

Submission  
No 6

**INQUIRY INTO PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH  
DISORDER BY MEMBERS DURING COMMITTEE  
PROCEEDINGS**

**Name:** The Hon. Jeremy Buckingham

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## Procedure Committee Inquiry

### *Procedures for dealing with disorder by Members during committee proceedings.*

To: The Hon. Ben Franklin  
Chair of the Procedures Committee

Submission by: The Honourable Jeremy Buckingham

Chair,

I am pleased that the Legislative Council agreed on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 2024 to inquire into procedures for dealing with disorder by members during committee proceedings. As you are aware the motion to do so was given by myself in my capacity as Chair of Portfolio Committee No. 1 -Premier and Finance (PC 1).

The reason for doing so was the persistent disorder displayed by the Hon. Wes Fang during the PC 1 Budget Estimates hearing into The Legislature on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 2024, of which you were of course a witness.

During the hearing Mr. Fang repeatedly interjected, called into question the impartiality of myself as Chair and treated witnesses with discourtesy. His behaviour was a clear and deliberate contravention of the procedural fairness resolution for inquiry participants. As Chair I repeatedly reminded Mr. Fang of resolution 19 which requires members to treat witnesses with courtesy. Members took a multitude of points of order in respect to his discourteous behaviour, in fact, Mr Fang was called to order 26 times and called into question my impartiality as Chair no less than 19 times.

At one point of proceedings Mr Fang yelled at the Chair whilst I was making a ruling on a point of order in relation to his behaviour *"Hurry Up. Hurry Up. I've got questions to ask. You're covering for him. Stop wasting my time."*

All members are aware that these hearing can be robust and interrogative affairs, but as the resolution of the House demands witnesses and the Chair should be treated with courtesy and respect. This did not happen.

It was clear from his childish and unedifying behaviour Mr Fang was intent on gross disorder and disrupting the conduct of the hearing to the point that I suspended the hearing to move into a deliberative meeting to discuss his egregious, and in my experience, unprecedented behaviour.

It was clear on the advice of the Secretariat that there was no recourse other than to continue to call Mr Fang to order, remind him of the resolution of the House and appeal to his good sense.

Unfortunately, all these measures and Mr Fang's good sense failed miserably.

I submit it is necessary for the Procedures Committee to consider measures that might be adopted to deal with these issues, such as strengthening the procedural fairness resolution for Legislative Council committees to the extent of adopting Standing Order 192 of the House that have empowered the President or Chair of Committees to remove disorderly members after fair warning and repeated calls to order.

Your sincerely,

The Hon. Jeremy Buckingham