

Procedural Digest

No. 23

46th Parliament

3–12 August 2021

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Selected entries contain links to video footage via *Parlview*. Please note that the first time you click a [\[Watch\]](#) link, you may need to refresh the page (ctrl+F5) for the correct starting point.

Bills

23.01 COVID-19 response bill introduced and passed all stages in one sitting

On the first day of the sitting fortnight, the Assistant Treasurer, by leave, presented the Treasury Laws Amendment (COVID-19 Economic Response No. 2) Bill 2021 without notice. During his second reading speech the Assistant Treasurer explained that the bill would enable the government to support individuals and businesses impacted by COVID-19 lockdowns. After his speech, the House gave leave for the debate to continue. The Shadow Treasurer was the first speaker and moved a second reading amendment.

During the day, several members spoke in the debate. Just prior to the adjournment of the House, the second reading amendment was disagreed to and the second reading agreed to on the voices. By leave, an assistant minister moved the third reading and the question was carried on the voices.

Hansard: 3 August 2021, 7199-217; 7270-309
Votes and Proceedings: 2021/2084-5, 2088

SOs 63, 138, 142, 145, 148

23.02 Amendments moved on behalf of absent members

Over the sitting fortnight, opposition members moved amendments on behalf of members unable to attend sittings due to COVID-19 restrictions. For example, during debate on the Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Child Care Subsidy) Bill 2021, Dr Andrew Leigh indicated that he was moving a second reading amendment on behalf of the Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education, Ms Amanda Rishworth. The next day, during consideration in detail of the bill, Dr Leigh moved amendments circulated in the name of the shadow minister. In both cases, the shadow minister spoke in the debate via video link.

According to the Agreement for members to contribute remotely to parliamentary proceedings, members participating remotely may not move a motion or an amendment.

Hansard: 4 August 2021, 7360-77
 5 August 2021, 7503-4
Votes and Proceedings: 2021/2103, 2108

SOs 145, 148

Business

23.03 Statements on Tokyo Olympic Games

On 9 August, the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition both made statements by indulgence to congratulate and thank the Australian Olympic team at the conclusion of the Tokyo Olympic Games. [\[Watch\]](#)

Hansard: 9 August 2021, 7751-4

23.04 Customs tariff proposal

On 4 August, the Assistant Treasurer moved Customs Tariff Proposal (No. 4) 2021. He explained that the proposal extended the free rate of customs duty applicable to certain medical and hygiene goods suitable for use in combating COVID-19. Debate was adjourned.

Tariff proposals take effect once they have been moved. It is not necessary for the motion to be agreed.

Hansard: 4 August 2021, 7327
Votes and Proceedings: 2021/P2101

23.05 Prime Minister's statement on Closing the Gap

On 5 August, the Prime Minister made his annual statement to parliament on Closing the Gap and presented the *Commonwealth Closing the Gap Implementation Plan*. The Leader of the Opposition spoke in response. The Leader of the House moved that the House take note of the document before debate was adjourned. [\[Watch\]](#)

During the sitting fortnight several members spoke in the debate on the motion to take note, including the Minister and Shadow Minister for Indigenous Australians.

Hansard: 5 August 2021, 7475-85
9 August 2021, 7807-27
11 August 2021, 8080-93
Votes and Proceedings: 2021/2107, 2119, 2130
SOs 63A, 199, 202

Documents

23.06 Revised ministry list presented

On 3 August, the Prime Minister presented a revised ministry list, reflecting changes to the ministry and representative arrangements. The list was incorporated in *Hansard*.

Hansard: 3 August 2021, 7226-9
Votes and Proceedings: 2021/2085

SO 199

Federation Chamber

23.07 Federation Chamber not meeting due to COVID-19

On 4 August, the Speaker informed the House that the Deputy Speaker had fixed 18 October 2021 as the day of the next meeting of the Federation Chamber. Later in the day, the Speaker explained that the Federation Chamber would not meet over the coming sitting weeks because a number of members on the Speaker's panel were unable to attend sittings due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Hansard: 4 August 2021, 7321; 7407
Votes and Proceedings: 2021/2101

SO 186

Members

23.08 Personal explanation by Leader of the Opposition

On 3 August, the Leader of the Opposition made a personal explanation claiming that the Prime Minister had misrepresented him during question time that day, by incorrectly stating that he had refused a briefing from Lieutenant General Frewen, Coordinator of the National COVID Vaccine Taskforce.

During Question Time on 5 August, on a point of order, the Leader of the Opposition complained that the Prime Minister had repeated the misrepresentation. The Speaker advised that the claim should not be made again unless there was new information. Later that day, the Leader of the Opposition made another personal explanation in relation to the matter.

Standing order 68 allows the Speaker to intervene where a member has made a personal explanation to correct a misrepresentation and another member subsequently repeats the matter complained of.

Hansard: 3 August 2021, 7247
5 August 2021, 50, 56

SO 68

23.09 Voting intentions of absent members presented

On 9 August, the Manager of Opposition Business, by leave, presented the voting intentions of Ms Zali Steggall and Mr Andrew Wilkie for the previous sitting week. He explained that this was in accordance with an agreement whereby crossbench members unable to attend sittings could send a formal record of how they would have voted to the Leader of the

House or himself for presentation in the House. On Thursday, 12 August, he presented the two members' voting intentions for the second sitting week.

Hansard: 9 August 2021, 7807

12 August, 8202

Votes and Proceedings: 2021/2119, 2135

SOs 63, 199

23.10 Leave of absence granted to all members

On the last day of the sitting fortnight, the Acting Leader of the House moved that leave of absence be given to all members until the date of the next sitting of the House. The question was carried on the voices.

A member's place becomes vacant if, without permission of the House, he or she does not attend the House for two consecutive months of any session of the Parliament (s. 38, The Constitution).

Hansard: 12 August 2021, 8187

Votes and Proceedings: 2021/2135

SO 26

Motions

23.11 Motion by Leader of the Opposition regarding COVID-19 carried

During members' statements, government member Mr George Christensen made some controversial remarks regarding COVID-19. Later, during question time, the House granted leave for the Leader of the Opposition to move a motion calling on all members to refrain from spreading misinformation in relation to the pandemic. The Prime Minister and another opposition member spoke before the motion was carried on the voices.

Hansard: 10 August 2021, 7868; 7887-94

Votes and Proceedings: 2021/2123

SO 63

Parliamentary administration

23.12 Statement by Speaker regarding COVID-safe arrangements

At the beginning of the sitting fortnight, the Speaker make a statement to inform members of special arrangements put in place at Parliament House in response to COVID-19 outbreaks across the country.

He explained that the building was closed to the public and that access would only be granted to people for essential business. He asked all building occupants to wear a mask whenever possible, including members in the chamber (when not speaking).

He further advised that strict physical distancing requirements would be followed in the Chamber and directed members to sit only in their allocated seats.

Hansard: 3 August 2021, 7197
Votes and Proceedings: 2021/2083
SO 199

23.13 Agreement for members to contribute remotely

After the Speaker's statement, a minister presented an *Agreement for members to contribute remotely to parliamentary proceedings* made between the Acting Leader of the House and the Manager of Opposition Business, to apply for the sitting fortnight. This allowed several members unable to attend sittings because of COVID-19 to participate in proceedings via the official video facility. In total, 41 members participated remotely at least once.

Hansard: 3 August 2021, 7197
Votes and Proceedings: 2021/2083-4
SO 199

23.14 Question to Speaker regarding possible changes to quorum requirement

On 12 August, the Manager of Opposition Business asked the Speaker a question regarding the resolution of the House adopted at the beginning of the pandemic, on 23 March 2020, which allowed for the House to meet in a manner and form not provided in the standing orders, with the agreement of the Leader of the House and the Manager of Opposition Business. He noted that, according to the resolution, any changes to the quorum of the House (currently 31 members) would need to be determined by the Speaker and asked the Speaker to clarify how this would work in practice, given the unfolding COVID-19 situation across Australia.

The Speaker responded that, while such action was currently not required, if the House needed to sit with a lower quorum then this would need to be agreed between the Leader of the House and Manager of Opposition Business and authorised by himself as Speaker. At that point, he explained, the House could meet with the lower quorum and relevant documentation would be presented for completeness.

Hansard: 12 August 2021, 8203-4
SOs 2, 54

Speaker

23.15 Changes to Speaker's panel

On the first day of the sitting fortnight, the Speaker presented a warrant revoking the nomination of Mr David Gillespie to the Speaker's panel and a warrant nominating Mr Darren Chester, Mr Mark Coulton and Mr Rick Wilson.

On 4 August, the Speaker presented another warrant nominating Mr Milton Dick to the panel.

Hansard: 3 August 2021, 7199

4 August 2021, 7407

Votes and Proceedings: 2021/2084, 2104

SO 17

Offensive words[#]

	<i>Hansard</i>	
	<i>Date</i>	<i>Page</i>
'The IQ of the chamber just went up.'	3 August 2021	7238
"'Lord make me pure, but not until we go into opposition' is the prayer of the 'Ballarorter'."	5 August 2021	7551
'What a fraud!'	10 August 2021	7871
'And this foolish motormouth, the member for Higgins—'	12 August 2021	8199

SOs 89, 90, 92

[#] List of unparliamentary expressions recorded in *Hansard*.