Barton Parliamentary Competition Handbook

Robert Menzies INSTITUTE

Per Vocem Vita

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Introduction

Welcome to the Barton Parliamentary Competition!

This competition, a collaboration between Per Vocem Vita and the Robert Menzies Institute, is designed to stimulate thinking and debate on lively political issues, empowering students to discuss both historical and contemporary topics.

Throughout the process of this competition, students will debate three bills, a contemporary prepared topic that they will have time to prepare for, a historical topic they will prepare for beforehand, and a secret contemporary topic. Contemporary topics will be selected from current media debates and battles fought in parliament but will often have extra clauses added to stimulate debate. Historical issues will include bills from the time of Australia's longest serving Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies.

These bills are fully modifiable by students, allowing them to remove, add, and modify mock legislation and make their impact. For the historical topic, students will be assigned a party, and it will be their job to research what their party's perspective on given legislation was at the time of Robert Menzies, and advocate for that viewpoint in this competition.

This competition directly rewards historical research, investment of time, and strong oratory skills. Students who spend time developing those three skills are highly likely to succeed. Schedules and further details will be provided upon enrolment to the competition and upon request.

Rules

Part I - Preliminary

Standing Order 1 — Short Title

These Standing Orders may be cited as the *Barton Parliamentary Competition Standing Orders*.

Standing Order 2 — Purpose

The purpose of these Standing Orders is to regulate proceedings of the Barton Parliamentary Competition, including debate, motions, amendments, voting, and the conduct of competitors.

Standing Order 3 — Definitions

In these Standing Orders, unless the contrary intention appears:

- “Bill” refers to legislative proposal debated during the competition.
- “Chair” refers to the Speaker, Presiding Officer, or Clerk conducting proceedings.
- “Clause” refers to individual provision of a Bill.
- “Committee of the Whole” refers to proceedings conducted clause-by-clause for detailed consideration of a Bill.
- “Competitor” refers to a participating member.
- “Motion” refers to a proposal requesting that the member take action.
- “Party Assignment” refers to a political affiliation allocated by organisers for competition purposes.

PART II — GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Standing Order 4 — Assigned Parties

(1) Competitors when debating the historical topic shall be allocated political parties by organisers.

(2) Competitors debating contemporary and secret topics may adopt positions irrespective of their personal beliefs.

(3) Competitors are encouraged to adopt diverse and novel positions where appropriate.

Standing Order 5 — Assessment Principles

(1) Competitors will be scored on the following categories;
   a. Oratory prowess; the vocal style (volume, tonal intonation, pace and fluency) and body language (eye contact, gestures and stance) used in the speeches and questions delivered by the competitor
   b. Substantive contributions; the quality, accuracy, responsiveness, uniqueness and significance of amendments, speeches and questions delivered by the competitor
   c. Historical accuracy and relevance; how well researched and faithful to their assigned position the competitor is throughout the debate
   d. Teamwork; how equitably and strategically the team divides their labour

(2) Judges have the discretionary ability to act on reports of misconduct by deducting points from teams, based on the circumstances of the transgression

(3) Each competitor's individual performance will be evaluated alongside their teammate's to award each team a final score at the end of each debate

(4) Teams will be ranked in order of their combined score at the end of the three debates, so that the team with the highest combined score is awarded the trophy

Standing Order 6 — Distribution of Documents

(1) Supporting documents shall be distributed prior to proceedings for non-secret topics.

(2) Documents relating to secret topics shall be distributed during proceedings.

(3) Additional supporting materials may be provided at the discretion of organisers.

PART III — AUTHORITY OF THE CHAIR

Standing Order 7 — Authority of the Chair

The Chair shall have authority to:

- maintain order;
- recognise speakers;
- enforce time limits;
- interpret these Standing Orders; and
- make procedural determinations where these Orders are silent.

Standing Order 8 — Suspension of Standing Orders

The Chair may suspend application of any Standing Order where necessary for fairness, practicality, or time management.

PART IV — MOTIONS

Standing Order 9 — Submission of Motions

1) Motions are to be written on a piece of paper, motions must be:
    a. Legible enough to be understood by the Clerk
    b. Relevant to the discussion at hand
    c. Signed by the mover of the motion
    d. Contain a brief explanation of the nature of the motion
2) Motions are submitted by competitors raising their hands, motions are collected by presiding officers.
3) Motions must be written prior to competitors raising their hand to facilitate equitable competition

Standing Order 10 — Nature of Motions

1) Motions are proposals requesting the Senate take a specified action.
2) Subsidiary motions shall not be considered unless expressly permitted by the Chair.
3) Procedural motions may be initiated by the Chair where necessary for orderly conduct.

Standing Order 11 — Seconding of Motions

Motions shall not require a seconder.

Standing Order 12 — Admissibility of Motions

(1) The Chair or Clerk may refuse to accept any motion.
(2) Reasons for refusal need not be provided.
(3) Grounds for refusal may include:
    (a) repetition of a matter already debated;
    (b) inconsistency with a previously agreed amendment;
    (c) duplication of an existing motion; or
    (d) procedural impracticality.

Standing Order 13 — Debate on Substantive Motions

(1) Upon a substantive motion being read, the mover shall be granted the first opportunity to speak in support of the motion.

(2) Debate shall not exceed four speakers.

(3) No speech, rebuttal, question, or reply shall exceed 2 minutes.

(4) At the conclusion of debate, the motion shall immediately be put to a vote.

PART V — LEGISLATIVE PROCEEDINGS

Division 1 — Order of Proceedings

Standing Order 14 — Sequence of Proceedings

Proceedings on each Bill shall occur in the following order:

1. Second Reading Debate;
2. Informal Consultation;
3. Committee of the Whole;
4. Final Review;
5. Third Reading Vote.

Division 2 — Second Reading Debate

Standing Order 15 — Purpose of Second Reading Debate

The Second Reading Debate shall consider the general principles and merits of the Bill in its introduced form.

Standing Order 16 — Recognition to Speak

(1) A competitor seeking the call shall submit a motion.

(2) Such motion shall state:

(a) whether the competitor speaks for or against the Bill; and

(b) the principal basis of their position.

(3) A motion may state, for example:

"That Senator Wiggins be granted the call to speak in favour of the Cybersecurity Bill on the basis that it enhances public safety."

Standing Order 17 — Time Limits During Second Reading

(1) Debate during the Second Reading stage shall continue for approximately 15 minutes.
(2) No individual speech shall exceed 4 minutes.

Division 3 – Informal Consultation

Standing Order 18 — Informal Consultation Period

(1) Following the Second Reading Debate, proceedings shall be suspended for approximately 5 minutes.
(2) During this suspension, competitors may discuss amendments informally.
(3) Informal consultation shall not ordinarily form part of scoring.

Division 4 – Committee of the Whole

Standing Order 19 — Committee Proceedings

(1) Following informal consultation, the Senate shall resolve into a Committee of the Whole.
(2) Debate in Committee shall continue for approximately 40 minutes.
(3) Proceedings shall occur clause-by-clause.

Standing Order 20 — Consideration of Clauses

(1) The Chair shall read each clause sequentially.
(2) The Chair shall inquire whether the Committee agrees to the clause as read.
(3) Where no objection is raised, the Committee shall proceed immediately to the next clause.

Standing Order 21 — Amendments

(1) Competitors may propose amendments only to the clause presently under consideration.
(2) Competitors may only write a maximum of 2 amendments to a given clause, per period of substantive consideration.
(3) Proposed amendments shall be transmitted to the Clerk by presiding officers.
(4) Amendments to past or future clauses shall not be considered and must be resubmitted when the relevant clause is reached.

Standing Order 22 — Debate on Amendments

(1) Debate on an amendment shall not exceed four speakers.
(2) Individual speeches shall not exceed 2 minutes.
(3) Following debate, the amendment shall immediately be put to a vote.

Standing Order 23 — Effect of Amendments

(1) Where an amendment is carried, the amended clause shall be read again.
(2) Debate on the amended clause shall recommence.

Standing Order 24 — New Clauses

(1) Upon completion of consideration of all clauses, the Chair shall permit motions to include new clauses.
(2) Proposed new clauses shall be debated and voted upon in the same manner as amendments.
(3) Following debate on a new clause, the Chair shall again inquire whether further new clauses are proposed.
(4) During this procedure, competitors are free to request motions to amend clauses that have been passed during this phase, clauses that have not been passed during this phase cannot be amended.
(5) Where no further clauses or further amendments to new clauses are proposed, proceedings shall continue to Final Review.

Standing Order 25 — Limitation on Reconsideration

(1) A motion may be passed for a clause to return to substantive reconsideration.
(2) Each clause shall return for substantive reconsideration no more than once during Committee proceedings.

Division 5 — Final Review

Standing Order 26 — Final Review of the Bill

(1) The Bill shall be read once more in its entirety.
(2) Clauses shall be reviewed sequentially.
(3) Debate during Final Review shall be expedited and ordinarily limited to agreement votes.

(4) No new clauses may be introduced during Final Review.

Division 6 — Third Reading Vote

Standing Order 27 — Final Vote

(1) Following Final Review, the Bill shall be put to a final vote.
(2) The Bill shall be read in its final form prior to voting.
(3) Voting shall occur individually and in turn.
(4) Voting shall be conducted by affirmative or negative vote only.
(5) Abstentions shall not be permitted unless otherwise directed by organisers.

For clarification on rules, please reach out to competition facilitators.

Advice for contestants

Keep in mind the aims of the competition. This competition at its core exists to promote skills of oratory and knowledge of Australian contemporary AND historical political systems. Any moments in which you can emphasise your knowledge of either will likely do you well in the competition.

Given that this program is attempting to simulate parliamentary procedures, it is exceedingly likely that if you attempt to bully, intimidate, or cheat other contestants, the judges will view this extremely poorly. A key part of negotiation is persuading others to want what you want – forcing them to do so using methods that may be personal in nature or immoral is likely to result in poor scores and/or disciplinary action.

Do's

- DO consider that the Historical Topic Debate is weighted more heavily than both the Prepared Contemporary Topic Debate and the Secret Contemporary Topic, rewarding extensive research on the socio-historical contexts of the topic.
- DO divide speaking time and amendment writing between competitors strategically so that all competitors are participating in all forms of the debate, as teams are judged on their teamwork

Don'ts

- DON'T just pass superficial amendments, such as ones that only rename the title of a government board or change the funding amount by a negligible factor. As teams are limited to two amendments per clause, they are encouraged to pass amendments that substantially affect or shift the direction of debate.
- DON'T have long and unsubstantive speeches. It is the content within the speech rather than the length that is awarded marks. If a speech's length exceeds its purpose, judges are unlikely to score it highly.

Equity and Wellbeing

Throughout the competition, we prioritise the wellbeing of all students. Discrimination or attacks on other participants/facilitators on the basis of; race, sex, culture, faith, appearance, or other personal characteristics will result in verbal warnings. If this behaviour continues, it may result in an exclusion from the competition and notification of educational institution/carers.

Abuse or mistreatment of program staff, facilities, or systems may also result in exclusion from the competition and notification of educational institution/carers.

We recognise the diverse background of students, and we ask that any students who may be presenting experiences that could distress other students to state the relevant distressing content before commencing their speech.

An equity officer will be present on the day to ensure that any concerns regarding equity or wellbeing are appropriately managed.

Any child safety concerns are to be reported to the Child Safety Officer on the day of the competition, who will be indicated to you. If any activity occurs that you believe places yourself or other participants in the direction of harm, please contact emergency services.

For clarification on equity and wellbeing, please get in touch with
Contact@PerVocemVita.org

Contacts

For further information or clarification on any rules, please reach out to:

Contact@PerVocemVita.org

Alternatively, mail can be sent to:

PO Box 70
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