful, becomes part of the final Bill. If the vote is unsuccessful, the clause remains unchanged. If a whole clause is to be omitted, the final vote on the clause as a whole must be resolved in the negative.

After all clauses have been voted on, the title of the Bill is voted on.

## Third Reading

At the conclusion of the Committee Stage, the Speaker resumes the Chair to preside over the third reading. During the third reading, the Sponsor of the Bill stands and moves: "That the Bill be now read a third time" (ie, that the final vote on the Bill takes place). If time permits (this is at the Speaker's discretion), the Sponsor may speak on the Bill as a whole as amended followed by the Refuter and then Honourable Members. Debate in the third reading is also along party lines.

The Bill can be totally scrapped with this vote and a "division" may be called. If the Bill passes the Third Reading vote, it becomes a proposed law and is sent to the Youth Administrator who signs it to give Assent. All the enacted Bills are then handed to the Government at the official closing ceremony.

All unsuccessful Bills will also appear in the report of the Youth Parliament to be presented to the Government.

See, it's not that hard after all!

# YOUTH PARLIAMENT PRESENTATION OF BILLS - SCRIPT

## First Reading

- Speaker:** Business of the Day.
- Clerk:** Business of the Day: Order No ..... (*Clerk reads the short title of the Bill to the House*) standing under the name of (*name sponsor*).
- Speaker:** (*Calls on the Sponsor*) The Honourable Mr/Miss/Ms (Surname)
- Sponsor:** "Mr /Madam Speaker, I seek leave to introduce a Bill entitled.....(short title)..."
- Speaker:** "Is leave granted?..... Leave is granted (*Sponsor hands Bill to the Clerk*)".
- Clerk:** *Clerk reads Long Title of the Bill to the House. A Bill for an Act.....*

## Second Reading

- Speaker:** The Honourable Mr/Miss/Ms (Surname)
- Sponsor:** "Mr./Madam Speaker, I move - that the Bill be now read a second time." (*The Sponsor proceeds with his/her speech, supporting and commending the Bill - 5 minutes maximum. The speech details the importance of the Bill and summarises the content of the Bill*). *The person refuting the Bill will follow the Sponsor in debate - 5 minutes maximum. Other members may debate the Bill. They must stand if they wish to speak and be acknowledged before speaking by the Speaker, who will say:*
- Speaker:** The Honourable Mr/Miss/Ms ..... (surname).
- Each delegate may speak only once for up to 2 minutes during the second reading debate.*  
*When debating has finished or time has expired:*

## Sponsor (in reply)

# YOUTH PARLIAMENT PRESENTATION OF BILLS - SCRIPT

**Speaker:** The question is that the Bill be now read a second time.  
Those of that opinion say, aye,  
To the contrary, no,  
I think the ayes/noes have it.”

**Clerk:** *Reads the Long Title of the Bill.* A Bill for an Act to...

## Committee Stage

**Speaker:** “The Assembly shall resolve itself into Committee of the Whole.”

*The Speaker will vacate the Chair and the Chairman of Committees will preside while the Bill is considered in Committee of the Whole. The Chairman will be appointed from the Youth Parliamentarians. Note: At this stage, the Bill is dealt with clause by clause and the proposed amendment(s) should be ordered accordingly.*

**Chairman:** “Order. The Committee will now consider the (*state title of Bill being considered*)”

“The question is that clause ... stand as printed.”

**Sponsor member:** **or** *At this point, if any change is proposed, the sponsor of the amendment must stand in his/her place and be acknowledged by the Chairman. Amendments are detailed at the end of this document.*

*If there is no amendment,*

**Chairman:** “Those of that opinion say, aye,  
To the contrary, no,  
I think the ayes/noes have it.”

*Once this question has been resolved and no amendment is proposed, the Chairman goes on to each subsequent clause, again proposing “The question is that clause stand as printed” . Once all clauses have been considered, the Chairman will put the question-”that the Title of the Bill be agreed to”.*

# YOUTH PARLIAMENT PRESENTATION OF BILLS - SCRIPT

**Chairman:** “The question is - That the Title be agreed to.  
Those of that opinion say, aye,  
To the contrary, no,  
I think the ayes/noes have it.”

*The Speaker then returns to the Chamber. The Chairman reports the Committee’s consideration of the Bill in the following terms:*

**Chairman:** “Mr/Madam Speaker, I have to report that the Committee has considered the Bill and agreed to the same with/without amendment(s).”

## **Third Reading**

**Speaker:** *Calls on the sponsor of the Bill by name.*

**Sponsor:** “Mr/Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill be now read a third time.”

*Debate may take place on the Bill as amended, and if time permits. Debate continues until the Bill’s sponsor stands.*

**Speaker:** “The question is that the Bill be now read a third time.  
Those of that opinion say, aye,  
To the contrary, no,  
I think the ayes/noes have it.”

***(Possible Division - see last page)***

The result of the division is...

**Clerk:** *Reads the long title of the Bill. A Bill for an Act to...*

# YOUTH PARLIAMENT PRESENTATION OF BILLS - SCRIPT

## Amendments

Amendments are your chance to improve a Bill. For example, if a Bill is missing an important definition or an important element is missing from a clause, you can move to amend the Bill in the Committee Stage. Remember that proposed amendments must not change the original purpose of the Bill.

Within the Committee Stage, the Bill is debated clause by clause and amendments can be made from either side of the Chamber. For each proposed amendment, there will be a sponsor who will start the debate and, after he or she has spoken, the proposed amendment is open for debate.

### Types of Amendments

- words may be added to or omitted from a clause.
- a new clause can be added to a Bill - either a completely new clause or one which replaces an existing clause.
- a clause can be omitted from a Bill.
- to alter an existing clause, after the Chairman's question "That clause ... stand as printed", the sponsor of the proposed amendment must stand and be acknowledged by the Chairman before proposing the amendment.

*To insert and/or omit words, the sponsor will say either:*

**A m e n d m e n t** "I move that the words '...' be **omitted**."

**Sponsor:**

*or*

"I move that the words '...' be **inserted** after/before the word/s '...' so that the clause now reads '...'".

*or*

"I move the following amendment - Omit '...' and **insert** in their stead '...'".

*To omit the whole clause, the sponsor votes in the negative to the question put by the Chairman-That the clause stand as printed:*

# YOUTH PARLIAMENT PRESENTATION OF BILLS - SCRIPT

*Following any of these four types of amendments and the (possible) ensuing debate, the Chairman puts the question:*

**Chairman:** “The question now is that the amendment of Mr/Mrs/Miss (surname) to clause number ‘.....’ be agreed to.  
Those of that opinion say, aye,  
To the contrary, no,  
I think the ayes/noes have it.”.

*(Possible Division - see next page)*

**Chairman:** “The question now is that the clause stand as amended.  
Those of that opinion say, aye,  
To the contrary, no,  
I think the ayes/noes have it.”.

*To insert a new clause, after the consideration of each clause and prior to the consideration of the long title, the sponsor must stand and say:*

**A m e n d m e n t Sponsor:** “I move that a **new clause**, (**No** ), be inserted after clause ‘....’ that reads ‘....’” or “as circulated in amendment schedule no . . . .”

**Chairman:** “The question is that the new clause be inserted in the Bill.  
Those of that opinion say, aye,  
To the contrary, no,  
I think the ayes/noes have it.”

*(Possible Division - see next page)*

# YOUTH PARLIAMENT PRESENTATION OF BILLS - SCRIPT

## Divisions

A division may only be called on either the second reading, ie, where the Speaker says:

**Speaker:** “The question is that the Bill be now read a second time.  
Those of that opinion say, aye,  
To the contrary, no,  
I think the ayes/noes have it.”

or in the committee stage, where the Chairman says:

**Chairman:** “The question is that the amendment of Mr/Ms (*surname*) to clause number ‘...’ be agreed to.  
Those of that opinion say, aye,  
To the contrary, no,  
I think the ayes/noes have it.”.

or when the Chairman says:

**Chairman:** “The question is that the new clause be inserted in the Bill.  
Those of that opinion say, aye,  
To the contrary, no,  
I think the ayes/noes have it.”.

# YOUTH PARLIAMENT PRESENTATION OF BILLS - SCRIPT

If a division is desired at this point, a member must call from his/her seat “**division**” and be supported by one other member. In this event, the following procedure is observed:

1. The Speaker will order the bells to be rung for one minute;
2. During this time all members shall return to their seats in the Chamber, unless they wish to abstain, in which case they should go outside the Chamber;
3. After the bells stop ringing, the doors will be locked and the Speaker/Chairman will direct those in **favour** of the question to sit on his/her **right**; and those **against** on his/her **left**;
4. The Speaker will appoint two tellers from each side to count the members and mark the division lists accordingly;
5. After the division lists have been completed and signed they will be returned to the Speaker/Chairman who will announce the result of the division.
6. Members should then resume their own seats.
7. The Speaker will announce the result of the Division: Ayes (number), Noes (number). I declare the question resolved in the affirmative/negative.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### THE MACE

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MACE in a Parliamentary Chamber is that it is a symbol of the authority of the Speaker and, in turn, of the Parliament and provides a tangible link with Westminster as the “Mother of Parliaments”.

While the Speaker is present in the Chamber, the Mace is placed on the Table and when the Assembly forms into Committee of the Whole, or before a Speaker is elected, it is relocated to the brackets below the Table.

During the 12<sup>th</sup> century, maces were carried by the Serjeants-at-Arms of the King’s personal attendant corps as weapons and, as such, became the symbol of the King’s authority. Towards the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Serjeants-at-Arms were assigned to the Speaker of the Parliament and commenced to undertake associated duties in the House of Commons. Accordingly, the symbolism of the Mace developed to signify the power of the Speaker.

The Mace of Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory was presented on 17 May 1979 by the Commonwealth Parliament as a gift to acknowledge Self-Government on 1 July 1978. The then President of the Senate, Senator the Honourable Condor Laucke, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Honourable Billy Snedden, travelled to Darwin to participate in the ceremony at which the Mace was presented.

The Commonwealth Parliament commissioned Garrards, Royal Jewellers to Her Majesty, to make the Mace and it is crafted in gold and silver gilt. It weighs 4.2 kilograms.

To symbolise the relationship between the Northern Territory and Westminster Parliamentary tradition, the Mace incorporates elements of both legislatures. On its crest is the St George Cross, which signifies the British Parliamentary system. The top of its orb is decorated alternately with the St George Cross and the French fleurs-de-lis and the orb proper contains Her Majesty’s cypher and a presentation inscription. Stylised wedge-tailed eagles, one of the Northern Territory’s faunal emblems, support the orb. The staff is intertwined with the Tudor Roses, a symbol of the British Parliament, Sturt Desert Roses, the Northern Territory’s floral emblem, and a spider conch shell, similar to that depicted on the Northern Territory Crest, is located at the base.

# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

## MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE (MPI)

DISCUSSION OF A MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE (MPI) is provided for by Standing Orders and provides an avenue to Opposition and Private Members to initiate immediate debate on a matter considered of current, topical and urgent concern. It allows discussion on a matter that otherwise would not be debated during the course of Business of the Day. To conform with Standing Orders, the matter should relate to a Minister's portfolio responsibility.

While any Member may initiate such a matter for discussion, it is almost exclusively used by Members of the Opposition in the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. In the House of Representatives, where there are limited opportunities for Private Members to initiate debate in the Chamber, MPI procedure has developed into one of considerable significance.

The provision to debate MPIs was adopted by the House of Commons in 1882 and by the House of Representatives in 1901.

An MPA must be raised by advising the Speaker, in writing and through the Office of the Clerk, at least two hours before commencement of that day's sitting. If the Speaker determines that the matter is within the competence of the Assembly and is in order, he or she will communicate it to the relevant Minister and the Leader of Government Business as soon as practicable.

Discussion on MPIs takes place after Ministerial Statements and before Orders of the Day are called on. The Speaker reads the letter received from the Member proposing debate to the Assembly, after which discussion must be supported by five Members, including the proposer. In the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, it is usual that two Members each from the Government and Opposition speak to a matter of public importance.

Although it is not usual in the Legislative Assembly for the Speaker to receive advice of more than one matter of public importance on the same sitting day, should this occur, the Speaker will accord priority to the matter which is the most urgent and important.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### SAMPLE LETTER CONVEYING MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

YOUTH PARLIAMENT  
GPO Box 3721  
Darwin NT 0801  
Telephone: (08) 89 461 427  
Facsimile: (08) 89 461 578

Youth Speaker  
Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory  
Parliament House  
DARWIN NT 0801

ddmmyy

Dear Mr/Madam Speaker

I propose that the following definite matter of public importance be put to the Assembly this day –

“The importance of the Northern Territory achieving statehood by the year 2010”.

Yours faithfully,

Youth Leader of the Opposition

# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

## SAMPLE SCRIPT FOR MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

**Speaker:** HONOURABLE MEMBERS, I HAVE RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING LETTER FROM THE YOUTH CHIEF MINISTER.

**Speaker:** *(READ LETTER)*

**Speaker:** IS THE PROPOSED DISCUSSION SUPPORTED?  
(WHEN 5 MEMBERS HAVE RISEN)  
YOUTH SPEAKER:

**Speaker:** I CALL ON THE YOUTH LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.

**O p p o s i t i o n** *Speaks to the motion*  
**Leader:**

**Chief Minister:** *Responds to the motion*

**O p p o s i t i o n** *Speaks in support of the motion*  
**Member:**

**Government** *Speaks in support of the Chief Minister.*  
**Member:**

**Speaker:** *Puts the motion to the vote (division is possible).*

# GLOSSARY

**Act (of Parliament)** A law made by parliament which has received Assent through the Governor-General (Commonwealth), Governor (State) or Administrator (Territory)

**Administrator** The Head of State of the Northern Territory. The representative of the Governor-General.

**Assembly** People meeting together.

**Backbencher** A member of Parliament who is not a Minister and holds no special officer; the name arises from the fact that such members sit on the benches at the back of the House.

**Bill** A proposal for a new law which has been presented to parliament.

**Chamber** Room where the Parliament meets.

**Chief Minister** The parliamentary head of the majority party and thus the government.

**Clerk** In parliament, the most important non-politician present. The Clerk advises the Speaker and the Members on the correct way to conduct parliamentary business.

**Coalition** The joining together of two or more groups or political parties, usually to form a government or an opposition.

**Committee of the Whole** A committee, consisting of all the members of a house of parliament, usually formed to consider a bill in detail. Each clause may be examined in detail and amendments may be considered.

**Cross bench** The smaller parties and independent Members are collectively called the cross bench.

**Division** A method by which a vote in a house of parliament is decided, in which members of the house divide into two groups to signify either support or opposition to a motion. The chair directs the 'ayes' to move to the right of the chair, and the 'nos' to the left. Division lists are published in Hansard. Bells are rung and the doors locked before the division takes place.

**Electorate** The area of land and the population from which one or more people are elected to parliament as representatives.

**First Reading** The stage in parliamentary proceedings at which permission is obtained to introduce and proceed with a Bill.

**Government** The majority party or parties after an election who has/have control of the parliament.

**Hansard** The written record of what is said in parliament.

**Legislative** Law making.

**Mace** The symbol of the Speaker's power in the Parliament.

**Member** A person elected to parliament.

# GLOSSARY

**Minister** A member of Government who has responsibility for a specific area of government business. This is called a portfolio. Portfolio responsibilities include: Treasury; Business, Industry and Resource Development; Sport and Recreation; Housing; Health; etc.

**Opposition** The party with the next highest number of seats in the Parliament.

**Parliament** A place where politicians meet to talk and make laws.

**Petition** A written request by a group of people to the Legislative Assembly for some action to be taken.

**Politicians** People elected to represent others in Parliament.

**Serjeant-at-Arms** The person who has responsibility for keeping order at the direction of the Speaker, the carrier of the Mace and the ceremonial officer of the Legislative Assembly.

**Speaker** The politician elected by other members to be in charge of the Legislative Assembly.

**Unicameral** A Parliament consisting of a single chamber. The Queensland parliament is unicameral, as is the assembly of the Northern Territory.