

HOUSE REVIEW

Selected features of House of Representatives business

Sitting period 22 July-1 August 2019 (no. 21)

This sitting fortnight featured first speeches by many new Members. Collectively these speeches demonstrate the renewal of House membership that is typical at the beginning of each Parliament. A number of government bills were introduced, including the Appropriation bills for 2019-2020, and an extensive second reading debate on these began. The House was informed of three election petitions: two relating to the election of the Member for Kooyong and one to the Member for Chisholm.

First speeches: Address in Reply to the Governor-General's speech

Debate on the proposed Address in Reply to the Governor-General's speech on the opening of parliament enabled many new Members to make their first speech. Over the fortnight, speeches were made by Ms McIntosh (Lindsay); Mr Simmonds (Ryan); Mr Burns (Macnamara); Ms Wells (Lilley), on 22 July; Ms Liu (Chisholm), on 23 July; Ms Steggall (Warringah); Ms Murphy (Dunkley); Mr Conaghan (Cowper); Ms Thwaites (Jagajaga); Ms Payne (Canberra); Mr Pearce (Braddon); Mr Sharma (Wentworth), on 24 July; Dr Martin (Reid), on 25 July; Dr Allen (Higgins); Ms Hammond (Curtin); Mr Connelly (Stirling), on 29 July; Mrs Phillips (Gilmore); Mr Stevens (Sturt), on 30 July; Mr Young (Longman); Ms Bell (Moncrieff), on 31 July; and Dr Mulino (Fraser); Mr David Smith (Bean); Dr Haines (Indi); and Dr Webster (Mallee), on 1 August. In their individual ways, each new Member expressed their political and personal ideals and commitment to their electorates. The text of all speeches and video extracts are available in [Hansard](#).

High Court—election petitions

On 1 August the Clerk presented copies of election petitions received from the Registrar of the High Court sitting as the Court of Disputed Returns under s.369 of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*. These comprise *Oliver Tennant Yates v Joshua Anthony Frydenberg* in respect of the election of a member for Kooyong; *Michael Robert Staindl v Joshua Anthony Frydenberg* in respect of the election of a member for the same division; and *Naomi Leslie Hall v Gladys Liu* in respect of the election of a member for Chisholm.

Legislation

Introductions

Twenty eight bills were presented in the week of 22 July, and eleven in the second week. These included eight private Members' bills and six Senate bills. The focus of bills included aged care and the Future Drought Fund. On 31 July, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Amendment (Rural and Regional Measures) Bill 2019 was presented. This bill will facilitate the provision of broadcasting services by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) to reflect the needs of rural and regional Australia. The ABC's Charter will be amended and the ABC Board will comprise two members with substantial connections to or experience in a regional area and a Regional Advisory Council will be established.

Appropriation bills

In the last week of the 45th Parliament, the Budget bills were introduced by the Treasurer and the Leader of the Opposition replied on the last day of sitting. No further progress could be made and the bills lapsed at the end of the Parliament. Also in that last week, three Supply bills were

introduced and passed the House and the Senate. They provided for five-twelfths of the 2019-2020 appropriations—for the first five months of the financial year—enabling the continuation of normal government business despite the prorogation of Parliament and dissolution of the House.

On 25 July the government's principal budget bills were introduced: Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2019-2020; Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2019-2020 and the Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1) 2019-2020. Each was preceded by the Chair reading a message from the Governor-General recommending an appropriation for the purposes of the bill, as required by the Constitution. The Minister characterised them as substantively the same as the earlier bills except for minor changes to reflect machinery-of-government changes and some new decisions. The proposed appropriations complement the arrangements of the Supply bills passed in April.

Debate on the motion for the second reading of Appropriation Bill (No. 1) was resumed on 30 July with the Shadow Treasurer in reply. The three bills were then referred to the Federation Chamber and second reading debate continued there on 31 July and 1 August. The second reading debate on such bills is relatively unconfined and this has already attracted a large number of speakers.

Passing the House

Eight bills passed the House in the first week and nine in the second. The Migration Amendment (Repairing Medical Transfers Bill) 2019 passed on 25 July after divisions on an Opposition second reading amendment and the second reading (on 24 July). When consideration was resumed the following day, a contingent notice to suspend standing orders was relied on by the Minister to allow the third reading to be moved immediately. This motion was carried on division, as was the subsequent question on the third reading. The bill was transmitted to the Senate and the second reading moved on 29 July. The bill will amend the *Migration Act 1958* to remove provisions inserted by the *Home Affairs Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous Measures) Act 2019* (the medical transfer provisions) that created a framework to transfer transitory persons and family and others from regional processing countries to Australia for medical or psychiatric assessment or treatment.

On 30 July the House passed the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Amendment (Sunsetting of Special Powers Relating to Terrorism Offences) Bill 2019. An Opposition second reading amendment was defeated on the voices and an amendment to the detail of the bill was defeated on division. The questions on the second and third readings were carried on the voices. The bill will extend the operation of ASIO's questioning, and questioning and detention powers for a further 12 months to 7 September 2020. The bill passed the Senate on 1 August.

On 31 July the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Ensuring Integrity) Bill 2019 passed after divisions on a second reading amendment and the second reading.

On 1 August, second reading debate on the Criminal Code Amendment (Agricultural Protection) Bill 2019 was brought forward after a number of earlier scheduled items were postponed. Debate was interrupted by the usual items of Members 90-second statements, Question Time and so on. So that consideration of the bill could be completed before the House rose, when the Speaker proposed 'That the House do now adjourn' at the normal time, the Leader of the House required the question to be put. The question was negatived on the voices and debate on the bill was resumed. Consideration was completed some 17 minutes later and the Leader of the House then moved that the House 'do now adjourn'. The adjournment debate began and continued until 5.00pm, the normal time of adjournment on Thursdays, when a Minister required that the debate be extended and then spoke. The House adjourned at 5.04pm, only slightly later than usual.

75th anniversary of the Cowra breakout

Immediately before Question Time on 1 August the Prime Minister spoke by indulgence on the 75th anniversary of the breakout in Cowra (by Japanese prisoners from a prisoner of war camp) leading the House to 'record its remembrance of the 75th anniversary of the Cowra breakout and offer its thanks to those who gave their lives in service to Australia, remember the costs of war

that are inflicted on all peoples and recognise the people of Cowra for their contribution to reconciliation and Australia's contemporary relationship with Japan, an ongoing relationship with Japan, a great friend.' The Leader of the Opposition spoke in support and the Leader of the House moved that the matter be referred to the Federation Chamber for further debate.

Retirement of the Clerk

On 1 August the Speaker made a statement about the retirement of the Clerk, Mr David Elder. The Prime Minister moved that the House record its appreciation of Mr Elder's service to the Parliament. After the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the House, and the Manager of Opposition Business spoke, the motion was carried when Members showed their support by standing in their places.

Division database

After Question Time on 23 July the Speaker referred to the recording of votes on iPads by the tellers and how this has enabled quicker publication of division results. The Speaker also announced the provision of a searchable database on [divisions](#) that is available publicly, facilitating research and the collection of statistics.

Committees

As is customary at this early stage of the Parliament, committees are being established and members are being appointed. Some new committees have been established. On 25 July the House agreed to a government motion to establish a House Select Committee on Regional Australia to examine the effectiveness of service delivery in regional Australia and the contribution of regional Australia to Australia's economy and identity, among other things. The Committee's final report is due on 31 July 2020. As a select committee, it will expire once the final report is made.

On 30 July the independent Member for Clark moved (without notice and by leave of the House) for the establishment of a Joint Select Committee into Crown Casino. After debate the motion was defeated on division (5:127). Five is the minimum number of Members on a side to trigger a formal count in a division.

On 1 August the House agreed to a government motion to establish a Joint Select Committee on Road Safety. The Committee will inquire into and report on steps to reduce Australia's road accident rates, trauma, and deaths on our roads. The final report is due before 31 July 2020. A message informing the Senate of the resolution and seeking its concurrence and action was reported on 1 August and agreed to that day.

Motions to suspend standing orders

During the fortnight several motions to suspend standing orders were moved without notice (and so required an absolute majority to succeed). These included a motion by the Manager of Opposition Business on 22 July relating to compliance of former Ministers with Ministerial Standards. After closure motions on Members and the question, the original motion was defeated 69:75.

Also on 22 July the Manager of Opposition Business moved a motion relating to debate on two bills: the Future Drought Fund Bill 2019 and the Future Drought Fund (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2019. After a successful closure of question motion, the motion itself was defeated 67:78. The Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance, Natural Disaster and Emergency Management then moved a suspension motion to 'program' debate on the two bills, allowing for their introduction and the continuation and completion of debate. This succeeded 76:70. The Minister then introduced each bill. Second reading debate continued on the first bill and an Opposition second reading amendment was moved. When the question for the adjournment of the House was proposed, the Leader of the House required the question to be put, the adjournment was negatived on division, and debate continued. The Leader of the House's motion to adjourn debate was negatived and debate continued. An amendment was moved by the Member for Melbourne to the Opposition's second reading amendment. This amendment and the Opposition amendment were each defeated

on division. The questions on the second and third reading were passed on the voices. The second bill was called on and finalised on the voices. The Leader of the House then moved that the House adjourn and the question was put and passed without debate, with the House adjourning at 9.38pm instead of the usual 8.00pm.

On 24 July the Shadow Treasurer moved a motion relating to pension assets and retirement incomes. After closure motions on Members and the question, the motion was defeated 66:78.

On 25 July the Manager of Opposition Business moved a motion relating to the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction. After closure motions on Members, the question was put and defeated 66:74.

Matter of Public Importance discussions

Discussion topics included: agriculture, a positive national agenda, the government's purpose, infrastructure investment, health policy, and representing Australia's interests.

Interaction with the Senate

Interaction with the Senate resumed its normal manner following the formalities evident on the opening of Parliament. Message traffic during the fortnight usually involved the return of House bills without amendment, or transmitted Senate bills for the concurrence of the House. Many messages relating to the formation and membership of parliamentary committees passed between the Houses. On 29 July, a message from the Senate was reported. It related to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. The Leader of the House moved that consideration of the message be made an order of the day for the next sitting. The Member for Melbourne moved to amend the motion so that the message would be considered immediately. Debate on the motion and proposed amendment was interrupted by the usual period of Members' 90-second statements. The Notice Paper records the Senate message as an order of the day, with resumption of debate (yet to begin) on the motion moved by the Leader of the House and the amendment moved to it by the Member for Melbourne.

On 24 July a message was received from the Senate returning the Future Drought Fund Bill 2019 with an amendment. The House agreed to consider the amendment immediately and, on the motion of a Minister, the amendment was agreed to.

The House is scheduled to meet next on 9 September.

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
[Bills and legislation](#), bills, explanatory memoranda, amendments, speeches, and a tracking option
[Last week in the House](#) lists events, including legislation considered and reports presented and provides links to records of the events

[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