Parliamentary Bureau – Parliamentary Calendar

Office of the Clerk and Christmas Recess

Christmas recess

1. The Parliament has previously agreed that—

   - the Christmas recess begins this year on Saturday 19 December 2026 and ends on Sunday 3 January 2027 (Motion ref. S7M-00153); and

   - the Office of the Clerk is closed on Thursday 24 (pm), Friday 25 and Monday 28 December 2026 and Friday 1 and Monday 4 January 2027 (Motion S7M-00152).

2. Since 2000, the Bureau has additionally proposed that the Office of the Clerk be closed between Christmas and the New Year. The Bureau is therefore invited to agree to propose to the Parliament that the Office of the Clerk be closed this year on Tuesday 29, Wednesday 30 and Thursday 31 December 2026 as shown in the Annexe.

3. In 2024 and 2025, the Bureau also agreed to close the Office of the Clerk on the morning of 24 December 2024. Considering the days that the public holidays fall on, and due to recess commencing a little earlier than usual, the Bureau is invited to agree that the Office of the Clerk be closed on the morning of Thursday 24 December 2026.

Impact on deadlines for questions and motions

4. Questions, motions and amendments cannot be lodged when the Office of the Clerk is closed.

Portfolio and General Question Times

5. First week after the Christmas recess - In line with the convention followed in previous sessions, it is recommended that for the Portfolio and General Question times in the week commencing 4 January, the draw should take place on Monday 14 December, with the subsequent deadline for the submission of questions being midday on Wednesday 16 December. This would avoid members being required to submit questions to the Chamber Desk on Wednesday 23 December which falls within the parliamentary recess period.

6. Second week after the Christmas recess - For Portfolio and General Question times in the second week following the recess (week commencing 11 January), it is recommended that the draw opens on Thursday 17 December, with names being drawn after midday on Monday 23 December. Questions must be submitted by midday on Wednesday 6 January.

Motions for debate

7. As Monday 4 January is a public holiday and the Office of the Clerk will be closed, any motion and subsequent amendments for a debate scheduled for

Tuesday 5 January would need to be lodged with the Chamber Desk either before the Christmas recess or immediately upon return.

8. The recommended approach would be to complete the process before the Christmas recess, when Members and staff are available to engage with the Chamber Desk as required. Under this option, the motion for debate would be lodged on Wednesday 16 December, with any subsequent amendments lodged on Thursday 17 December.

9. Consideration was also given to lodging the motion on Thursday 17 December. However, this would require any subsequent amendments to be lodged with the Chamber Desk by 9.30 am on Tuesday 5 January, the first day following the Christmas recess.

10. Debates scheduled for Wednesday 6 January and Thursday 7 January would follow the usual lodging deadlines that apply following a Monday public holiday. Accordingly, for a debate on Wednesday 6 January, the motion would need to be lodged with the Chamber Desk by 10.00 am on Tuesday 5 January, while a motion for a debate on Thursday 7 January would need to be lodged by 4.00 pm on Tuesday 5 January. Any amendments would be subject to the normal lodging deadlines.

Conclusion

11. The Bureau is invited to—

- agree to propose to the Parliament by motion that the Office of the Clerk be closed on Thursday 24 (am), Tuesday 29, Wednesday 30 and Thursday 31 December 2026; and

- consider the proposed Chamber Desk deadlines set out above and agree:
    - the draw and subsequent lodging deadlines for Portfolio and General Question Times in the first and second weeks after the Christmas recess, and
    - the lodging deadline for a motion for debate scheduled on Tuesday 5 January, to be either Wednesday 16 December (recommended option), or Thursday 17 December.

Parliamentary Business Team
October 2026

Annexe - Proposal to close the Office of the Clerk

December 2026/January 2027

Monday	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**	**Friday**
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	*24 (pm)	25
28	*29	*30	*31	1
4	5	6	7	8

	Recess
	Office of the Clerk is closed on these previously agreed days
*	Proposal to close the Office of the Clerk on these days