

Standing Committee on
Procedure and Privileges



Report on the Review of the Rules of the Northwest Territories, No. 3

20th Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly

Chair: Ms. Kate Reid

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SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Speaker:

Your Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges is pleased to provide its Report on the Review of the Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly.



Kate Reid

Chair, Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES**

**REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE RULES OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, NO. 2**

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES**

**REPORT ON THE REVIEW THE RULES OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, NO. 3**

INTRODUCTION

The Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges (Committee) is pleased to report on its review of the Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly (the Rules).

Speaker Shane Thomson referred three procedural matters to Committee for review. These matters arise from two letters dated November 04, 2025, and December 03, 2025. The Speaker asked Committee to examine whether the Consolidated Rules of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly (“the Rules”) require clarification or amendment in the following areas:

1. Time allowed for closing debate
2. Length of time for oral questions
3. The role of the Speaker when a Member proposes an emergency debate

The Speaker also asked Committee to consider if the Rules should be changed to clarify process regarding reporting bills. Committee continues to examine the matter and will provide a report at a later date. The correspondence from Speaker Thompson is attached as Appendix A.

Committee has considered each of these matters and is prepared to provide a report to this House.

Time Allowed for Closing Debate

The Speaker asked whether the limit for closing debate should be reduced from twenty minutes to five minutes. Rule 6.2(7) provides that the mover of a motion may speak a second time to close debate, confirming a distinct right of reply. Read together with Rule 3.2(2), which allows a Member to speak for up to 20 minutes at a time unless expressly limited by another Rule, the mover’s closing reply presently carries a maximum speaking time of twenty minutes. There is no conflict between these Rules. Rule 6.2(7) creates the right to a closing reply, and Rule 3.2(2) supplies the time limit in the absence of a more specific limit.

In his referral, the Speaker noted that the right of reply is intended to summarize the debate and respond to points raised, rather than to introduce new arguments, and asked Committee to consider expressly limiting the closing reply to five minutes. Committee found no evidence that the current limit causes delays or obstructs proceedings. Closing debate is rarely lengthy, and Members noted no concerns in practice.

No change is recommended to Rule 3.2(2) or Rule 6.2(7).

Length of Time for Oral Questions

The Government House Leader asked the Speaker to refer to Committee the question of whether the current 60-minute limit for Oral Questions, set out in Rule 7.2(5), should be reduced. The request noted that since the 2024 amendment reducing supplementary questions from three to two, Question Period has been noticeably more efficient, with Members often able to ask multiple questions within the existing one-hour timeframe

Committee reviewed the request and did not find that the present sixty-minute limit is causing inefficiency or procedural difficulty. Members agreed that the existing duration enables all Regular Members to participate fully and does not impede the Assembly's work. The Committee therefore concluded that no procedural problem has been demonstrated.

No change is recommended to Rule 7.2(5).

Role of the Speaker when a Member Wishes to Propose Emergency Debate

Rule 3.5(1)(a) requires that a Member seeking an emergency debate provide the Speaker with at least one hour's notice. The Speaker asked whether this notice period is sufficient and whether the Rules should more clearly support a pre-screening role for the Speaker, similar to other notices such as Acknowledgements and Written Questions where the Speaker can provide feedback before the motion is brought forward.

Committee noted that emergency debates are infrequent and context-driven. Committee also noted that the Speaker already exercises a gatekeeping role when determining whether a matter is urgent and cannot be addressed through other

procedures. However, Committee agreed that the current wording of Rule 3.5(1) does not clearly reflect this gatekeeping function and the Speaker's role should be made more explicit in the Rules.

Committee considers the one-hour notice requirement reasonable and consistent with the Assembly's needs. To clarify the Speaker's authority to assess whether the conditions have been met to justify an emergency debate, Committee recommends the following amendment to the Rules:

Recommendation 1: The Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges recommends that Rule 3.5(1) of the Consolidated Rules of the Northwest Territories be amended to replace "subject to the following conditions" with "if the Speaker is satisfied that the following conditions have been met."

APPENDIX A

- Correspondence from Speaker Shane Thompson