

HOUSE REVIEW



Selected features of House of Representatives business

Sitting period 18-28 June 2018 (no. 13)

This sixth issue for 2018 considers the continuing effect of s. 44 of the Constitution, a substantial number of bills introduced and finalised, including finalisation of the Appropriation bills, a diverse array of committee reports, and message traffic between the House and Senate.

Section 44 of the Constitution

Following the Acknowledgment of Country and Prayers on 18 June 2018, the Speaker informed the House that he had issued writs on 15 June for the election of Members for the divisions of Braddon, Fremantle, Longman, Mayo, and Perth. The Speaker stated the rolls would close on 22 June, nominations on 5 July, and the date of polling would be 28 July 2018. Four of the five vacancies arise as a result of s. 44 of the Constitution. Circumstances in the electorates featured frequently in Question Time, as well as in Members' statements and debate.

Budget debate completed

Consideration in detail of Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2018-2019 continued from 18 to 21 June in the Federation Chamber, with Ministers representing all portfolios attending and responding to Members' questions. When expenditure on all portfolios had been considered and agreed—on 21 June—the remainder of the bill was taken as a whole and agreed. The question that the Federation Chamber's consideration of the bill be reported to the House without amendment was agreed. Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2018-2019 was then called on, the questions on the second reading, and that the bill be reported to the House without amendment, were each put and passed. The Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1) 2018-2019 and Appropriation Bills (No. 5) and (No. 6) 2017-2018 each passed after the same process. Later on the 21st, the Federation Chamber's consideration of each bill was reported to the House in turn, each bill was agreed, the third reading moved immediately by leave, and carried on the voices. That completed the House's consideration. The Senate passed all the bills without amendment on 25 June and its messages returning the bills without amendments or requests were reported to the House later that day.

Legislation

Introductions

On 20 June, the Unexplained Wealth Legislation Amendment Bill 2018; Migration (Validation of Port Appointment) Bill 2018; and Farm Household Support Amendment Bill 2018 were introduced; and the Treasury Laws Amendment (Protecting Your Superannuation Package) Bill 2018 was introduced the following day. On 27 June, one bill was introduced and eight were introduced the following day, including the Defence Amendment (Call Out of the Australian Defence Force) Bill 2018 and the Modern Slavery Bill 2018. The Defence Amendment bill is intended to streamline legal procedures for the call out of the ADF and to enhance protections against domestic violence, including terrorism. The Modern Slavery bill aims to require some entities to report on the risk of slavery in their operations and supply chains and action to address that risk. The Family Law Amendment (Family Violence and Cross-examination of Parties) Bill 2018 was also introduced on 28 June. The Attorney-General, in his second reading speech, said that the bill responds to recommendations of the House

of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs report of 2017, A better family law system to support and protect those affected by family violence, by amending legislation to ensure family violence victims are protected from direct cross-examination by the alleged perpetrators.

Passing the House

During the fortnight 43 bills passed the House. These included: the Treasury Laws Amendment (Medicare Levy and Medicare Levy Surcharge) Bill 2018 and the Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Veteran-Centric Reforms No. 2) Bill 2018 (on 18 June); and the Health Legislation Amendment (Improved Medicare Compliance and Other Measures) Bill 2018 and Treasury Laws Amendment (Accelerated Depreciation for Small Business Entities) Bill 2018 (on 19 June).

On 20 June, the Treasury Laws Amendment (2018 Superannuation Measures No. 1) Bill 2018 and Aged Care (Single Quality Framework) Reform Bill 2018 passed. The next day, the Social Services Legislation Amendment (Cashless Debit Card Trial Expansion) Bill 2018 and Social Services Legislation Amendment (Payments for Carers) Bill 2018 passed. On 25 June, the Counter-Terrorism Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2018 passed.

On 26 June, following a cognate second reading debate, the National Security Legislation Amendment (Espionage and Foreign Interference) Bill 2017 and the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Bill 2017 passed the House with the support of the major parties. In summing up the second reading debate the Attorney-General acknowledged the work of several parliamentary committees, the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security, and the Shadow Attorney. The Attorney stated that the reforms in the Espionage and Foreign Interference Bill represent the most significant counterintelligence reforms since the 1970s. The bill seeks to strengthen criminal offences covering espionage, official secrets and treason and introduces an offence criminalising economic espionage. The Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Bill will require persons who undertake activities on behalf of a foreign principal to register under the scheme, depending on the identity of the foreign principal and the activities of the person. Two Members opposed the second reading of each bill: three fewer than necessary to cause a formal count. The Attorney-General proposed a large number of detail amendments to each bill and these were agreed to on the voices for each bill. In the Senate, on 28 June, proposed second reading and detail amendments to each bill were unsuccessful and the bills passed.

The Treasury Laws Amendment (Australian Consumer Law Review) Bill 2018 passed on 27 June following agreement to government amendments. The Farm Household Support Amendment Bill 2018 passed the same day (following its introduction on 20 June) and the Treasury Laws Amendment (Protecting Your Superannuation Package) Bill 2018 passed on 28 June after being introduced on 21 June.

All bills introduced and passed by the House are accessible from [Last Week in the House](#).

Private Members' business

On 18 June, two private Members' bills were introduced, one concerning an Inspector-General of Animal Welfare and Live Animal Exports, and the other, refugee protection. The following Monday, five private Members' bills were introduced, concerning restoration of penalty rates (sponsored by the Leader of the Opposition), banking system reform, telephone towers, the minimum wage, and a proposed Regional, Rural and Remote Education Commissioner.

The House agreed to suspend standing orders on 21 May to facilitate the work of the Federation Chamber in considering the appropriation bills. The resolution allocated additional meeting times for the Federation Chamber and gave government business priority during these and some additional times. This enabled a long second-reading debate on the main appropriation bill with participation by

90 Members over 22 hours, and an extensive consideration in detail of the bill. To balance this allocation of time, the resolution provided some additional time during 26 to 28 June for private Members' business, an additional grievance debate, and an hour-long adjournment debate.

Although Ministers cannot sponsor private Members' business items, they can participate in debate. During Private Members' Business time on 18 June, the Minister for Aged Care participated in debate on an Opposition Member's motion on aged home care packages. On the same day debate was resumed in the Federation Chamber on the private Member's bill on Live Sheep Long Haul Export Prohibition that was introduced on 21 May. After the time allocated had expired, debate was adjourned. Following a further allocation of time by the Selection Committee, debate was resumed on 26 June in the Federation Chamber and adjourned when the time allocated time had expired.

Committees

During the fortnight 19 reports were presented to the House. One presented on 25 June was an advisory report by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security on the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Bill 2017. Debate on the bill that was the subject of the report was resumed the following day, along with the National Security Legislation Amendment (Espionage and Foreign Interference) Bill 2017. The PJCIS report on this bill had been presented on 7 June.

A message from the Senate was reported on 26 June informing the House that the Senate had agreed to refer the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Lowering Voting Age and Increasing Voter Participation) Bill 2018 (a private Senator's bill) to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters for inquiry and report by 18 October.

On 28 June, the Chair of the Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests presented Notifications of alterations of Members' interests received between 26 February and 26 June. Also on 28 June the Chair of the Select Committee on Regional Development and Decentralisation presented the Committee's final report, examining best practice approaches to regional development, the decentralisation of Commonwealth entities and support for corporate decentralisation. The Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia presented that Committee's report of its inquiry into opportunities and methods for stimulating tourism in Northern Australia.

Matters of public importance discussions

Topics discussed were working and middle-class Australians, respect for workers, cuts to childcare and penalty rates, corporate tax cuts, and healthcare funding.

Death of former Member and Minister

Before Question Time on 25 June the Prime Minister referred to the death of the Hon. Joseph Max Berinson, the Member for Perth from 1969 to 1975, and moved that the House record its deep regret. The Leader of the Opposition seconded the motion and the House's agreement was signified by all Members rising in silence.

Question time

On 21 June the Manager of Opposition Business moved closure of Member ('that the Member be no longer heard') during an answer by the Minister for Health. The motion was defeated and the Minister finished his answer.

Interaction with the Senate

During the fortnight, the last before the winter sitting recess, message traffic between the Houses was constant.

Private Senators' bills

On 18 June the Chair reported a message from the Senate transmitting the Treasury Laws Amendment (Axe the Tampon Tax) Bill 2018 (a private Senator's bill) and seeking the concurrence of the House. After the first reading, the Leader of the House moved that resumption of debate on the second reading be made an order of the day for the next sitting. The Member for Melbourne moved an amendment proposing that the House consider the question for the second reading immediately. The Leader of the House moved closure of question (that is, 'that the question be now put') and this was carried on division. The original question was then put and carried on the voices. On 26 June another Senate bill, the Taxation Administration Amendment (Corporate Tax Entity Information) Bill 2018 received the same treatment, with the same result, except that it was the Shadow Attorney-General who sought to move an amendment to enable second reading debate to begin.

Senate's amendments to Treasury Laws Amendment (Personal Income Tax Plan) Bill 2018 disagreed
Immediately after the Acknowledgement of Country and prayers on 21 June 2018, the Speaker reported a message from the Senate returning the Treasury Laws Amendment (Personal Income Tax Plan) Bill 2018 with amendments. The Senate's amendments and subsequent negotiations with the Senate crossbench had received a great deal of publicity the evening before. At 9.32am the Treasurer moved that the amendments be considered immediately and, when a debate began, successfully moved closure of question, stopping debate immediately. The question was then put on the Treasurer's motion for immediate consideration and this was carried on division. The Treasurer then moved that the Senate's amendments be disagreed to. After a debate began the Treasurer successfully moved closure of question. The question on the motion 'that the amendments be disagreed to' was carried on division. The Treasurer presented written reasons for the House disagreeing to the Senate's amendments, moved that the House adopt them, and moved closure of question shortly afterwards, as an Opposition amendment was being moved. When the closure motion was carried on division, the original question 'that the House adopt the reasons' was put and carried on division at 10.15am.

Later in the morning of the 21st, consideration in the Senate was resumed when the House's message disagreeing to the Senate amendments was reported and considered immediately in the committee of the whole. The Minister for Finance moved successfully that the Senate not insist on its amendments, that the resolution be reported, and then that the report from the committee of the whole be adopted.

The House was not awaiting messages from the Senate on 28 June and rose at the normal time of 5pm.

The next issue of House Review will be published after the House sits next: 13-23 August 2018.

Further information on the work of the House

[Guide to Procedures](#), 6 ed., 2017, a concise and current guide to the operations of the House

[Last week in the House](#), a collection of items (with hyperlinks) considered by the House during the week

[Bills and legislation](#) for bills, explanatory memoranda, amendments, speeches, and tracking facility

[Live Minutes](#) for 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](#) 6 ed, 2012, for the most authoritative guide to House procedure