



HOUSE REVIEW

Selected features of House of Representatives business

Sitting period 7 – 10 November 2022 (no. 52)

This week featured an extended sitting on Wednesday to debate employment legislation.

Legislation

Bills were debated in both the House and the Federation Chamber this week. Eight bills were referred to the Federation Chamber, and six bills were fully considered by the Federation Chamber and returned to the House.

Introductions

During the week, four Government bills were presented, including one Senate bill. No private Members' bills were introduced.

Passing the House

On Tuesday the Leader of the House moved a debate management motion to suspend standing orders in regard to the debate on the Fair Work (Secure Jobs, Better Pay) Bill 2022. The motion provided for shorter speaking times of 10 minutes on the second reading debate after the Leader of the Opposition had spoken, an extended debate on Wednesday evening, with speaking times of five minutes from 9pm, and consideration in detail on Thursday morning.

After the Manager of Opposition Business unsuccessfully moved an amendment, the debate management motion was agreed to.

When debate was resumed on Tuesday evening, the Leader of the Opposition moved a second reading amendment. During debate, two further amendments were moved. Each sought to amend the text of the preceding amendment. The second reading debate continued on Wednesday, concluding at 10.34 pm.

On Thursday morning, after the bill was called on, the House considered each second reading amendment in turn. Each amendment sought to amend the previous amendment. Therefore the last amendment to be moved was considered first, as agreement to it would alter the terms of the next question before the House and so on.

Following the defeat of each of the second reading amendments, the bill was read a second time, the Speaker announced messages from the Governor-General recommending appropriation for the purpose of the bill and for government amendments to be moved, and the House proceeded to consider the bill in detail.

Pursuant to the resolution agreed on Tuesday, detail amendments were moved in sets—that is, together. First, the Leader of the House moved 150 government amendments. A crossbench Member then moved to amend one of these amendments, and this was agreed on the voices.

Another crossbench Member moved to amend another government amendment; her motion was defeated on division. The government amendments, as amended, were then agreed to on division.

A set of 31 amendments moved by the Manager of Opposition Business was defeated on division. A crossbench Member then unsuccessfully moved a set of eight amendments. While no division was called for, two Members asked that their dissent from the decision be recorded. A further four sets of amendments moved by crossbench Members were disagreed to, the House dividing each time, and one set was agreed to on the voices. On two occasions, the Leader of the House, as allowed under the terms of the resolution agreed on Tuesday, brought debate on a set of amendments to a close by requiring the question to be put. The bill, as amended, was then agreed to and read a third time.

Eight other bills passed the House during the week, including the Anti-Discrimination and Human Rights Legislation Amendment (Respect at Work) Bill.

Federation Chamber

On Monday, seven private Members' motions were debated in the Federation Chamber. These related to the Global Methane Pledge, infrastructure funding, West Jerusalem, a free trade agreement with the European Union, the gender pay gap, critical minerals policy and native forest logging.

On Tuesday, three bills were fully considered in the Federation Chamber and were returned to the House. Debate on a fourth bill resumed, before the bill passed all stages the following day along with two others. Later on Wednesday, the second reading debate resumed on Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2022-23, the main appropriation bill. While in most instances debate must be relevant to the subject matter, an exception is made for the motion for the second reading of the main appropriation bill, when public affairs may be debated. As is customary, the debate is a cognate debate which also covers Appropriation Bill (No. 2) and Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1).

Divisions and quorum calls

The House divided on 24 occasions this week. If a division is called when the Federation Chamber is meeting, proceedings are suspended to enable Members to attend divisions in the House—a requirement under standing order 190(a).

The bells also rang for 11 quorum calls during the week. While the House often meets without a quorum (that is, 31 Members) present, any Member is entitled to draw the Chair's attention to 'the state of the House' if a quorum is not present. The bells are rung for four minutes. The bells stop ringing as soon as a quorum is formed. The Speaker reminded Members on Thursday that they may not leave the Chamber while the bells are ringing or until a quorum is present.

The Federation Chamber is not required to suspend to enable Members to attend quorum calls in the House. However, on several occasions this week the Federation Chamber lost quorum itself when there was a quorum call in the House. Under standing order 190(b), Federation Chamber proceedings must be suspended immediately when a quorum (defined by the standing orders as the Deputy Speaker, one government Member and one non-government Member) is not present.

Marking the deaths of former Members

On Monday the Prime Minister moved a condolence motion on the death of Hon Anthony Austin (Tony) Street, Member for Corangamite from 1966 to 1984 and a former Minister. The following day the Prime Minister moved a condolence motion on the death of Hon Robert James (Bob) Ellicott AC KC, Member for Wentworth from 1974 to 1981 and a former Minister. On both occasions the Leader of the Opposition seconded the motion and spoke before further debate was referred to the Federation Chamber.

Parliamentary committees

On Wednesday, the Chair of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security made a report by statement. On Thursday, the Deputy Chair of the Joint Select Committee on National Anti-Corruption Legislation presented the committee's advisory report on the provisions on the National Anti-Corruption Commission Bill 2022 and an associated bill and, by leave, made a statement in connection with the report.

On Tuesday, a motion to suspend standing orders to enable the Manager of Opposition Business to move that a select committee on fair work legislation be established was defeated on division.

Distinguished visitors

During the week the Speaker announced the presence in the gallery of the former Member for Gilmore, Mrs Joanna Gash, Carnegie Mellon international university students, a group from the Clinical Trials Patients Summit delegation and a group of advocates and sufferers of silicosis.

Communication with the Senate

Only the House sat this week while Senate estimates committees considered the particulars of proposed expenditure.

The House and Senate are scheduled to meet next on 21 November.

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.