

HOUSE REVIEW



Selected features of House of Representatives business

Sitting period 23-28 September 2022 (no. 50)

A motion for an address of condolence on the death of Her Majesty The Queen was moved and passed on Friday, 23 September. The House also sat for three days in the week beginning 26 September, where it returned to its usual order of business. Consideration of the address in reply to the Governor-General's speech afforded the opportunity for the remaining new Members to make their first speeches.

Address to His Majesty The King

Following the death of Her Majesty The Queen, the House did not sit as scheduled in the week 12-15 September and the Speaker instead set 23 September for the next sitting.

The House met at 8 am on Friday, 23 September. Standing orders were suspended to set the order of business for the day and to provide for time limits for speeches on the motion to be moved by the Prime Minister. The Speaker acknowledged the presence in the gallery of Mrs Vicki Treadell CMG MVO, the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom.

The Prime Minister then moved that the House agree to an address to King Charles III expressing deep sympathy for the great loss sustained in the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and extending congratulations to the King on his accession to the throne. Following speeches by the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition (who seconded the motion), the Deputy Prime Minister and the Leader of the Nationals, all Members present rose in their places to signify their respect and sympathy.

A further 109 Members made contributions to the debate before the address was agreed to and the House adjourned at 5.24 pm.

Change to sitting pattern

Before the motion of condolence and congratulation was moved on 23 September, the House agreed to a revised sitting pattern which included sittings on 26-28 September.

Ministerial statement

On Monday, 26 September the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Mr Keogh, made a statement relating to the government response to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide interim report, before the shadow minister, Mr Joyce, made a statement in response. Both Members spoke of the high toll of defence and veteran suicide and the need for improvements to services. The Minister also apologised on behalf of the Australian government.

Condolence motion

Before question time on Wednesday, the Prime Minister moved a motion of condolence in relation to the 20th anniversary of the Bali bombings. After the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition had spoken to the motion, all Members present rose in silence. Debate was adjourned and resumption of debate was referred to the Federation Chamber.

Statement on a significant matter

On Wednesday, pursuant to notice, the Minister for Indigenous Australians made a statement regarding the death of Uncle Jack Charles, and the Shadow Minister for the Arts, Mr Fletcher, then made a statement in reply. This is the second occasion on which the provisions of new standing order 50A have been used to make statements on significant matters on a Wednesday or Thursday morning. On motion by the Leader of the House, further statements were permitted in the Federation Chamber.

Legislation

Introductions

On Monday, one private Member's bill was presented, proposing criminal law reforms relating to ransomware.

Under standing order 179, only a Minister may initiate a proposal to impose, increase or decrease a tax, so when the Member for Melbourne wished to give notice of a private Member's bill relating to 'stage 3' tax cuts on Tuesday he had to seek to suspend standing orders. The suspension motion was defeated on division.

While government bills are most commonly introduced on Wednesday and Thursday mornings, they may be introduced at any time during the periods reserved for government business. Two government bills were presented on Tuesday afternoon—including an anti-discrimination and human rights legislation amendment bill to implement some of the recommendations of the *Respect@Work* report—and a further 10 were introduced on Wednesday morning. This included the National Anti-Corruption Commission Bill 2022, introduced by the Attorney-General along with a bill providing for associated consequential and transitional provisions.

Passing the House

Eleven bills passed the House during the period.

Federation Chamber

Between 26 and 28 September, five bills were referred to the Federation Chamber. Two of these bills were fully considered, while debate continued on the second reading of a third bill.

The Federation Chamber also considered private Members' motions relating to research commercialisation, veterans' employment and training, paid parental leave, Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day, 1st Battalion Royal Australian Regiment, media diversity, the EU free trade agreement, aged care and the construction industry. Members also spoke to the condolence motion for former Senator the Hon. James Joseph Webster and made further statements on the death of Uncle Jack Charles.

Proceedings in the Federation Chamber were interrupted on several occasions when divisions were called in the House. It may be of interest to know that, under standing order 190, the Federation Chamber must be suspended when a division is called, even if a quorum remains present. This is to enable any Member to attend the division. It also ensures all Members are able to attend all proceedings of the Federation Chamber if they wish.

Parliamentary committees

On Wednesday, the House agreed to the establishment of a Joint Select Committee on National Anti-Corruption Commission Legislation to inquire into and report (by 10 November) on the provisions of the two related bills introduced earlier that day. Later that day, on motion by a Minister, the House also agreed to appoint six Members to the committee.

Petitions

On Monday morning, the Chair of the Standing Committee on Petitions presented the committee's first report for the 47th Parliament, along with more than 70 petitions and more than 90 ministerial

responses. The Chair of the committee noted that a ‘visual petition’ of photographs, presented in the House by the Member for Canberra in July, had been considered by the committee. However, as it did not meet the requirements of standing orders 204 and 205 regarding the form and content of petitions and the rules for signatures, it will instead be treated as a tabled document.

Communication with the Senate

The Senate also sat on 23 and 26-28 September. On Wednesday the House considered Senate amendments to the Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Repeal of Cashless Debit Card and Other Measures) Bill 2022, and agreed to them on division. On Wednesday evening, a message informed the House of the Senate’s concurrence with the appointment of the Joint Select Committee on National Anti-Corruption Commission Legislation.

The House and the Senate are both scheduled to meet next on 25 October—Budget day.

Further information on the work of the House

[Bills and legislation](#)—access bills, explanatory memoranda, amendments, speeches, information about key stages of a bill’s consideration, and a tracking option

[Live Minutes](#)—a real time summary of House decisions and proceedings. When used in conjunction with the [Daily Program](#), the Live Minutes are a simple way to track the House’s work each day

[House of Representatives Practice](#) 7 ed., 2018—the most authoritative guide to House procedure

[House of Representatives Standing and Sessional Orders](#), as at 2 August 2022—the House’s rules of procedure

[Procedural Digest](#)—a record of selected procedural events in the House of Representatives Chamber and the Federation Chamber. It includes Speaker’s rulings, precedents and unusual situations.