

# HOUSE REVIEW



## Selected features of House of Representatives business

Sitting period 23 August – 2 September 2021 (no. 43)

The sittings featured the Prime Minister moving motions on matters of national significance and debate on those motions throughout the fortnight; the consideration of legislative proposals; many committee reports being presented; and the naming and suspension of a Member.

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### **Private Members' business**

Monday mornings are set aside for presentation of petitions and consideration of committee and delegation reports and private Members' business. The Selection Committee had selected three items of private Members' business for consideration on Monday, 23 August. However, one Member withdrew his notice of motion, and another postponed his notice to a later day. Under standing order 110, a Member who has given a notice of motion may postpone or withdraw the notice by notifying the Clerk in writing before the motion is called on.

This left only one item of private Members' business for debate, a motion on aged care. Several members spoke to the motion and, when the time allotted for the item expired, the House granted leave for the debate to continue. The House moved to consideration of government business before noon.

For Monday, 30 August, in accordance with standing order 41(b), the Selection Committee had accorded priority to the introduction of a private Member's bill relating to superannuation. However, on Monday morning the Speaker advised the House that the Member had postponed the notice. In doing so, the Speaker noted that the Selection Committee is obliged to accord priority to a notice of intention to present a bill, and the impact of postponement after an item had been listed for consideration was to deny other Members time to speak on other matters during the period set aside for private Members' business.

### **Motions – Afghanistan and the 70th anniversary of the ANZUS treaty**

Before Question Time on 23 August, standing orders were suspended to enable the Prime Minister to move a motion relating to Afghanistan, and to permit debate on the motion. The Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition each spoke for 10 minutes, before the Deputy Prime Minister, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Minister for Defence, and Member for Gorton each spoke to the motion for 5 minutes and the debate was adjourned. Debate resumed on 24 August, and continued on 26 August and 2 September.

On 1 September, standing order were again suspended, to enable the Prime Minister to move a motion relating to the 70th anniversary of the ANZUS Treaty and the alliance between Australia and the United States of America. The terms of the suspension motion outlined identical speaking times to the motion on Afghanistan the previous week, with the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition each speaking for 10 minutes, and the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Defence and Member for Gorton then each speaking for 5 minutes. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition was also due to speak for 5 minutes but was unable to do so due to technical difficulties with his video link. The Deputy Leader subsequently made his contribution when debate was resumed on the motion later that day, and debate was then adjourned to a future sitting.

### **Death of Senator Alex Gallacher**

On 30 August, the Speaker announced the death of Alexander (Alex) McEachian Gallacher, a sitting Senator, the previous day. The Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition made statements, by indulgence, and all Members rose, in silence, as a sign of respect to Senator Gallacher's memory. The following day, the Prime Minister moved a motion of condolence, to which he and other Members spoke before debate was adjourned, all Members once again rising in their places as a sign of respect. On 1 September, further contributions to the debate were made and the motion was agreed to. Following the announcement of Senator Gallacher's death in the Senate on 30 August, the Senate adjourned as a mark of respect, until the next day.

### **Member named and suspended**

During Question Time on 26 August, the Speaker directed a Member to leave the Chamber, under standing order 94(a), for defying the Chair. The Member continued to interject before leaving the Chamber. The Speaker noted that he would return to the matter at the end of Question Time, at which time he named the Member for defying the Chair. In accordance with standing order 94(b), the Leader of the House moved that the Member for Bruce be suspended from the service of the House. The question was immediately put and agreed to on division, and the Member was suspended for 24 hours. As [House of Representatives Practice](#) describes on pages 539–40, a Member suspended from the service of the House is excluded from the Chamber and may not participate in Chamber-related activities, including presenting petitions, lodging notices, or submitting matters of public importance. A suspended Member is not affected in their non-Chamber duties, such as participating in committee activities.

### **Motions to suspend standing orders**

During the fortnight, the House considered four motions to suspend standing orders, two of which were the motions to enable the Prime Minister to move motions regarding Afghanistan (on 23 August) and the anniversary of the ANZUS treaty (on 1 September). On 31 August, a motion to suspend standing orders was moved by the Member for Indi, regarding the establishment of a federal integrity commission. The Leader of the Opposition seconded the motion, which was then debated and negatived. On 2 September, the Member for Hughes moved a suspension of standing orders regarding his No Domestic COVID Vaccine Passports Bill 2021, which was negatived.

### **Voting intentions of Members not present**

On 26 August and 2 September, the Manager of Opposition Business, by leave, presented documents received from the Members for Mayo, Melbourne and Clark indicating how they would have voted on a range of motions over the sitting fortnight. Similar documents have been presented throughout the pandemic when non-aligned Members were unable to be present at the sittings and wished to have their voting intentions recorded.

## **Legislation**

### *Introductions*

During the fortnight, 19 Government bills were presented. Subjects included Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations, Aboriginal land rights, paid parental leave for those receiving COVID-19 disaster payments, amendments to taxation relating to the sharing economy and the closure of the Superannuation Complaints Tribunal, the Australian Government's investment funds, two bills relating to redress for the Stolen Generations and one bill relating to redress for victims of institutional child sexual abuse, the purchase of COVID-19 vaccines, addressing the doctor shortage in regional Australia, the implementation of recommendations made by the Aged Care Royal Commission, employment in regional communities, the strengthening of biosecurity, two bills relating to the implementation of custom arrangements with Indo-Pacific nations, two bills relating to establishing offshore electricity infrastructure and related levies, and amendments to COAG and

National Cabinet legislation relating to disclosure. A private Member's bill was introduced, relating to COVID-19 vaccinations.

#### *Introduction and passage on the same day*

On 25 August, the Foreign Intelligence Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 was introduced. Unusually, the bill passed all stages in one day, with leave granted after the minister's second reading speech for debate to continue later that day. Later, Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security presented its advisory report, which made recommendations for amendments to the bill. When debate concluded later in the day, government amendments were agreed to and, as is usual practice, leave was granted for a minister to move the motion for the third reading of the bill immediately. Had leave not been granted at these stages, further proceedings would have taken place at a future sitting, pursuant to standing orders 142 and 155.

#### **Parliamentary committees**

Committees continued their work during the fortnight, with 19 reports presented, including on vaccine related fraud and security risks, tax treatment of employee share schemes, trade and investment with Pacific island countries and aspects of the treaty-making process in Australia. On 30 August, a Member presented the Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs' report on Indigenous participation in employment and business, and made a statement. The Chair, Deputy Chair, and another member of the Committee also made statements, some by video link. The report contained 17 recommendations including in relation to existing and forthcoming government employment programs, and the Government's Indigenous Procurement Policy.

Committees met and many conducted public hearings for their inquiries during the fortnight. Details of committee inquiries, reports, and hearings are available on the parliamentary website.

Some changes were made to committee membership. On 25 August, changes were made to the membership of the Joint Select Committee on Road Safety and the Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts.

#### **Matter of Public Importance discussions**

Topics for the one-hour discussions after Question Time on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays included: the agriculture sector, Jobkeeper, the economy, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Communication with the Senate**

One message from the Senate related to membership of a joint committee. All other messages related to the consideration of legislative proposals.

Sixteen House bills were returned from the Senate without amendments or requests.

One House bill, the Treasury Laws Amendment (2021 Measures No. 2) Bill 2021, was returned with amendments. The message was reported on 2 September and, on motion by a minister, the amendments were considered immediately and agreed to, on the voices, after debate.

Four Senate bills were transmitted for the House's concurrence. On most occasions, the bill was read a first time and the second reading was made an order of the day for a future sitting.

On 2 September, the Sex Discrimination and Fair Work (Respect at Work) Amendment Bill 2021 was transmitted from the Senate for concurrence and read a first time, immediately after which a minister presented a revised explanatory memorandum to the bill and moved the second reading. The second reading debate, by leave, took place immediately. A second reading amendment was negatived and the second reading agreed to, both on the voices. During the consideration in detail stage of the bill, the Manager of Opposition Business moved 51 detail amendments, which were disagreed to, on division, after debate. The bill was then agreed to and read a third time.

The House and Senate are scheduled to meet next on 18 October 2021.

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***Further information on the work of the House***

[Bills and legislation](#)—access bills, explanatory memoranda, amendments, speeches, information about key stages of a bill’s consideration, and a tracking option

[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

[House of Representatives Standing Orders](#), as at 19 September 2019, as amended—the House rules of procedure