

HOUSE REVIEW



Selected features of House of Representatives business

Sitting period 29-31 March 2022 (no. 47)

This sitting week featured: the Treasurer's presentation of and the Leader of the Opposition's reply to, the 2022-23 Budget, the passage of supply bills and an address by the President of Ukraine, which Senators were invited to attend.

Practical arrangements were tailored in response to the current COVID-19 health settings. All Members were able to sit in the House, and the public galleries returned to full capacity seating. Masks were mandatory in the Chamber and galleries due to increased attendance during the Budget sitting week. With these changed circumstances, there were no arrangements in place for Members to make contributions using the official video facility.

Resignation of Member

On 29 March, the Speaker announced that the Member for Spence, Mr Nick Champion, had resigned as a Member on 22 February 2022. With a general election pending, the Speaker had decided that a writ would not be issued for a by-election to be held for the federal division of Spence. This would avoid the necessity for the electors of Spence to participate in three elections (including the recent state election and the impending general election) within a short period of time.

Budget

At 7.30 pm on Tuesday, 29 March a message from the Governor-General was announced by the Speaker, recommending in accordance with the Constitution, an appropriation for the purposes of Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2022-2023. The Treasurer presented the bill (known as the 'main' budget bill), which was read a first time. The Treasurer then moved that the bill be read a second time and made the traditional Budget speech. After debate was adjourned, the Assistant Treasurer presented Budget Papers 1 to 4, a women's budget statement and a regional budget statement. Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2022-2023 and Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 2) 2022-23 were each introduced following the required message from the Governor-General. On Thursday evening at 7.30 pm, the Leader of the Opposition made his Budget reply speech on resumption of debate on the second reading of the main budget bill.

On Tuesday afternoon, the House had agreed to suspend standing orders relating to the automatic adjournment of the House and limits on business to allow presentation of the budget and the reply. The Speaker also reminded Members on both Tuesday and Thursday that standing orders allow the Treasurer and the Leader of the Opposition unlimited time on their second reading speeches on the main appropriation bill, although they typically limit themselves to around 30 minutes. The clocks in the Chamber are set for 30 minutes to assist with timing but not to limit speeches formally.

Also on Tuesday, an assistant minister introduced three supply bills for appropriations to facilitate the continuation of normal government and parliamentary activity for the first five months of 2022-23. The supply bills are based generally on approximately five-twelfths of annual appropriation, taking into account measures announced in the mid-year fiscal and economic outlook and additional estimates. They are designed to fund government and parliamentary expenditure on an interim basis until the principal appropriation bills are passed. Debate on each bill was adjourned until a later hour, by leave, and the bills were then passed later that day.

Address by the President of Ukraine

On Wednesday, the House agreed to suspend standing orders to enable the House to invite His Excellency Mr Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine, to address the House by video link the following day, and to send a message to the Senate inviting the President of the Senate and all Senators to attend the House as guests for the address. The suspension of standing orders also provided for the House to suspend proceedings before and after His Excellency's address.

At 5.30 pm on Thursday, following a short suspension, the Speaker, the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition made welcoming remarks. Appearing by video link on screens located next to the Speaker and around the Chamber, President Zelenskyy gave an address about the situation in Ukraine.

This is the 16th address by a foreign head of state or government to a meeting in the House of Representatives Chamber with Members and Senators—and the first such address by video link.

Marking the deaths of a serving Senator and a former Minister

On Tuesday, the Prime Minister moved a condolence motion on the death of Senator Kimberley Jane Elizabeth Kitching, a serving Senator for the state of Victoria, and a number of Members made contributions. Later the same day, the Prime Minister moved a condolence motion on the death of Dr Moses Henry (Moss) Cass, a former Minister and Member for Maribyrnong. On each occasion, the Leader of the Opposition seconded the motion and, at the conclusion of contributions, Members rose in their places in silence as a mark of respect. Both motions were referred to the Federation Chamber, where further contributions were made the following day, before being returned to the House and agreed to.

Statements by indulgence

Just before Question Time on Tuesday, the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition made statements by indulgence on the recent floods in Queensland and New South Wales. The House then agreed that further statements could be made in the Federation Chamber, where Members spoke the following day.

The Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition then both made statements by indulgence on the situation in Ukraine. With the agreement of the House, further statements were made in the Federation Chamber the following day.

On Thursday before Question Time, the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition made statements on the memorial service for Shane Warne. Following Question Time, each leader also made a statement regarding the death of David Irvine AO, following which Members rose in their places as a mark of respect to the memory of the deceased.

Legislation

During the week, 11 bills were introduced. In addition to the budget and supply bills, these included treasury law, excise and tariff amendment bills to give effect to measures announced in the Budget, as well as a bill relating to Aboriginal land in the Jervis Bay territory.

The introductions included one Senate bill, relating to road vehicle standards, which was received from the Senate on Thursday and considered immediately. By leave, debate on the second reading took place immediately. After the bill was read a second time, the third reading was also moved by leave and agreed to.

In total, 19 bills passed the House during the three days. This included six bills which passed on the same day they were introduced. While the standing orders require debate on a bill to be adjourned until a future sitting after the second reading is moved, if leave is granted the second reading debate can continue immediately or later during the same sitting.

As the Monday was not a sitting day, no private Members' bills were introduced this week.

Valedictory remarks

During the week, the Members for Casey, Dawson, Menzies, Pearce and Swan, who will not be contesting the next election, made valedictory remarks by indulgence.

Parliamentary committees

On Tuesday, the House agreed to the appointment of members to various committees. The Speaker advised that he had received advice of the nominations from the Chief Government Whip on 11 March and that, as the House was not expected to sit for several weeks, in accordance with SO 229(b) the appointments became effective on that date.

Thirty-six committee reports were presented during the week, most on Thursday.

Communication with the Senate

The Senate sat this week from 28 to 30 March. Senate committees began their consideration of budget estimates on 31 March, a House sitting day.

One Senate bill was received during the week, as discussed above, and 20 bills were returned from the Senate without amendment or requests.

On Thursday, three bills were returned with amendments. Amendments to the Data Availability and Transparency (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2020 and the Security Legislation Amendment (Critical Infrastructure Protections) Bill 2022 were considered and agreed to immediately, while the House agreed to consider amendments to the Aged Care and Other Legislation (Royal Commission Response No. 2) Bill 2021 at the next sitting. Other message traffic related to committee membership.

The House is scheduled to meet next on 11 April.

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