TERMINOLOGY

This is a set of definitions of some of the most frequently used parliamentary words or phrases not explained elsewhere in these sheets.

**ACT**
The document which creates and describes a law. It is passed as a Bill, agreed to by both Houses, and has received Royal Assent from the Governor.

**ADJOURN**
To end a sitting day.

**ADJOURNMENT DEBATE**
A debate held at the end of the sitting day in which any topic may be raised.

**AMENDMENT**
An alteration to a Bill, an Act or a Motion. An entire Bill may amend an existing Act, or amendments may be proposed during the passage of a Bill.

**AYES**
When Members vote yes.

**BACKBENCHER**
A Member of Parliament who is not a Minister or holder of any special office.

**BAR (OF THE HOUSE)**
The formal barrier of each Chamber beyond which only MPs, officers of the House or those invited may proceed.

**BICAMERAL**
A Parliament composed of two Houses - in Tasmania the ‘lower’ House is the House of Assembly while the ‘upper’ House is the Legislative Council.

**CABINET**
A maximum of eight Members of the Parliament who have been commissioned as Ministers by the Governor to be responsible for a ministry or government agency or to administer certain Acts.

**CASTING VOTE**
The vote which determines the outcome of an issue when the voting is equally divided.

**CHAMBER**
The term given to the room in which the business of either House of Parliament is conducted. Only Members, Clerks and invited guests may enter it.

**CLERKS**
The (black-gowned) officials who assist the Presiding Officers and Members in the correct operations of Parliament as determined by the Standing Orders. They also maintain the formal record of proceedings (the Votes and Proceedings), and manage the daily affairs of the Parliament.

**COMMITTEE**
A group of Members of Parliament appointed by one or both Houses to consider and report on matters referred to it. Some Standing Committees have a broad scope which lasts for the life of the Parliament, while Select Committees consider specific issues referred to them.

**DISSENT**
Members may move to dissent if they disagree with a ruling given by the Presiding Officer. The issue is then debated and voted upon.

**DISSOLUTION**
The termination by the Governor of the House of Assembly for a general election.

**DIVISION**
When the Presiding Officer announces the result of a vote a Member in the minority may ask that a count be taken. This records in writing those MPs for or against the motion or question before the House. After the bells are rung for two minutes (timed by a sand-glass) the doors are locked, and a teller (person to count) from each side is appointed to record the Ayes or Noes. The Ayes move to the right and the Noes to the left of the Presiding Officer’s Chair.

**ELECTORAL ROLL**
The list of people entitled to vote at an election; it is maintained by the Electoral Office.

**ELECTORATE**
The geographical area represented by a Member of Parliament. The lower House has 5 electorates, each returning five Members; the upper House has 15 electorates, or divisions, each returning one Member. The same rolls are used for State House of Assembly and Federal House of Representatives elections.
GOVERNMENT
The Party or group of Members who can maintain the confidence (a majority of votes) of the House. The Government is also seen as every Member supporting the parliamentary majority.

HONOURABLE
Members who have met certain requirements may, upon application to the Governor, retain the title ‘Honourable’ in front of their name for life.

HONOURABLE MEMBER
A formal manner of address for all Members.

LEAVE
When a Member seeks permission of all Members in the Chamber to do something which otherwise may not be permitted at that stage of proceedings.

MINISTERS
The Premier, as the Governor’s principal adviser and as chief Minister, allocates each of the Ministers cabinet or portfolio responsibilities, and they manage or set government and/or departmental policy.

MINORITY GOVERNMENT
A governing Party without a majority of seats in the lower House, which is therefore dependent on the support of other Members to achieve its goals.

MOTION
A proposal or choice set out so that Members may declare their preference when the ‘motion is put’, or the time to vote or divide has been reached. All business requiring a clear decision is put as a motion.

NOES
When Members vote no.

NOTICE
The formal process by which the Parliament is notified of forthcoming business. Motions and questions may be placed on notice to give Members or Ministers an opportunity to prepare for them. These then appear on the Notice Paper.

OPPOSITION
The second largest party or grouping after the Government in the lower House.

ORDER
The Presiding Officers are charged with maintaining order (noise and behaviour etc.) in their respective Chambers, often calling for Order, Order!

ORDERS OF THE DAY
The agenda for the day's proceedings, published in the Notice Paper.

PAIR
By mutual agreement, to balance the legitimate absence of a Member another Member is ‘paired’ and does not vote or take part in divisions. In this way crucial government majorities survive.

PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE
Special rights applying to each House and the Members individually to allow them to carry out their duties without fear of prosecution or hindrance.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION
A short statement by a Member concerning an issue that involves them personally or which may have an impact on them, or Members who feel they may have been misrepresented or misunderstood.

POINT OF ORDER
A query raised by a Member as to whether the proceedings or conduct of the House or another Member or Party are in order. The Presiding Officers rule on the query but their decision may be challenged by Members dissenting from that ruling.

PORTFOLIO
The specific responsibilities of a Minister or his or her department.

PROROGUE
The termination of the session of Parliament by the Governor, but it is not a dissolution for an election. It brings an end to the business of that session and stops some committee activity; any unfinished business may be reinstated to the Notice Paper when Parliament resumes.

RESOLUTION
Either House of the Parliament can express its opinion on any matter by resolution. A motion passed by the House becomes a resolution.

SEAT
Refers to both a Member's electorate and place in the House.

STANDING ORDERS
The State Constitution Act provides that the Governor may endorse a set of standing orders or rules and procedures decided upon by each House for the conduct of its own formal business. These are managed by the Presiding Officers and Clerks.

TABLING
The presentation to either House of a report, Bill, or other formal document; this procedure is known as ‘laying upon the Table’.

WHIP
Each major Party appoints one of its Members to manage party business such as allocating speeches and ensuring sufficient Members are ready for divisions.

WRIT
The written commands from the Governor which are issued for an election and returned to commence the new Parliament, and must be tabled by the Clerk.

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