

2002

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

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1 MEETING OF SENATE

The Senate met at 9.30 am. The President (Senator the Honourable Paul Calvert) took the chair and read prayers.

2 GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S OPENING SPEECH—ADDRESS-IN-REPLY—PRESENTATION

The President informed the Senate that, accompanied by honourable senators, he had on 28 August 2002 waited on the Governor-General and presented to him the address-in-reply to his speech, on the occasion of the opening of Parliament, agreed to on 16 May 2002.

The Governor-General had indicated that he would convey the address-in-reply to Her Majesty The Queen.

3 PETITION

The following petition, lodged with the Clerk by Senator Cherry, was received:

From 42 petitioners, requesting that the Senate urge the Government to release publicly the demands and concessions it proposes to make to other countries for opening up trade in services as part of negotiations on a new General Agreement on Trade in Services.

4 NOTICES

Senator Allison: To move on the next day of sitting—That the Senate—

(a) notes that:

- (i) the Specific Learning Difficulties Association of New South Wales Inc. (SPELD) may have to close after more than 30 years due to lack of funding,
- (ii) SPELD receives only \$27 000 of state government funding and receives no federal government funding, despite representations having been made,
- (iii) an estimated 7 per cent of children, or one in every classroom, have a specific learning disability,
- (iv) this condition can seriously limit life options for people, with significant impacts on emotional health, self esteem, social skills and workforce options, and
- (v) the SPELD help line receives over 5 000 calls annually; and

(b) urges the Federal Government to consider providing funding for learning difficulties associations to assist them in their important work, as a matter of urgency. (*general business notice of motion no. 150*)

The Chair of the Select Committee on Superannuation (Senator Watson): To move on the next day of sitting—That the time for the presentation of the report of the Select Committee on Superannuation on its inquiry on tax arrangements for superannuation and related policy be extended to 14 November 2002. (*general business notice of motion no. 151*)

5 ORDER OF BUSINESS—REARRANGEMENT

The Special Minister of State (Senator Abetz) moved—That the following government business orders of the day be considered from 12.45 pm till not later than 2 pm today:

- No. 7 Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (2002 Budget Measures) Bill 2002 and a related bill.
- No. 8 Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2002.
- No. 9 Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety (Licence Charges) Amendment Bill 2002.

Question put and passed.

Senator Abetz moved—That the order of general business for consideration today be as follows:

- (a) general business notice of motion no. 149 standing in the name of Senator Evans, relating to the rate of bulk billing by general practitioners; and
- (b) consideration of government documents.

Question put and passed.

6 POSTPONEMENTS

Items of business were postponed as follows:

Business of the Senate notice of motion no. 1 standing in the name of Senator Bartlett for today, relating to the reference of matters to the Legal and Constitutional References Committee, postponed till 17 September 2002.

Business of the Senate notice of motion no. 2 standing in the name of Senator Conroy for today, relating to the disallowance of certain Corporations Amendment Regulations, postponed till 16 September 2002.

Government business notice of motion no. 1 standing in the name of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer (Senator Ian Campbell) for today, proposing to vary an order of the Senate for the production of periodic reports by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, postponed till 16 September 2002.

7 RURAL AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS AND TRANSPORT LEGISLATION COMMITTEE— PROPOSED REFERENCE

Senator Harris, pursuant to notice of motion not objected to as a formal motion, moved business of the Senate notice of motion no. 3—

- (1) That the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Amendment Regulations 2002 (No. 1) and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Amendment Regulations 2002 (No. 2), as contained in Statutory Rules 2002 Nos 72 and 73, respectively, and made under the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*, be referred to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee for inquiry and report by 15 October 2002.
- (2) That, in considering the Regulations, the committee have regard to the effective management and interaction of the fishing and tourism industries and interests in the region, with particular regard to the best means of managing any competition or conflict between these industries and interests.

Question put and negatived.

8 LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENCES COMMITTEE—LEAVE TO MEET DURING SITTING

Senator Mackay, at the request of the Chair of the Legal and Constitutional References Committee (Senator Bolkus) and pursuant to notice of motion not objected to as a formal motion, moved general business notice of motion no. 147—That the Legal and Constitutional References Committee be authorised to hold a public meeting during the sitting of the Senate on Monday, 16 September 2002, from 8 pm, to take evidence for the committee's inquiry into the Migration Legislation Amendment (Further Border Protection Measures) Bill 2002 and related issues.

Question put and passed.

9 COMMUNITY AFFAIRS REFERENCES COMMITTEE—EXTENSION OF TIME TO REPORT

Senator Mackay, at the request of the Chair of the Community Affairs References Committee (Senator Hutchins) and pursuant to notice of motion not objected to as a formal motion, moved general business notice of motion no. 148—That the time for the presentation of the report of the Community Affairs References Committee on the Family and Community Services Legislation Amendment (Australians Working Together and other 2001 Budget Measures) Bill 2002 and related issues be extended to 25 September 2002.

Question put and passed.

10 PUBLICATIONS—STANDING COMMITTEE—2ND REPORT

The Chair of the Standing Committee on Publications (Senator Colbeck) tabled the following report:

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE
2ND REPORT

The Publications Committee reports that it has met in conference with the Publications Committee of the House of Representatives.

The Committee, having considered documents presented to the Parliament since 26 June 2002, recommends that the following be printed:

Australia and the Asian Development Bank—Report for 2000-01.

Australia and the IMF—Report for 2000-01.

Australia and the World Bank—Report for 2000-01.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare—Report—Australia's health 2002.

Australian Land Transport Development Program—Progress reports for—
1998-99,
1999-2000.

Commonwealth Grants Commission—Report—Jervis Bay Territory 2002.

Judge Advocate General—Report for 2001.

National Health and Medical Research Council—Report for 2001.

Productivity Commission—Report no. 14—Review of the *Prices Surveillance Act 1983*.

Queensland Fisheries Joint Authority—Report for 2000-01.

Reserve Bank of Australia—Report for 2001-2002.

Western Australian Fisheries Joint Authority—Report for 1999-2000.

Senator Richard Colbeck

Chairman

29 August 2002.

Senator Colbeck moved—That the report be adopted.

Question put and passed.

11 EMPLOYMENT, WORKPLACE RELATIONS AND EDUCATION LEGISLATION COMMITTEE—ADDITIONAL INFORMATION—ESTIMATES

Senator Eggleston, at the request of the Chair of the Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Legislation Committee (Senator Tierney), tabled additional information received by the committee (Budget estimates 2001-02—vols 7 and 8; Additional estimates 2001-02—vol. 7).

12 FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION LEGISLATION COMMITTEE—REPORT—CHARTER OF POLITICAL HONESTY BILL 2000 [2002], ELECTORAL AMENDMENT (POLITICAL HONESTY) BILL 2000 [2002], GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING (OBJECTIVITY, FAIRNESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY) BILL 2000 [AND] AUDITOR OF PARLIAMENTARY ALLOWANCES AND ENTITLEMENTS BILL 2000 [NO. 2]

Pursuant to order, Senator Eggleston, at the request of the Chair of the Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee (Senator Mason), tabled the following report and documents:

Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee—Charter of Political Honesty Bill 2000 [2002], Electoral Amendment (Political Honesty) Bill 2000 [2002], Government Advertising (Objectivity, Fairness and Accountability) Bill 2000 [and] Auditor of Parliamentary Allowances and Entitlements Bill 2000 [No. 2]—Report, dated August 2002, *Hansard* record of proceedings and submissions [24].

Report ordered to be printed on the motion of Senator Eggleston.

Statement by leave: Senator Eggleston, by leave, made a statement relating to the report.

13 EMPLOYMENT, WORKPLACE RELATIONS AND EDUCATION LEGISLATION COMMITTEE—REPORT—RESEARCH AGENCIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2002

Pursuant to order, Senator Eggleston, at the request of the Chair of the Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Legislation Committee (Senator Tierney), tabled the following report and documents:

Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Legislation Committee—Research Agencies Legislation Amendment Bill 2002—Report, dated August 2002 and submissions [8].

Report ordered to be printed on the motion of Senator Eggleston.

14 **ORDER OF BUSINESS—REARRANGEMENT**

The Minister for Defence (Senator Hill) moved—That intervening business be postponed till after consideration of government business order of the day no. 2 (Higher Education Funding Amendment Bill 2002 and a related bill).

Question put and passed.

15 **HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING AMENDMENT BILL 2002**
HIGHER EDUCATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2) 2002

Order of the day read for the adjourned debate on the motion of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Senator Troeth)—That these bills be now read a second time.

Debate resumed.

Question put and passed.

Bills read a second time.

The Senate resolved itself into committee for the consideration of the bills.

In the committee

HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING AMENDMENT BILL 2002—

Bill taken as a whole by leave.

On the motion of Senator Carr the following amendments, taken together by leave, were debated and agreed to:

Schedule 1, item 8, page 6 (lines 5 and 6), omit “eligible unfunded institution”, substitute “eligible private institution”.

Schedule 1, item 11, page 6 (line 22), omit “*eligible unfunded institution*”, substitute “*eligible private institution*”.

Schedule 1, item 12, page 6 (line 28), omit “eligible unfunded institution”, substitute “eligible private institution”.

Schedule 1, item 13, page 6 (line 31), omit “eligible unfunded institution”, substitute “eligible private institution”.

Schedule 1, item 15, page 7 (lines 8 and 9), omit “eligible unfunded institution”, substitute “eligible private institution”.

Schedule 1, item 15, page 7 (line 11), omit “eligible unfunded institution”, substitute “eligible private institution”.

Schedule 1, item 17, page 7 (line 23), omit “**Eligible unfunded institution**”, substitute “**Eligible private institution**”.

Schedule 1, item 17, page 8 (lines 10 and 11), omit “eligible unfunded institution”, substitute “eligible private institution”.

Schedule 1, item 17, page 8 (lines 18 and 19), omit “eligible unfunded institution”, substitute “eligible private institution”.

Senator Carr moved the following amendments together by leave:

Schedule 1, item 10, page 6 (lines 13 to 17), omit paragraph (c), substitute:

(c) if the institution is a non-self accrediting institution—is a course which the Minister is satisfied meets the quality criteria in place in the National Protocols, based on the advice of:

- (i) an independent expert panel as established by the Minister with terms of reference and reporting requirements as prescribed; or
- (ii) an institution referred to in section 4.

Schedule 1, item 10, page 6 (line 17), after paragraph (c), insert:

; (d) the matters prescribed under subparagraph (c)(i) shall include criteria for the appointment of an expert panel, including persons with extensive knowledge of higher education courses in the same or similar field, which is independent of the institution.

Debate ensued.

Question—That the amendments be agreed to—put.

The committee divided—

AYES, 32

Senators—

Allison	Conroy	Lees	Murray
Bartlett	Cook	Ludwig	Nettle
Bishop	Crossin	Lundy	O'Brien
Bolkus	Denman	Mackay	Ray
Buckland (Teller)	Faulkner	Marshall	Ridgeway
Campbell, George	Forshaw	McLucas	Sherry
Carr	Greig	Moore	Stephens
Cherry	Hogg	Murphy	Stott Despoja

NOES, 31

Senators—

Abetz	Coonan	Johnston	Patterson
Alston	Eggleston	Kemp	Payne
Barnett	Ellison	Knowles	Scullion
Boswell	Ferguson	Lightfoot	Tchen
Brandis	Ferris (Teller)	Macdonald, Ian	Tierney
Calvert	Harradine	Macdonald, Sandy	Vanstone
Campbell, Ian	Heffernan	Mason	Watson
Colbeck	Herron	McGauran	

Question agreed to.

After 12.45 pm: The Acting Deputy President (Senator McLucas) resumed the chair and the Chair of Committees (Senator Hogg) reported progress.

16 ORDER OF BUSINESS—REARRANGEMENT

The Minister for Forestry and Conservation (Senator Ian Macdonald) moved—That, after consideration of government business order of the day no. 9 (Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety (Licence Charges) Amendment Bill 2002), the following government business orders of the day be called on to enable second reading speeches to be made till not later than 2 pm:

No. 5 Plant Breeder's Rights Amendment Bill 2002.

No. 6 Space Activities Amendment Bill 2002.

No. 4 Proceeds of Crime Bill 2002 and a related bill.

Question put and passed.

**17 VETERANS' AFFAIRS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (2002 BUDGET MEASURES) BILL 2002
VETERANS' AFFAIRS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 1) 2002**

Order of the day read for the adjourned debate on the motion of the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (Senator Alston)—That these bills be now read a second time.

Debate resumed.

Question put and passed.

Bills read a second time.

No amendments to the bills were circulated and no senator required that they be considered in committee.

On the motion of the Minister for Forestry and Conservation (Senator Ian Macdonald) the bills were read a third time.

18 VETERANS' AFFAIRS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2) 2002

Order of the day read for the adjourned debate on the motion of the Special Minister of State (Senator Abetz)—That this bill be now read a second time.

Debate resumed.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

No amendments to the bill were circulated and no senator required that it be considered in committee.

On the motion of the Minister for Forestry and Conservation (Senator Ian Macdonald) the bill was read a third time.

**19 AUSTRALIAN RADIATION PROTECTION AND NUCLEAR SAFETY (LICENCE CHARGES)
AMENDMENT BILL 2002**

Order of the day read for the adjourned debate on the motion of the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (Senator Alston)—That this bill be now read a second time.

Debate resumed.

Senator Stott Despoja moved the following amendment:

At the end of the motion, add “but the Senate notes concerns with the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency’s licensing processes and requests that the Australian National Audit Office audit the agency’s:

- (a) process and method of determining licence applications;
- (b) scheduling and renewing;
- (c) setting of licence charges;
- (d) extent of unlicensed activities resulting from delays in licence processing; and
- (e) the impact of delays, if any, on research and development in Australia.

Debate ensued.

Question—That the amendment be agreed to—put and passed.

Senator Allison moved the following amendment:

At the end of the motion, add “but the Senate:

- (a) notes the view of the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) that arrangements for taking the spent fuel and turning it into a reasonable waste form needs to be absolutely clear before the new reactor at Lucas Heights commences operations, and there needs to be clear progress on siting a store for the waste that returns to Australia; and
- (b) is of the opinion that until all matters relating to safety, storage and transportation of nuclear materials associated with the new reactor at Lucas Heights are resolved, no operating licence related to the new reactor at Lucas Heights should be issued by the agency”.

Question—That the amendment be agreed to—put and passed.

Main question, as amended, put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

No amendments to the bill were circulated and no senator required that it be considered in committee.

On the motion of the Minister for Forestry and Conservation (Senator Ian Macdonald) the bill was read a third time.

20 **PLANT BREEDER’S RIGHTS AMENDMENT BILL 2002**

Order of the day read for the adjourned debate on the motion of the Minister for Health and Ageing (Senator Patterson)—That this bill be now read a second time.

Debate resumed.

On the motion of the Minister for Forestry and Conservation (Senator Ian Macdonald) the debate was adjourned till the next day of sitting.

21 SPACE ACTIVITIES AMENDMENT BILL 2002

Order of the day read for the adjourned debate on the motion of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer (Senator Ian Campbell)—That this bill be now read a second time.

On the motion of the Minister for Forestry and Conservation (Senator Ian Macdonald) the debate was adjourned till the next day of sitting.

Suspension of sitting: On the motion of Senator Ian Macdonald the sitting of the Senate was suspended till 2 pm.

At 2 pm—

22 QUESTIONS

Questions without notice were answered.

23 ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Senator Forshaw moved—That the Senate take note of the answers given by ministers to questions without notice asked today.

Debate ensued.

Question put and passed.

24 AUSTRALIAN SEARCH AND RESCUE—PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Senator O'Brien, by leave, made a personal explanation relating to a press release of 28 August 2002 by the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr Anderson) concerning the administration of Australian Search and Rescue in relation to the search for the *Margaret J.*

25 FOREIGN AFFAIRS—UNITED STATES OF AMERICA—TERRORISTS ATTACKS—ANNIVERSARY

The Leader of the Government in the Senate (Senator Hill), by leave, moved—That the Senate—

- (a) affirms the imperative for all people to enjoy peace and security in their day-to-day lives;
- (b) expresses its repugnance of those who employ terror and violence against innocent people;
- (c) conveys to the Government and people of the United States of America the sympathy of the Government and people of Australia, on the first anniversary of the horrific terrorist attacks of September 11;
- (d) extends condolences to the families and other loved ones of those Australians who lost their lives in the attacks;
- (e) confirms Australia's continued commitment to the war against terrorism;
- (f) reiterates its support for the comprehensive range of enhancements to domestic counter-terrorist arrangements enacted by this Parliament; and

- (g) endorses the Australian Government's continuing efforts to improve cooperation on counter-terrorism with other governments in our region.

Debate ensued.

The Acting Leader of the Australian Democrats (Senator Greig) moved the following amendment:

Omit paragraphs (e), (f) and (g).

Debate ensued.

Question—That the amendment be agreed to—put.

The Senate divided—

AYES, 9

Senators—

Allison (Teller)	Greig	Murphy	Ridgeway
Bartlett	Lees	Nettle	Stott Despoja
Cherry			

NOES, 41

Senators—

Bishop	Evans	Macdonald, Sandy	Sherry
Brandis	Ferguson	Marshall	Stephens
Buckland	Ferris (Teller)	Mason	Tchen
Calvert	Herron	McGauran	Tierney
Campbell, George	Hill	McLucas	Troeth
Carr	Hogg	Moore	Watson
Colbeck	Johnston	O'Brien	Webber
Conroy	Kemp	Payne	Wong
Cook	Kirk	Ray	
Crossin	Ludwig	Reid	
Eggleston	Lundy	Scullion	

Question negatived.

Main question put and passed.

26 SUPERANNUATION—COMMERCIAL NOMINEES OF AUSTRALIA LTD—ORDER FOR PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS—STATEMENT BY LEAVE

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Senator Troeth), by leave, made a statement relating to the order of the Senate of 28 August 2002 for the production of documents concerning advice by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority relating to applications for financial assistance for superannuation funds where Commercial Nominees of Australia Ltd was trustee (*see entry no. 14, 28 August 2002*).

27 SUPERANNUATION—SUPERANNUATION WORKING GROUP—ORDER FOR PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS—STATEMENT BY LEAVE

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Senator Troeth), by leave, made a statement relating to the order of the Senate of 28 August 2002 for the production of documents concerning a report by the Superannuation Working Group (*see entry no. 15, 28 August 2002*).

**28 ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNICATIONS, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND THE ARTS
REFERENCES COMMITTEE—GOVERNMENT RESPONSE—METHODS OF APPOINTMENT
TO THE ABC BOARD**

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Senator Troeth) tabled the following document:

Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee—Report—Above board? Methods of appointment to the ABC Board—Government response, dated August 2002.

Senator Cherry, by leave, moved—That the Senate take note of the document.

On the motion of Senator Ludwig the debate was adjourned till the next day of sitting.

29 TREATIES—JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE—GOVERNMENT RESPONSE—42ND REPORT

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Senator Troeth) tabled the following document:

Treaties—Joint Standing Committee—42nd report—Who's afraid of the WTO? Australia and the World Trade Organisation—Government response.

Senator Ludwig, by leave, moved—That the Senate take note of the document.

Debate adjourned till the next day of sitting, Senator Ludwig in continuation.

Before 4.30 pm: The Acting Deputy President (Senator McLucas) reminded the Senate that the standing orders provided for general business to be called on not later than 4.30 pm.

Leave was granted to enable the tabling of certain documents and for a motion relating to the membership of committees to be moved prior to the commencement of general business.

30 APPROPRIATIONS AND STAFFING—STANDING COMMITTEE—REPORT FOR 2001-02

The Acting Deputy President (Senator McLucas) tabled the following report:

Appropriations and Staffing—Standing Committee—Report for 2001-02, dated August 2002.

Report ordered to be printed on the motion of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Senator Troeth).

31 WORK OF COMMITTEES—DOCUMENT

The Acting Deputy President (Senator McLucas) tabled the following report:

Work of committees—Consolidated statistics for 1 July 2001 to 30 June 2002; Statistics for 1 January to 30 June 2002.

Document ordered to be printed on the motion of Senator McGauran.

32 AUDITOR-GENERAL—AUDIT REPORT NO. 6 OF 2002-03—DOCUMENT

The Acting Deputy President (Senator McLucas) tabled the following report:

Auditor-General—Performance audit—Fraud control arrangements in the Department of Veterans' Affairs (Report no. 6 of 2002-03).

Senator Ludwig, by leave, moved—That the Senate take note of the document.

Debate adjourned till the next day of sitting, Senator Ludwig in continuation.

33 AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE—STANDING OPERATING PROCEDURES—DOCUMENTS

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Senator Troeth) tabled the following documents, in accordance with an undertaking given at the Legal and Constitutional Legislation Committee hearing in respect of the Border Security Legislation Amendment Bill 2002:

Australian Customs Service—Standing operating procedures—Provision of information to Customs by—

Card issuers about existing Aviation Security Identification Cards holders.

Employers of airport personnel working in the security restricted area but not holding Aviation Security Identification Cards.

34 PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT—JOINT STATUTORY COMMITTEE—390TH REPORT

Senator Watson, on behalf of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit, tabled the following report:

Public Accounts and Audit—Joint Statutory Committee—390th report—Review of Auditor-General's reports 2001-02: First, second and third quarters—Administration of taxation rulings; Commonwealth estate property sales; Administration of the Federation Fund Program; Personnel security: Management of security clearances, dated August 2002.

Senator Watson, by leave, moved—That the Senate take note of the report.

Question put and passed.

35 DOCUMENTS

The following documents were tabled by the Clerk:

Broadcasting Services Act—

Broadcasting Services (Additional Conditions — Open Narrowcasting Radio Services) Notice 2002.

Broadcasting Services Clarification Notice 2002.

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act—Instrument amending list of—

Key threatening processes under section 183, dated 10 July 2002.

Threatened species under section 178, dated 4 July 2002.

Higher Education Funding Act—Determination under section 15—Determination No. T14-2002.

Remuneration Tribunal Act—Determination 2002/16: Principal Executive Office (PEO) Classification Structure and Terms and Conditions.

36 COMMITTEES—CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

The Acting Deputy President (Senator McLucas) informed the Senate that the President had received letters requesting changes in the membership of various committees.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Senator Troeth), by leave, moved—That senators be discharged from and appointed to committees as follows:

Community Affairs Legislation Committee—

Participating members: Senators Buckland and Collins

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee—

Substitute member: Senator Bartlett to replace Senator Ridgeway for the committee's inquiry into materiel acquisition and management in Defence

Senators' Interests—Standing Committee—

Appointed: Senator Reid

Discharged: Senator Barnett.

Question put and passed.

General business was called on.

37 HEALTH—MEDICARE—BULK BILLING

Senator Forshaw, at the request of Senator Evans and pursuant to notice, moved general business notice of motion no. 149—That the Senate—

(a) notes that:

(i) since the election of the Howard Government, the rate of bulk billing by general practitioners (GPs) has dropped from 80.6 per cent to 74.5 per cent, and that the average patient cost to see a GP who does not bulk bill has gone up 41.8 per cent to nearly \$12, and

(ii) in every year from the commencement of Medicare in 1984 through to 1996, bulk billing rates for GPs increased, but that, in every year since the election of the Howard Government, bulk billing rates have decreased;

(b) recognises that the unavailability of bulk billing hurts those Australians who are least able to afford the rising costs of health care and those who are at greatest risk of preventable illness and disease;

(c) condemns the Howard Government's failure to take responsibility for declining rates of bulk billing; and

(d) calls on the Minister for Health and Ageing (Senator Patterson) to release publicly the June 2002 quarter bulk billing figures so that the true extent of the problem is made known.

Debate ensued.

At 6 pm: Debate was interrupted while Senator Moore was speaking.

38 GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS—ORDERS OF THE DAY—CONSIDERATION

The following orders of the day relating to government documents were considered:

Torres Strait Regional Authority—Report for 2000-01. Motion of Senator Ludwig to take note of document agreed to.

Australia and the Asian Development Bank—Report for 2000-01. Motion of Senator Marshall to take note of document agreed to.

National Health and Medical Research Council—Report for 2001. Motion of Senator Wong to take note of document agreed to.

General business orders of the day nos 4-13 relating to government documents were called on but no motion was moved.

General business concluded.

39 COMMITTEE REPORTS AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSES—ORDERS OF THE DAY—CONSIDERATION

The following orders of the day relating to committee reports and government responses were considered:

Privileges—Standing Committee—106th report—Possible improper interference with a witness before the Senate Select Committee on a Certain Maritime Incident. Motion of the chair of the committee (Senator Ray)—That the Senate endorse the finding at paragraph 1.41 of the 106th report—agreed to.

Privileges—Standing Committee—107th report—Parliamentary privilege precedents, procedures and practices in the Australian Senate 1996-2002. Motion of the chair of the committee (Senator Ray)—That the Senate take note of the 107th report—agreed to.

Public Works—Joint Statutory Committee—Report—Common use infrastructure on Christmas Island. Motion of Senator Ferguson to take note of report agreed to.

40 AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS—ORDERS OF THE DAY—CONSIDERATION

Orders of the day relating to reports of the Auditor-General were called on but no motion was moved.

41 COMMUNITY AFFAIRS LEGISLATION COMMITTEE—APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER

The President informed the Senate that he had received a letter nominating a senator to be a member of a committee.

The Minister for the Arts and Sport (Senator Kemp), by leave, moved—That Senator Boswell be appointed as a participating member of the Community Affairs Legislation Committee.

Question put and passed.

42 ADJOURNMENT

The President proposed the question—That the Senate do now adjourn.

Debate ensued.

The Senate adjourned at 6.46 pm till Monday, 16 September 2002 at 12.30 pm.

43 ATTENDANCE

Present, all senators except Senators Brown, Chapman, Collins and Minchin.

HARRY EVANS
Clerk of the Senate