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This Infosheet is the fourth in a series produced by the OCLA to explain the work of the Legislative Assembly of Samoa

Infosheets in this series include

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Infosheets on a range of topics will be added to this series in the future

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## 4 PARLIAMENTARY WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

### THE LANGUAGE OF PARLIAMENT

When the Legislative Assembly meets, the people who speak and participate are Samoa's elected representatives: Members of Parliament. During meetings (sittings), all Members must comply with the Assembly's rules (standing orders) so that proper process is followed and so that all Members may speak and be heard. The words and procedures used during Assembly meetings are similar to those used by parliaments all around the world. Sometimes these words have a different meaning from when they are used in everyday situations and sometimes the words are completely unique to parliament. This Infosheet explains in general terms some of the words and expressions used in the Legislative Assembly of Samoa.

### WORDS USED IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF



### SAMOA

**Act** a draft law (a bill) becomes an Act once it passes all required stages in the Assembly and is signed by the Head of State (given Royal Assent)

**Adjournment** the House adjourns/suspends at the end of a sitting day until the next sitting day or sitting period

**Amendment** changes to bills or motions may be proposed by a Member, and, if agreed to, become amendments

**Appropriation bills** contain the proposed expenditure for the services of government in the next financial year. These budget bills are subjected to greater scrutiny by the Assembly than 'ordinary' bills

**Bill** a draft law. If agreed to, it becomes an Act. Bills are usually proposed by a Minister but backbench Members may also propose bills

**Casting vote** may be made by the Speaker when equal numbers of Members support and oppose a proposal; this vote decides the result

**Chamber** the circular room in the Parliament building (Maota) in which Members sit (in reserved seats) and over which the Speaker presides

**Division** a formal count of Members to record their agreement or disagreement to a proposal, for example, that a bill be read a second time

**Explanatory Memorandum** a document that accompanies a bill and explains the bill's purpose and contents in general terms

**Government business** the business (usually bills), proposed by the Government for consideration and decision by the Assembly on sitting days

**Ministerial Statement** a formal statement by a Minister to the Assembly relating to a matter of policy or public affairs within his area of Ministerial responsibilities; it may be debated later if tabled

**Motion** a proposal that the Assembly agree to something. If it is agreed, it becomes a resolution or order. Motions may relate to thanks, no confidence, discussions of matters special interest, etc

**Mover** the Member who proposes a motion, for example that his/her motion be agreed to

**Notice** the written document signed by a Member and provided to the Clerk or at the Table in the Chamber, indicating the intention of a Member to move a Motion at a later sitting. Requirements to give notice ensure that Members are properly informed of business that will arise

**Order of Business** is the order of business for each sitting day that is set out in the standing orders. It may be varied on any day by leave (permission) of the Speaker

**Order Paper** is the formal agenda of the Assembly that is prepared by the Clerk of the Assembly. It includes Orders of the Day (business which has already been introduced and will be considered again when the item is reached on the Order Paper), Notices of Motion (which indicate proposals a Member intends to put to the Assembly when that item is reached) and notice of Questions

**Party** a political party must comprise at least eight Members and be registered as a party by the Electoral Commission before it can be recognised as a party in the Parliament

**Private Members' Business** Members who are not Ministers or Associate Ministers may move motions and bills on topics of their choice during periods set aside for this kind of Business

**Question Time** the time allowed in the Order of Business for Members to put questions on notice to Ministers (and to Members) relating to Assembly business that is their responsibility

**Quorum** the minimum number of Members who must be present for business to be decided. The quorum is half the total number of Members, excluding the Speaker or occupant of the Chair

**Reading** one of the three formal stages in the passage of a bill when the Clerk reminds the Assembly of the stage reached, and reads the bill's long (formal) title (Third reading: a bill for an Act to...)

**Secunder** the Member who seconds or supports a proposal by another Member, for example, that the terms of a motion be agreed to. Debate on some motions cannot begin unless it is 'seconded'

**Speaker** the Presiding Officer of the Assembly is elected by other Members to chair its meetings impartially, to maintain order, interpret the standing orders, and administer the precincts

**Standing orders** the rules chosen by the Legislative Assembly to govern its procedures and the conduct of its Members. The Speaker interprets and enforces the standing orders

**Tabling** a document is tabled, and becomes public, when placed on the Chamber's Table

**Urgency Certificate** if such a certificate is signed by the Head of State and received by the Speaker, the bill or bills to which it relates are able to bypass some of the usual Assembly requirements

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**MORE INFORMATION:**

The Constitution of the Independent State of Samoa  
Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly of Samoa, 2010  
*Practice and Procedure Manual*, 2012, Legislative Assembly of Samoa  
Legislative Assembly of Samoa: [www.parliament.gov.ws](http://www.parliament.gov.ws)