

1996

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

No. 28

TUESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 1996

1 The House met, at 2 p.m., pursuant to adjournment. The Acting Speaker (Mr Nehl) took the Chair, and read Prayers.

2 QUESTIONS

Questions without notice being asked—

Member ordered to withdraw: At 3.17 p.m. the Member for Hotham (Mr Crean) was ordered, under standing order 304A, to withdraw from the House for 1 hour for continuing to interject after a warning had been given from the Chair, and he accordingly withdrew from the Chamber.

Questions without notice continued.

3 PAPERS

The following papers were presented:

Advance to the Minister for Finance—
Statements for June and July 1996.

Supporting applications of issues from the Advance during June and July 1996.
Australian Telecommunications Authority (AUSTEL)—Sixth quarterly report on status of Telstra's implementation of recommendations of AUSTEL's COT cases report, 11 July 1996.

Industry Commission Act—Industry Commission—Report No. 51—The pharmaceutical industry, 3 May 1996—

Volume 1—Report.

Volume 2—Appendices.

Treaties—Texts of—

Bilateral with national interest analysis—

Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of Australia concerning the protection of defence related information exchanged between them.

Multilateral with national interest analysis—

Amendments done at Aberdeen, UK, on 28 June 1996 to the Schedule of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, 1946.

Multilateral—National interest analysis—

International Convention on Salvage, done at London on 28 April 1989.

Protocol of 1988 relating to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, done at London on 11 November 1988.

Protocol of 1988 relating to the International Convention on Load Lines, 1966, done at London on 11 November 1988.

4 INDUSTRY COMMISSION—REPORT ON THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY—MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPER

Mr Reith (Leader of the House) moved—That the House take note of the following paper:

Industry Commission Act—Industry Commission—Report No. 51—The pharmaceutical industry, 3 May 1996—

Volume 1—Report.

Volume 2—Appendices.

Debate adjourned (Mr Lee), and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for the next sitting.

5 DISCUSSION OF MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE—PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE

The House was informed that Mr Lee had proposed that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely, “The consequences for the Australian people who will not receive the full benefit of the tax rebate for private health insurance in their pockets despite the assurance of the Minister for Health on Budget night that they would do so”.

The proposed discussion having received the necessary support—

Mr Lee addressed the House.

Discussion ensued.

Discussion concluded.

6 SELECTION COMMITTEE—REPORT

Mr Jenkins (Acting Chair) presented the following paper:

Selection Committee—Report relating to the consideration of committee and delegation reports and private Members’ business on Monday, 16 September 1996.

7 APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 1) 1996-97—BUDGET DEBATE

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the question—That the Bill be now read a second time—*And on the amendment moved thereto by Mr G. J. Evans (Deputy Leader of the Opposition), viz.—That all words after “That” be omitted with a view to substituting the following words: “whilst not declining to give the Bill a second reading, the House notes that:*

- (1) the Budget betrays the Australian promise of working towards a more fair, just, inclusive and united society;

- (2) the Budget is both mindless and heartless, and its prescriptions are not what the Australian economy needs at present;
- (3) the Budget will have a savagely contractionary impact on economic growth and make impossible the job creation necessary to reduce Australia's still unacceptably high level of unemployment;
- (4) with stronger economic growth the Budget could be restored to underlying balance over the life of this Parliament through a much more moderate program of fiscal consolidation;
- (5) the spending cuts and tax increases contained in the Budget are, on the evidence of the Government's own Budget Papers, not necessary to reduce the Commonwealth Government's debt-to-GDP ratio and will not produce a significant improvement in the current account deficit;
- (6) the Budget not only offers no hope to the unemployed but actively harms their prospects of finding a job by cutting labour market programs and privatising the previously publicly provided employment service function of the CES;
- (7) the Budget will have unfair and unjust consequences for the struggling and disadvantaged in our midst—the poor, the old, the sick, indigenous Australians and newly-arrived migrants;
- (8) the many spending cuts concerned with education and training, research and development, trade development (including breaches of promise with respect to EMDG, ITES and IAMP), production bounties, and other business support, will be counter-productive in their longer term consequences;
- (9) there is deception involved in the family tax package contained in the Budget, whereby what the Prime Minister appears to be putting into one pocket is for most middle Australian families being taken right out of the other by the Treasurer in higher education fees, Austudy changes, higher nursing home charges, higher fees and charges;
- (10) there are many breaches of Coalition election promises contained in this Budget, which amount to over \$17 billion over four years, and which will cause hardship, insecurity and dismay for millions of Australians;
- (11) the Budget involves a massive betrayal of regional Australia through the abolition of the \$150 million regional development program, large cuts to road funding, the closure of regional Government offices such as Medicare and CES offices, and the cuts to the ABC and university funding;
- (12) the mean-spirited decision to introduce large, up-front entry fees and massively increased daily fees for nursing homes, and increase user-charges will harm elderly Australians;
- (13) the abolition of Childcare Operational Subsidies will impact heavily upon community based child care centres;

- (14) the reduction of \$800 million over four years in public hospital funding will cause longer waiting lists for the sick and reduce the quality of hospital and medical assistance for millions of people;
- (15) the Budget involves a breaking of the Government's so called 'core' commitment to maintain Medicare in its entirety through cuts to rebates for numerous items under Medicare;
- (16) the cruel decision to abolish the Commonwealth Dental Health Programme will cause serious problems for the less well off;
- (17) harsh and promise-breaking decisions will force Australian families to pay substantially more for the cost of their prescription medicines;
- (18) the massive funding cuts to education, the increased HECS charges and AUSTUDY changes will penalise the less well off;
- (19) the Budget's comprehensive and ideological assault on the public sector will cost 10 500 jobs in 1996-97 alone;
- (20) the Government has failed to honour its election commitment to maintain the environment budget and to provide an additional \$84 million in the 1996-97 Budget, instead cutting by 13 per cent the environmental budget and forward estimates;
- (21) the reckless decision to reduce funding for the National Highway by \$622 million over four years, breaches a clear Coalition election commitment at the 1996 election, and with other decisions will reduce the level of public infrastructure investment, especially in regional Australia;
- (22) the decision to impose a 500 per cent increase in the taxation arrangements for visits to the Great Barrier Reef will discourage tourism and cost jobs in Queensland;
- (23) the Government has failed to honour its promise to not cut Australia's foreign aid beyond the election commitment to abolish the DIFF program, and in doing so will allow the estimated ODA/GDP ratio for Australia in 1996-97 to fall to 0.29 per cent;
- (24) the Government has failed to honour its election promise that Defence expenditure would not be cut, whilst cutting \$165 million from the 1995 Defence Budget estimates for 1996-97, and reducing Defence expenditure as a percentage of GDP to its lowest level since 1939;
- (25) the mean-spirited and discriminatory approach to migrants and ethnic communities will harm outworkers, hurt newly-arrived migrants and refugees, cut humanitarian aid and penalise asylum seekers;
- (26) the substantial cuts to ATSIC and to indigenous-related Commonwealth programs represent a massive setback to the process of reconciliation in Australia;
- (27) the savage cuts to the ABC, of \$209 million over four years, are in complete breach of the Coalition's solemn election promise to maintain existing levels of Commonwealth funding to the ABC;

- (28) the Budget has failed to honour the promise to maintain levels of arts funding and spend an additional \$60 million over three years; and
- (29) the Government's plan to substantially increase Commonwealth court and tribunal fees, coupled with deep cuts to legal aid, will result in a severe curtailment of access to justice by many Australians"—

Debate resumed.

Mr Rocher moved—That the Member for Curtin be now heard.

Question—put.

The House divided (the Deputy Speaker, Mrs Crosio, in the Chair)—

AYES, 5

Mr Andren*	Mr Filing*	Mr Rocher
Mr Campbell	Ms Hanson	

NOES, 109

Mr Abbott	Mrs Draper	Miss J. M. Kelly	Mr Reith
Mr Adams	Ms Ellis	Dr Kemp	Mr Ronaldson
Mr Albanese	Mrs Elson	Mr Lee	Mr Sawford*
Mr Anderson	Mr Entsch	Mr Lieberman	Mr Scott
Mr J. N. Andrew	Mr R. D. C. Evans	Mr Lindsay	Mr Sercombe
Mr K. J. Andrews	Mr Fahey	Mr Lloyd	Mr Slipper
Mr Anthony	Mr Fischer	Mr McArthur	Mr A. C. Smith
Mrs Bailey	Mr Fitzgibbon	Mr McClelland	Mr W. L. Smith
Mr R. C. Baldwin	Mr Forrest	Mr McDougall	Mr Somlyay
Mr Barresi	Mrs Gallus	Mr McGauran	Dr Southcott
Mr Bartlett	Ms Gambaro	Mr McLachlan	Mr Stone
Mr Beddall	Mrs Gash	Mr McLeay	Mrs Sullivan
Mr Billson	Mr Georgiou	Mr Melham	Mr Taylor
Mrs Bishop	Mrs E. J. Grace	Mr Miles	Mr A. P. Thomson
Mr Bradford	Mr E. L. Grace	Mr Moore	Mr K. J. Thomson
Mr Broadbent	Mr Hardgrave	Mr A. A. Morris	Mr Truss
Mr Brough	Mr Hatton	Mr Mossfield	Mr Tuckey
Mr Brown	Mr Hawker	Mrs Moylan	Mr M. A. J. Vaile
Mr Cadman	Mr Hicks*	Mr Mutch	Mr Wakelin
Mr E. H. Cameron	Mr Hockey	Mr Nairn	Mrs West
Mr R. A. Cameron	Mr Hollis	Dr Nelson	Mr Williams
Mr Causley	Ms Jeanes	Mr Neville	Mr Willis
Mr Charles	Mr Jenkins	Mr Nugent	Dr Wooldridge
Mr Cobb	Mrs Johnston	Mr Prosser	Ms Worth
Mr Costello	Mr Jones	Mr Pyne	Mr Zammit
Mr Crean	Mr Jull	Mr Quick	
Mr Dondas	Mr Katter	Mr Randall	
Mr Downer	Mrs D. M. Kelly	Mr Reid	

* Tellers

And so it was negated.

Debate adjourned (Mr McArthur), and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for a later hour this day.

8 BILLS REFERRED TO MAIN COMMITTEE

Mr Cadman (Chief Government Whip), pursuant to notice, moved—That the following Bills be referred to the Main Committee for consideration:

Australian Capital Territory Government Service (Consequential Provisions) Amendment 1996;

Legislative Instruments 1996;

Bankruptcy Legislation Amendment 1996;

Australian Animal Health Council (Live-stock Industries) Funding 1996;

Cattle Export Charges Amendment (AAHC) 1996;

Cattle Transaction Levy Amendment (AAHC) 1996;

Laying Chicken Levy Amendment (AAHC) 1996;

Live-Stock Export Charge Amendment (AAHC) 1996;

Live-Stock Slaughter Levy Amendment (AAHC) 1996;

Meat Chicken Levy Amendment (AAHC) 1996;

Pig Slaughter Levy Amendment (AAHC) 1996;

Primary Industries and Energy Legislation Amendment (No. 2) 1996; and

Education Services for Overseas Students (Registration of Providers and Financial Regulation) Amendment (No. 1) 1996.

Question—put and passed.

9 APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 1) 1996-97—BUDGET DEBATE

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the question—That the Bill be now read a second time—*And on the amendment moved thereto by Mr G. J. Evans (Deputy Leader of the Opposition), viz.*—That all words after “That” be omitted with a view to substituting the following words: “whilst not declining to give the Bill a second reading, the House notes that:

- (1) the Budget betrays the Australian promise of working towards a more fair, just, inclusive and united society;
- (2) the Budget is both mindless and heartless, and its prescriptions are not what the Australian economy needs at present;
- (3) the Budget will have a savagely contractionary impact on economic growth and make impossible the job creation necessary to reduce Australia’s still unacceptably high level of unemployment;
- (4) with stronger economic growth the Budget could be restored to underlying balance over the life of this Parliament through a much more moderate program of fiscal consolidation;
- (5) the spending cuts and tax increases contained in the Budget are, on the evidence of the Government’s own Budget Papers, not necessary to reduce the Commonwealth Government’s debt-to-GDP ratio and will not produce a significant improvement in the current account deficit;

- (6) the Budget not only offers no hope to the unemployed but actively harms their prospects of finding a job by cutting labour market programs and privatising the previously publicly provided employment service function of the CES;
- (7) the Budget will have unfair and unjust consequences for the struggling and disadvantaged in our midst—the poor, the old, the sick, indigenous Australians and newly-arrived migrants;
- (8) the many spending cuts concerned with education and training, research and development, trade development (including breaches of promise with respect to EMDG, ITES and IAMP), production bounties, and other business support, will be counter-productive in their longer term consequences;
- (9) there is deception involved in the family tax package contained in the Budget, whereby what the Prime Minister appears to be putting into one pocket is for most middle Australian families being taken right out of the other by the Treasurer in higher education fees, Austudy changes, higher nursing home charges, higher fees and charges;
- (10) there are many breaches of Coalition election promises contained in this Budget, which amount to over \$17 billion over four years, and which will cause hardship, insecurity and dismay for millions of Australians;
- (11) the Budget involves a massive betrayal of regional Australia through the abolition of the \$150 million regional development program, large cuts to road funding, the closure of regional Government offices such as Medicare and CES offices, and the cuts to the ABC and university funding;
- (12) the mean-spirited decision to introduce large, up-front entry fees and massively increased daily fees for nursing homes, and increase user-charges will harm elderly Australians;
- (13) the abolition of Childcare Operational Subsidies will impact heavily upon community based child care centres;
- (14) the reduction of \$800 million over four years in public hospital funding will cause longer waiting lists for the sick and reduce the quality of hospital and medical assistance for millions of people;
- (15) the Budget involves a breaking of the Government's so called 'core' commitment to maintain Medicare in its entirety through cuts to rebates for numerous items under Medicare;
- (16) the cruel decision to abolish the Commonwealth Dental Health Programme will cause serious problems for the less well off;
- (17) harsh and promise-breaking decisions will force Australian families to pay substantially more for the cost of their prescription medicines;
- (18) the massive funding cuts to education, the increased HECS charges and AUSTUDY changes will penalise the less well off;

- (19) the Budget's comprehensive and ideological assault on the public sector will cost 10 500 jobs in 1996-97 alone;
- (20) the Government has failed to honour its election commitment to maintain the environment budget and to provide an additional \$84 million in the 1996-97 Budget, instead cutting by 13 per cent the environmental budget and forward estimates;
- (21) the reckless decision to reduce funding for the National Highway by \$622 million over four years, breaches a clear Coalition election commitment at the 1996 election, and with other decisions will reduce the level of public infrastructure investment, especially in regional Australia;
- (22) the decision to impose a 500 per cent increase in the taxation arrangements for visits to the Great Barrier Reef will discourage tourism and cost jobs in Queensland;
- (23) the Government has failed to honour its promise to not cut Australia's foreign aid beyond the election commitment to abolish the DIFF program, and in doing so will allow the estimated ODA/GDP ratio for Australia in 1996-97 to fall to 0.29 per cent;
- (24) the Government has failed to honour its election promise that Defence expenditure would not be cut, whilst cutting \$165 million from the 1995 Defence Budget estimates for 1996-97, and reducing Defence expenditure as a percentage of GDP to its lowest level since 1939;
- (25) the mean-spirited and discriminatory approach to migrants and ethnic communities will harm outworkers, hurt newly-arrived migrants and refugees, cut humanitarian aid and penalise asylum seekers;
- (26) the substantial cuts to ATSIC and to indigenous-related Commonwealth programs represent a massive setback to the process of reconciliation in Australia;
- (27) the savage cuts to the ABC, of \$209 million over four years, are in complete breach of the Coalition's solemn election promise to maintain existing levels of Commonwealth funding to the ABC;
- (28) the Budget has failed to honour the promise to maintain levels of arts funding and spend an additional \$60 million over three years; and
- (29) the Government's plan to substantially increase Commonwealth court and tribunal fees, coupled with deep cuts to legal aid, will result in a severe curtailment of access to justice by many Australians"—

Debate resumed.

Mr Hollis addressing the House—

10 ADJOURNMENT

It being 10.30 p.m.—The question was proposed—That the House do now adjourn.

Debate ensued.

The House continuing to sit until 11 p.m.—The Acting Speaker adjourned the House until tomorrow at 9.30 a.m.

PAPERS

The following papers were deemed to have been presented on 10 September 1996:

Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 187.

Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 162.

Air Force Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 179.

Australian Sports Drug Agency Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 163.

Bankruptcy Act—Rules—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 191.

Cattle Export Charges Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 166.

Cattle Transaction Levy Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 165.

Christmas Island Act—

List of Western Australian Acts for period 30 April to 6 September 1996.

Ordinances 1996 Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6.

Cocos (Keeling) Islands Act—

List of Western Australian Acts for period 30 April to 6 September 1996.

Ordinances 1996 Nos. 3, 4, 5.

Defence Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 Nos. 177, 181, 196.

Defence Act, Naval Defence Act and Air Force Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 182.

Export Inspection (Establishment Registration Charges) Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 193.

Export Inspection (Quantity Charge) Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 195.

Export Inspection (Service Charge) Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 192.

Extradition Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 170.

Family Law Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 188.

Federal Court of Australia Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 189.

Health Insurance Commission Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 159.

Hearing Services Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 149.

Imported Food Control Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 194.

- Income Tax Assessment Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 Nos. 150, 185.
- Industrial Relations Act—
Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 168.
Rules—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 154.
- International Organizations (Privileges and Immunities) Act—Regulations—
Statutory Rules 1996 No. 197.
- Judiciary Act—
High Court of Australia—Rule of Court, 8 August 1996.
Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 190.
- Lands Acquisition Act—Statement under section 40.
- Migration Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 Nos. 153, 198.
- Military Superannuation and Benefits Act—Declaration—Statutory Rules 1996
Nos. 152, 169.
- Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules
1996 No. 175.
- National Health Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 183.
- National Residue Survey Administration Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules
1996 No. 161.
- National Residue Survey (Cattle Export) Levy Act—Regulations—Statutory
Rules 1996 No. 167.
- National Residue Survey (Cattle Transactions) Levy Act—Regulations—
Statutory Rules 1996 No. 164.
- Native Title Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 186.
- Naval Defence Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 Nos. 178, 180.
- Parliament Act—Parliamentary Zone—Proposal for construction of a glass
canopy and stainless steel drainage grating to the porte cochere of the House of
Representatives main entry of Parliament House.
- Primary Industries and Energy Research and Development Act—Regulations—
Statutory Rules 1996 No. 160.
- Radiocommunications Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 158.
- Social Security Act—
Pensions Loans Scheme (Social Security)—Rate of Compound Interest
Determination 1996 No. 1.
Social Security (Threshold Rates) Determination—1996 No. 1.
- States Grants (Primary and Secondary Education Assistance) Act—
Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 199.
- Superannuation Act 1976*—Declaration—Statutory Rules 1996 Nos. 155, 173.
- Superannuation Act 1990*—Declaration—Statutory Rules 1996 Nos. 156, 172,
174.

Superannuation (Resolution of Complaints) Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 151.

Telecommunications (Carrier Licence Fees) Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 157.

Therapeutic Goods Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 200.

Trade Marks Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 184.

Veterans' Entitlements Act—Pension Loans Scheme (Veterans' Entitlements)—Rate of Compound Interest Determination 1996 No. 1.

Weapons of Mass Destruction (Prevention of Proliferation) Act—Regulations—Statutory Rules 1996 No. 176.

ATTENDANCE

All Members attended (at some time during the sitting) except Mr Griffin, Mr Halverson, Mr Holding, Mr Langmore, Dr Theophanous and Mr Wilton.

I. C. HARRIS

Acting Clerk of the House of Representatives