

The Speaker's 'struggle'

Question: Why does a newly elected Speaker struggle when escorted to the Speaker's Chair in the House of Representatives Chamber?

Answer: It is a tradition originating from medieval England when the job of Speaker was fraught with danger. Back then the Speaker was a key player in the power struggle between the monarchy and parliament. As the spokesman for a parliament that wanted to wrest greater power for itself from the sovereign, the Speaker often found himself in a perilous situation. A number of Speakers died violent deaths by way of execution or murder, while others were imprisoned, impeached or expelled from office. Today, as a symbolic gesture, it is custom for a newly chosen Speaker to act as though he or she is

unwilling to take the job. When a new Speaker has been elected in the House of Representatives, the successful candidate 'struggles' as he or she is led to the Speaker's Chair by the proposer and seconder of the nomination.

Have you got a question?

If you have a question that you want answered about the House of Representatives, please contact us:

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Member for Wakefield (SA), Neil Andrew (centre) 'struggles' as he is led to the Speaker's Chair by the Member for Corangamite (Vic), Stewart McArthur (left) and the Member for Mallee (Vic), John Forrest (right). Photo AUSPIC.

EXTRAS

Guide to community grants

Are you looking for sources of funding for community projects? If so, check the 'Guide to Community Grants' produced by the Parliamentary Library. The guide brings together sources of Commonwealth, state and non-government community grants. It is available at: www.aph.gov.au/library/intguide/sp/spgrants.htm

Seminars in Melbourne and Perth

The House's annual seminar program will visit Melbourne and Perth this year, with an *About the House* seminar designed for people who need a working knowledge of the legislative and committee processes of the House of Representatives. Conducted by the Department of the House of Representatives in association with the Public Service and Merit Protection Commission, the seminars will be held in Melbourne on 19 July and Perth on 9 August. Fees are applicable.

For further information

Visit www.aph.gov.au/house/info/seminars

Phone: (02) 6277 2122

Email: seminar.reps@aph.gov.au

Keep up-to-date with House News

While you're waiting for the next edition of *About the House* to arrive, you can keep right up-to-date with what's going on in the House of Representatives via the new House News web site.

House News (www.aph.gov.au/house/house_news) provides the latest news on the nuts-and-bolts of what's happening in the House. You can access new legislation that's been introduced and check out progress in committee investigations—who's quizzing who about what.

House News also provides an easy gateway to a variety of information on the work of the House (the Daily Program, Hansard transcripts, votes and proceedings, and handy summaries of upcoming and previous business). There's also links to a range of features including the House's seminar program, and even a page of photos and cartoons.

House News is the latest and easiest way yet to find out what's happening at your House. Bookmark it now!

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