

Procedural Digest

No. 19

46th Parliament

15–25 March 2021

March 2021				
M	T	W	T	F
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26

Selected entries contain links to video footage via *Parlview*. Please note that the first time you click a [\[Watch\]](#) link, you may need to refresh the page (ctrl+F5) for the correct starting point.

Business

19.01 Statements regarding March 4 Justice

Prior to question time on 15 March, the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition both made statements, by indulgence of the Chair, regarding March 4 Justice rallies held at Parliament House and elsewhere, calling for action on violence against women. [\[Watch\]](#)

Hansard: 15 March 2021, 2195-9

19.02 Motion to suspend standing orders to allow motion regarding violence against women negated

Following question time on 15 March, the Leader of the Opposition moved to suspend standing orders to allow him to move a motion calling on the Prime Minister to take certain actions in regard to violence against women. The mover and seconder were closed on division and the debate was closed on division. The suspension motion was then negated on division.

Hansard: 15 March 2021, 2209-17
Votes and Proceedings: 2021/1704-9

SOs 47, 80, 81

19.03 Customs tariff proposal

On 17 March, the Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs moved Customs Tariff Proposal (No. 2) 2021. He explained that the proposal created a new tariff concession for goods used for the F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter program, in accordance with an international agreement. Debate was then adjourned.

Hansard: 17 March 2021, 2525-6
Votes and Proceedings: 2021/1731

19.04 Statements regarding floods

During the second week of the sitting fortnight, the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition both made a number of statements, by indulgence of the Chair, regarding devastating floods on the east coast of Australia.

Hansard: 22 March 2021, 2934-7
23 March 2021, 3146
24 March 2021, 3362-3

19.05 Statements on Greek Independence Day

On 25 March, the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition both made statements, by indulgence of the Chair, in relation to the 200th anniversary of Greek Independence Day.

Hansard: 25 March 2021, 3560-1

Debate

19.06 Member speaks Chinese in debate

The Member for Stirling (Mr Connelly) gave part of his speech in Chinese during debate on a private member's motion regarding human rights in China.

Hansard: 22 March 2021, 2893-4

Members

19.07 Infants in the Chamber

During members' statements on 22 March, the Member for Lilley (Ms Wells) made a speech on Multiple Birth Awareness Week while holding her twin babies. [\[Watch\]](#)

Hansard: 22 March 2021, 2928

SO 257

19.08 Chief Opposition Whip announces retirement

On 24 March the Chief Opposition Whip, Mr Chris Hayes, announced his retirement at the next election, by indulgence of the Chair. Several members, including the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, also spoke by indulgence, acknowledging Mr Hayes' esteemed parliamentary career and thanking him for his service. [\[Watch\]](#)

Hansard: 24 March 2021, 3363-70

19.09 Leave of absence granted to all members

On the last day of the Autumn sitting period, the Acting Leader of the House moved that leave of absence be given to all members from the determination of the sitting until the date of the next sitting of the House. The question was carried on the voices.

A member's place becomes vacant if, without permission of the House, he or she does not attend the House for two consecutive months of any session of the Parliament (s. 38, The Constitution).

*Hansard: 25 March 2021, 3578
Votes and Proceedings: 2021/1787*

SO 26

Motions

19.10 Condolence motion for Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare

On the first sitting Monday, the Prime Minister moved that the House acknowledge the passing of Papua New Guinea Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare, place on record its gratitude for his long-standing relationship with Australia and tender its sympathy to his family in their bereavement. The Leader of the Opposition seconded the motion and the Deputy Prime Minister and Deputy Leader of the Opposition spoke in support. All members present rose in silence as a mark of respect and the motion was referred to the Federation Chamber for further debate. [\[Watch\]](#)

The motion was debated in the Federation Chamber on Tuesday and carried in the House on Wednesday, with all members again rising in silence.

*Hansard: 15 March 2021, 2190-5
16 March 2021, 2489-93
17 March 2021, 2591*

Votes and Proceedings: 2021/1704; 1729; 1736

SOs 49, 183

19.11 Condolence motion for the Honourable Christopher John Hurford AO

A second condolence motion was moved on 17 March, in relation to the death of the Honourable Christopher John Hurford, a former minister and the Member for Adelaide from 1969 to 1987. The Leader of the Opposition seconded the motion and all members present rose in silence as a mark of respect. The motion was referred to the Federation Chamber for further debate. [\[Watch\]](#)

The next day, the motion was debated in the Federation Chamber and carried in the House, with all members again rising in silence.

*Hansard: 17 March 2021, 2588-91
18 March 2021, 2763, 2823-5
Votes and Proceedings: 2021/1736, 1747; 1751*

SOs 49, 183

19.12 Senate resolution calling for Royal Commission into veteran suicides

On 22 March, a message was reported informing the House that the Senate had agreed to a resolution calling on the government to establish a Royal Commission into the rate of suicide among current and former Australian Defence Force personnel. The Minister for Veterans' Affairs moved that the House concur with the resolution. Several members spoke in the debate and, later in the day, the motion was carried. [\[Watch\]](#)

Hansard: 22 March 2021, 2913-26; 2961-89
Votes and Proceedings: 2021/1758-9, 1764

SO 261

Parliamentary administration

19.13 Statement by Presiding Officers regarding access to Parliament House

On 17 March, the Speaker presented a statement from the Presiding Officers in response to a question previously asked by the Leader of the Australian Greens regarding whether a former political staffer had been granted access to Parliament House. The statement noted that the publication of sign-in registers could give rise to questions of parliamentary privilege and advised that the matter would be referred to the House and Senate appropriations committees for consideration.

Hansard: 17 March 2021; 2524
Votes and Proceedings: 2021/1731

SO 199

19.14 Appointment of Registrar of Members' Interests

On 25 March, the Speaker informed the House that the Deputy Clerk, Mr Peter Banson, had been appointed as the Registrar of Members' Interests.

The Registrar of Members' Interests is responsible for maintaining and providing advice on the Register of Members' Interests.

Hansard: 25 March 2021; 3495
Votes and Proceedings: 2021/1783

Private members' business

19.15 Suspension of standing orders to allow private members' business in Federation Chamber on a Wednesday

On 22 March, the House agreed to suspend standing orders to allow for private members' business to be debated in the Federation Chamber on Wednesday, 12 May, in time usually allocated to government business. In accordance with the resolution, the Selection Committee scheduled business for the meeting on 12 May in its report presented on 24 March.

Private members' business is usually debated on Mondays in the House and Federation Chamber. The House is not scheduled to sit on Monday, 10 May.

*Hansard: 22 March 2021, 2911
Votes and Proceedings: 2021/1757
SOs 41, 47, 192, 222*

19.16 Motion to bring on private member's bill

During government business time on 23 March, independent member Ms Zali Steggall moved to suspend standing orders to allow her to move a motion raising a number of matters in relation to sexual harassment in the workplace and to bring on her bill, the Sex Discrimination Amendment (Prohibiting All Sexual Harassment) Bill 2021, for final determination by the House.

Another independent member, Ms Rebekha Sharkie, seconded the motion, and the Minister Representing the Minister for Women, Ms Susan Ley, and the Shadow Minister for Women, Ms Tanya Plibersek, both spoke in the debate. The question was put and the division was deferred in accordance with standing order 133. Later in the day, the motion to suspend standing orders was disagreed to.

*Hansard: 23 March 2021; 3117-23; 3180-3
Votes and Proceedings: 2021/1771-3
SOs 35, 47, 133*

Questions

19.17 Questions ruled out of order

During question time on 22 March, a shadow minister asked the Prime Minister to confirm whether staff had engaged lawyers in response to the Gaetjens inquiry into matters connected with an alleged sexual assault in Parliament House. The Speaker noted that the question went beyond the responsibilities of the Prime Minister and ruled it out of order.

On 23 March, an opposition member asked the Prime Minister a question regarding whether a security guard had been questioned about the alleged assault. The Speaker noted the ongoing criminal investigation and ruled the question out of order as it was not within the responsibilities of the Prime Minister.

*Hansard: 22 March 2021; 2942
23 March 2021; 3153-4
SOs 98, 100*

Speaker

19.18 Statement by Speaker regarding sub judice convention

On 24 March the Speaker made a statement regarding the sub judice convention in light of a criminal investigation into an alleged sexual assault in Parliament House. The Speaker reminded members to exercise their right to freedom of speech responsibly to avoid compromising the ongoing police investigation.

*Hansard: 24 March 2021; 3334
Votes and Proceedings: 2021/1778*

Offensive words[#]

	Hansard	
	<i>Date</i>	<i>Page</i>
'...had it been someone who wasn't bankrolling either the Australian Labor Party or the Greens, he might have somehow had an issue...'	15 March 2021	2333
'...that tosser Clive Palmer...'	17 March 2021	2687
'Minister, this is what we can give you, but we need that NAIF, so please take your gun down, put it at the head of the Treasurer and get that money.'	25 March 2021	3548

SOs 89, 90, 92

[#] List of unparliamentary expressions recorded in *Hansard*.