

Procedural Digest

No. 9

48th Parliament

23 March – 1 April 2026

March – April 2026				
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Members

9.01 Revised shadow ministry list presented

On 23 March, prior to Question Time, the Leader of the Opposition presented a revised shadow ministry list reflecting changes announced on 16 March.

Hansard: 23 March 2026, P110-11
Votes and Proceedings: 2025-26/576

9.02 First instance of a member being directed to leave the Chamber for three hours

On 24 March, during Question Time, the Speaker directed a member to leave the Chamber for three hours for interjecting. This was the first instance of the sanction being invoked since standing order 94(a) was amended at the beginning of the 48th Parliament to include the option of a three-hour exclusion period for disorderly conduct.

Hansard: 24 March 2026, P8
Votes and Proceedings: 2025-26/587

SO 94

9.03 Writ issued for Farrer by-election

On 1 April, the Speaker informed the House that he had issued a writ that day for the election of a member to fill the vacancy in the electoral division of Farrer (see [Digest 8.02](#)).

Hansard: 1 April 2026, P62
Votes and Proceedings: 2025-26/648

9.04 Leave of absence for all members

On the final sitting of the fortnight, 1 April, the Leader of the House moved that leave of absence be given to all members until the date of the next sitting. The question was put and passed on the voices.

Section 38 of the Constitution provides that the place of a member shall become vacant if they fail to attend the House for two consecutive months of any session of the Parliament. A motion of leave for all members is usually made by a minister at the end of a period of sittings to cover the absence of members during the break between sittings.

Hansard: 1 April 2026, P62
Votes and Proceedings: 2025-26/649

SO 26

Distinguished visitors

9.05 President of the European Commission addresses Parliament

On 23 March, the Leader of the House, by leave, moved a motion to make arrangements for the President of the European Commission, Her Excellency Ursula von der Leyen, to attend and address the House on 24 March. The motion, which was agreed to, provided for:

- the time for the House to meet being no earlier than 11:55 am
- the order of proceedings to be welcoming remarks by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition and an address by the President of the European Commission, followed by a suspension of the House until the ringing of the bells at no earlier than 2:55 pm
- a message to be sent to the Senate inviting senators to attend the House as guests for the occasion, and standing order 257(c) relating to good order to apply during their visit in the Chamber and the galleries, and
- the Federation Chamber to meet at approximately 5:00 pm for one hour of constituency statements and one hour of grievance debate, followed by immediate adjournment without debate.

On 24 March, in accordance with the resolution, the House met at 12:00 pm. Following the acknowledgment of country and prayers, the Speaker extended a welcome to the President of the Senate and senators as guests. The President of the European Commission was then announced and escorted into the Chamber, where she was welcomed by the Speaker. Welcoming remarks were then made by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition before the Speaker invited President von der Leyen to address the House. After the address, members and senators rose in their places and applauded, and the Speaker thanked President von der Leyen on behalf of the House. The Speaker also thanked the President of the Senate and senators for their attendance before inviting the Prime Minister to escort President von der Leyen from the Chamber. The sitting of the House was then suspended from 12:52 pm to 3:00 pm.

Standing order 257 relates to the admission of senators and visitors and, among other provisions, gives the Speaker the privilege of admitting distinguished visitors to have a seat on the floor of the Chamber. It also provides that senators, when present in the Chamber or galleries, must observe the Speaker's instructions regarding good order.

Hansard: 23 March 2026, P90-1

24 March 2026, P1-5

Votes and Proceedings: 2025-26/575; 587

SO 257

Bills

9.06 Amended suspension motion passed and bills read together

On 26 March, during government business time, the Manager of Opposition Business moved a motion, without notice, to suspend standing and sessional orders to immediately resume debate on the Treasury Laws Amendment (Doubling Penalties for ACCC

Enforcement) Bill 2026. The motion also sought to manage debate on the bill by having second reading debate proceed without interruption, limiting the time for each speech to five minutes, and questions then being immediately put on any amendments moved to the motion for the second reading and on the second reading of the bill. Detail amendments in any consideration in detail stage would be moved in sets. Any remaining questions required to conclude a consideration in detail stage would be put from no later than 1:00 pm and, when the bill was agreed to, the question on the third reading of the bill would be put immediately. Lastly, any variation to these arrangements would be made only on a motion moved by the Manager of Opposition Business.

The motion was seconded and debate ensued; the Leader of the House then moved amendments to the suspension motion to add the Fair Work Amendment (Fairer Fuel) Bill 2026 for concurrent debate and to remove the variation clause. The House divided on the question that the amendment be agreed to, which was carried. The question that the amended suspension motion be agreed to was then put and agreed to on division with the concurrence of an absolute majority.

In accordance with the resolution, the two bills were then called on and debated together. An opposition amendment to a crossbench second reading amendment was negated, as was the original amendment. The bills were then read together a second and third time.

If a suspension motion is moved without notice, it can only be carried by an absolute majority of members, or by a majority of members present if agreed by the Leader of the House and the Manager of Opposition Business.

Bills are considered together on occasion. The last instance of bills being read together a second and a third time was on 4 August 2022.

*Hansard: 26 March 2026, P6-39
Votes and Proceedings: 2025-26/606-10
SOs 47, 142, 155*

9.07 Fuel bills package introduced and passed in one day

On 30 March, the Leader of the House moved a motion, without notice, to suspend standing and sessional orders to facilitate the passage of three bills: the Export Finance and Insurance Corporation Amendment (Strategic Reserve) Bill 2026, the Appropriation (Fuel Security Response) Bill (No. 1) 2025-2026 and the Appropriation (Fuel Security Response) Bill (No. 2) 2025-2026. The motion provided that:

- following presentation of the bills and the ministers' second reading speeches, debate be adjourned until a later hour and, on resumption of debate, cognate debate on the bills to occur
- immediately following Question Time and the presentation of any documents, debate on the bills to resume immediately if the bills had not passed
- at no later than 5.30 pm, any questions necessary to complete the remaining stages of each bill to be put, with any message from the Governor-General under standing order 147 being announced, and any detail amendments circulated being treated as if they had been moved together by the member proposing them, and
- any variation to this arrangement only on a motion moved by a minister.

The Manager of Opposition Business spoke in support and the motion was agreed to with the concurrence of an absolute majority.

In accordance with the resolution, each bill was presented and ministers' second reading speeches were made. Before each appropriation bill was presented, a message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation was announced. Second reading debate on the bills then proceeded in cognate until 1:30 pm when debate was interrupted for members' statements. Cognate debate resumed following Question Time and the presentation of documents. Second reading and detail amendments to the Export Finance and Insurance Corporation Amendment (Strategic Reserve) Bill 2026 were negatived on division. All three bills passed on the voices.

*Hansard: 30 March 2026, P33-49; 68-91
Votes and Proceedings: 2025-26/617-22*

SOs 47, 141, 142, 145, 147, 148, 150, 155, 180

9.08 Further fuel legislation introduced and passed in one day

On 31 March, the Leader of the House moved, pursuant to notice, to suspend standing and sessional orders to allow debate on the Treasury Laws Amendment (Fuel Excise Relief) Bill 2026 to continue after the Minister's second reading speech, to resume (if needed) after the matter of public importance and presentation of a delegation report, and to conclude no later than 5.30pm. The Manager of Opposition Business spoke in support and the motion was agreed to.

The bill was then presented and the minister's second reading speech made. In accordance with the resolution, second reading debate on the bill continued. A shadow minister moved a second reading amendment, which was negatived on division after debate resumed that afternoon. The bill then passed all remaining stages on the voices.

*Hansard: 31 March 2026, P1-15; 44-55
Votes and Proceedings: 2025-26/631-2; 633-4*

SOs 47, 141, 142, 145, 155

9.09 Senate-initiated bills transmitted to the House

Over the sitting fortnight, three bills initiated in the Senate were transmitted to the House for concurrence:

- the High Seas Biodiversity Bill 2026 (24 March)
- the Housing Australia Amendment (Accountability) Bill 2026 (a private senator's bill, transmitted on 26 March), and
- the National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Integrity and Safeguarding) Bill 2025 (31 March).

The majority of government bills are initiated in the House. Standing order 166 provides that Senate bills coming to the House for the first time proceed, to the necessary extent, as though they were House bills.

*Hansard: 24 March 2026, P27
26 March 2026, P68
31 March 2026, P61*

Votes and Proceedings: 2025-26/588; 611; 636

SO 166

Motions

9.10 Non-government motions to suspend standing orders

Over the sitting fortnight non-government members moved to suspend standing and sessional orders:

- On 25 March, to introduce a bill to amend the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Member for Calare). The motion was seconded and debate ensued before a minister moved that the debate be adjourned, which was agreed to on division.
- On 26 March, to immediately resume debate on the Treasury Laws Amendment (Doubling Penalties for ACCC Enforcement) Bill 2026 (see Digest 9.06).
- On 1 April, to move a motion relating to roads (Member for Calare). The motion to suspend standing orders was seconded before the Leader of the House moved that the debate be adjourned, which was agreed to on division.
- On 1 April, to introduce a bill relating to the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (Member for Lyne). The motion was negated on division.

Hansard: 25 March 2026, P20-4

26 March 2026, P6-12

1 April 2026, P2-10

Votes and Proceedings: 2025-26/595-6; 606-8; 641-44

SOs 41, 47, 79, 111

Committees

9.11 Membership of new Parliamentary Joint Committee on Defence

On 1 April, the Deputy Speaker informed the House that the Speaker had received advice from the Prime Minister nominating members to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Defence. The Leader of the House moved, by leave, that the members be appointed in accordance with the *Defence Act 1903*, and the motion was agreed to (see [Digest 8.12](#)).

Hansard: 1 April 2026, P72

Votes and Proceedings: 2025-26/649

SO 229

Statements

9.12 Ministerial statement on the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement progress report

On 25 March, the Minister for Education, by leave, made a ministerial statement relating to the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement progress report. The Minister presented copies of his statement and the progress report. The Shadow Minister for Education then addressed the House in reply. The Minister moved that the House take note of the ministerial statement before debate was adjourned and resumption of debate was referred to the Federation Chamber.

On 31 March, the Leader of the House moved, without notice, to suspend standing orders to remove the whole debate time limit on the motion to take note of the ministerial statement. The motion passed with the concurrence of an absolute majority.

Under standing order 1, the maximum time for the whole debate on a motion to take note of a document (which falls under 'Other debates – not otherwise provided for') is one hour.

Hansard: 25 March 2026, P35-43

31 March 2026, P1

Votes and Proceedings: 2025-26/598; 631

SOs 1, 47, 63A, 199, 202

9.13 Statements of condolence

Over the sitting fortnight the following statements of condolence were made:

- On 23 March, the Prime Minister, by indulgence, made a statement on the death of Ms Rhoda Ann Roberts AO, an actor, broadcaster, director, and arts executive. The Leader of the Opposition then made a statement by indulgence associating the Opposition with the Prime Minister's remarks. Further statements were made in the Chamber on 25 March and in the Federation Chamber on 31 March.
- On 26 March, the Speaker informed the House of the death of Dr Wylie Talbot Gibbs, the Member for Bowman from 1963 to 1969. All members present stood in their places as a mark of respect.
- On 1 April, the Attorney-General made a statement on the death of Sir Anthony Mason AC KBE GBM KC, former Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition associated the Opposition with the Attorney-General's remarks. Further statements were made in the Federation Chamber.

In most circumstances, the death of a former member or senator who did not hold certain offices is marked with a statement by the Speaker without a condolence motion being moved. Sometimes members have made statements of condolence by indulgence. Members are also able to refer to the deaths of former members at another time, such as during the adjournment debate.

Hansard: 23 March 2026, P124-5

25 March 2026, P1-2

26 March 2026, P46

31 March 2026, P106-8

1 April 2026, P1-2; 91-2

Votes and Proceedings: 2025-26/611; 639; 641; 652

9.14 Statements by indulgence

On 25 March, the Prime Minister made a statement by indulgence on endometriosis awareness month. A shadow minister then made a statement associating the Opposition with the Prime Minister's remarks.

Several other statements were made by indulgence over the sitting fortnight:

- On 24 March, after Question Time, the Minister for Climate Change and Energy made a statement by indulgence adding to an answer he had provided earlier during Question Time.

- On 26 March, after the matter of public importance discussion, the Minister for Climate Change and Energy made a statement by indulgence adding to an answer he had provided during Question Time.
- On 30 March, during Question Time, the Minister for Emergency Management answered a question on Ex-Tropical Cyclone Narelle. A shadow minister then made a statement associating the Opposition with the Minister's remarks.
- On 31 March, before Question Time, the Prime Minister and a shadow minister made statements by indulgence relating to a prize-winning school student.

Hansard: 24 March 2026, P17
 25 March 2026, P1
 26 March 2026, P67-8
 30 March 2026, P63-4
 31 March 2026, P21

Offensive words[#]

<i>Offensive words or phrase</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Hansard page reference</i>
'...it'll bore them all to death.'	23 March	P104
'You lied last week.'	23 March	P123-4
'Labor's actually lying to you...'	26 March	P32
'...Labor and the LNP are on the take. ...they don't want to stop the gravy train.'	31 March	P41

SOs 89, 90, 92

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