



The Hon Barry O'Farrell MP

Premier of NSW

Minister for Western Sydney

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW LAWS TO STOP PARLIAMENT BEING SHUT DOWN EARLY

New laws will be introduced to prevent the NSW Parliament being shut down early before an election, NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell announced today.

"The former Labor Government acted shamefully in proroguing Parliament in December last year in an attempt to stop the Upper House inquiry into its bungled and dishonest power sale," Mr O'Farrell said.

"The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will ensure this never happens again," he said.

"Under new legislation to be introduced today, the NSW Parliament will remain open until at least Australia Day in any election year. This will ensure Parliament is open long enough for all Questions on Notice to be answered – and for Committees to hear evidence until late January.

"In other words, we will never see the Parliament shut down in such a shameful manner ever again.

"In future, a Government will only be able to prorogue Parliament before an election from Australia Day onwards.

"There will be no early shutdowns before Christmas to avoid scrutiny. The Government of the day will be accountable for its actions right up until late January."

Mr O'Farrell said provision would be made in the legislation to allow the Governor to close Parliament in exceptional circumstances – such as when a Government lost its majority in the Legislative Assembly.

But he said those occurrences would be extremely rare.

"The people of NSW were outraged when the Parliament was shut down early last year," Mr O'Farrell said.

"The Parliament should never be treated with such disdain. It should never be closed down to simply protect a desperate Government trying to cling on to power. This was a denial of democracy.

"This legislation will restore confidence in the laws relating to the proroguing of Parliament and return integrity to Government," Mr O'Farrell said.

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