

2002-03

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

No. 102

THURSDAY, 19 JUNE 2003

1 The House met, at 9 a.m., pursuant to adjournment. The Speaker (the Honourable Neil Andrew) took the Chair, and read Prayers.

2 COMMUNICATIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 3) 2003

Mr McGauran (Minister representing the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts), pursuant to notice, presented a Bill for an Act to amend legislation related to communications, and for related purposes.

Bill read a first time.

Mr McGauran moved—That the Bill be now read a second time.

Paper

Mr McGauran presented an explanatory memorandum to the Bill.

Debate adjourned (Mr Swan), and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for the next sitting.

3 POSTAL SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2003

Mr McGauran (Minister representing the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts), pursuant to notice, presented a Bill for an Act to amend legislation relating to postal services, and for related purposes.

Bill read a first time.

Mr McGauran moved—That the Bill be now read a second time.

Paper

Mr McGauran presented an explanatory memorandum to the Bill.

Debate adjourned (Mr Swan), and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for the next sitting.

4 PROCEDURE—STANDING COMMITTEE—REPORT—STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Mrs May (Chair) presented the following papers:

Procedure—Standing Committee—Sessional Order 344—

Report, June 2003.

Evidence received by the committee.

Minutes of proceedings.

Ordered—That the report be printed.

Mrs May, Mr M. J. Ferguson, Mr Melham and Mr Price, by leave, made statements in connection with the report.

Mrs May, by leave, moved—That the House take note of the report.

Mrs May was granted leave to continue her speech when the debate is resumed.

Debate adjourned, and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for the next sitting.

5 SUPERANNUATION (SURCHARGE RATE REDUCTION) AMENDMENT BILL 2003

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the question—That the Bill be now read a second time—*And on the amendment moved thereto by Mr Cox, viz.*—That all words after “That” be omitted with a view to substituting the following words: “the Bill be withdrawn and redrafted to:

- (1) ensure that the proposed surcharge tax reduction to high-income earners, and changes to public sector funds do not proceed; and
- (2) provide for a fairer contributions tax cut that will boost retirement incomes for all superannuation fund members to assist in preparing the nation for the ageing population”—

Debate resumed.

Amendment negatived.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed—Bill read a second time.

Leave granted for third reading to be moved forthwith.

On the motion of Mr Slipper (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration), the Bill was read a third time.

6 PUBLIC WORKS—PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE—REFERENCE OF WORK—CONSTRUCTION OF A RESPECIFIED IMMIGRATION RECEPTION AND PROCESSING CENTRE ON CHRISTMAS ISLAND

Mr Slipper (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration), pursuant to notice, moved—That, in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Works Committee Act 1969*, the following proposed work be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for consideration and report: Construction of a respecified immigration reception and processing centre on Christmas Island.

Question—put and passed.

7 TAXATION LAWS AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 6) 2003

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the question—That the Bill be now read a second time—

Debate resumed by Mr Cox who moved, as an amendment—That all words after “That” be omitted with a view to substituting the following words:

“whilst not declining to give the Bill a second reading, the House notes that, while this Bill restores the value of the Medicare levy and the Medicare levy surcharge low income thresholds, the Howard Government has failed to provide an appropriate system of Medicare rebates to support the continuation of bulk billing”.

Debate continued.

Amendment negatived.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed—Bill read a second time.

Leave granted for third reading to be moved forthwith.

On the motion of Mr Slipper (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration), the Bill was read a third time.

8 SUPERANNUATION (GOVERNMENT CO-CONTRIBUTION FOR LOW INCOME EARNERS) BILL 2003

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the question—That the Bill be now read a second time—

Debate resumed.

Question—put and passed—Bill read a second time.

Message from the Administrator

Message No. 139, 2 June 2003, from His Excellency the Administrator was announced recommending an appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Consideration in detail

Bill, by leave, taken as a whole.

Mr Cox moved the Opposition amendment.

Debate continued.

Amendment negatived.

Bill agreed to.

Consideration in detail concluded.

On the motion of Mr Slipper (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration), by leave, the Bill was read a third time.

9 SUPERANNUATION (GOVERNMENT CO-CONTRIBUTION FOR LOW INCOME EARNERS) (CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) BILL 2003

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the question—That the Bill be now read a second time—

Question—put and passed—Bill read a second time.

Message from the Administrator

Message No. 140, 2 June 2003, from His Excellency the Administrator was announced recommending an appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Leave granted for third reading to be moved forthwith.

On the motion of Mr Slipper (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration), the Bill was read a third time.

10 POSTPONEMENT OF ORDER OF THE DAY

Ordered—That order of the day No. 5, government business, be postponed until the next sitting.

11 NATIONAL HEALTH AMENDMENT (PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE LEVIES) BILL 2003

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the question—That the Bill be now read a second time—

Debate resumed by Ms Macklin (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) who moved, as an amendment—That all words after “That” be omitted with a view to substituting the following words: “while supporting the provisions of the Bill, the House:

- (a) notes that before the 2001 election, the Prime Minister said that the Government’s policies would “lead to reduced premiums” and that private health insurance would be “more affordable and attractive” to consumers;
- (b) notes that since the election in 2001, the Government has approved increases in premiums of more than 14% and that as a result many families with private health insurance will pay an extra \$300 to \$500 in premiums than they did before the election in 2001;
- (c) notes that families with private health insurance are facing substantial increases in out of pocket costs for medical care in hospitals, with the average gap now \$90.64 – an increase of 77% since December 2000;
- (d) notes that last year the Government announced that private health premiums would automatically rise by CPI every year, without the need for Government approval – dishonouring the Prime Minister’s “absolute guarantee” and “honest guarantee” that his Government would approve all future private health insurance premium increases;
- (e) notes that the average increase in private health insurance premiums of 7.4% this year will cost taxpayers more than \$170 million extra each year, on top of annual spending of \$2.4 billion;
- (f) condemns the Howard Government for failing to ensure that private health insurance remains value for money for Australian families and value for money for Australian taxpayers”.

Debate continued.

Amendment negatived.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed—Bill read a second time.

Message from the Governor-General

Message No. 141, 27 March 2003, from His Excellency the Governor-General was announced recommending an appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Leave granted for third reading to be moved forthwith.

On the motion of Ms Worth (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing), the Bill was read a third time.

12 PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE (ACAC REVIEW LEVY) BILL 2003

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the question—That the Bill be now read a second time—

Question—put and passed—Bill read a second time.

Leave granted for third reading to be moved forthwith.

On the motion of Ms Worth (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing), the Bill was read a third time.

13 PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE (COLLAPSED ORGANIZATION LEVY) BILL 2003

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the question—That the Bill be now read a second time—

Question—put and passed—Bill read a second time.

Leave granted for third reading to be moved forthwith.

On the motion of Ms Worth (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing), the Bill was read a third time.

14 PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE (COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION LEVY) BILL 2003

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the question—That the Bill be now read a second time—

Question—put and passed—Bill read a second time.

Leave granted for third reading to be moved forthwith.

On the motion of Ms Worth (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing), the Bill was read a third time.

15 PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE (REINSURANCE TRUST FUND LEVY) BILL 2003

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the question—That the Bill be now read a second time—

Question—put and passed—Bill read a second time.

Leave granted for third reading to be moved forthwith.

On the motion of Ms Worth (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing), the Bill was read a third time.

16 POSTPONEMENT OF BUSINESS

Ordered—That business intervening before order of the day No. 12, government business, be postponed until a later hour this day.

17 TAXATION LAWS AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 5) 2003

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the question—That the Bill be now read a second time—

Debate having been resumed by Mr Cox who, during his speech, moved an amendment to omit words with a view to substituting other words—

It being 2 p.m., the debate was interrupted in accordance with standing order 101A, and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for a later hour this day.

18 QUESTIONS

Questions without notice being asked—

Paper

Mr K. J. Thomson, in accordance with standing order 321, having called for a document quoted from by Mr Howard (Prime Minister)—

Mr Howard presented the following paper:

Iraq—Excerpt of transcript of interview with David Skeet, National Director of the Australian Relief and Mercy Services Limited, ABC Radio 774, 19 June 2003.

Questions without notice continuing—

Member ordered to withdraw

At 3.25 p.m. the Member for Lyons (Mr Adams) was ordered, under standing order 304A, to withdraw from the House for one hour for continuing to interject after a warning had been given from the Chair, and he accordingly withdrew from the Chamber.

Questions without notice concluded.

19 AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

The Speaker presented the following paper:

Auditor-General—Audit report No. 51 of 2002–2003—Performance audit—Defence housing and relocation services: Department of Defence.

Ordered to be printed.

20 PAPERS—MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPERS

Mr McGauran (Deputy Leader of the House) presented the following papers:

Treaties—Joint Standing Committee—Reports—

48th—Treaties tabled in August and September 2002—Government response.

50th—Treaties tabled 15 October 2002—Government response.

Western Australian Fisheries Joint Authority—Report for 2000-01.

and moved—That the House take note of the papers.

Debate adjourned (Mr Latham), and the resumption of each debate made an order of the day for the next sitting.

21 DISCUSSION OF MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE—JOB NETWORK

The House was informed that Mr Albanese had proposed that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely, “The failure of the Government’s Job Network to provide adequate assistance to Australia’s long-term unemployed”.

The proposed discussion having received the necessary support—

Mr Albanese addressed the House.

Paper

Mr Albanese, by leave, presented the following paper:

Job Network Star Ratings method—Appendix A: Regression Details—Provided by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

Discussion ensued.

Discussion concluded.

22 APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 1) 2003-2004—REPORT FROM MAIN COMMITTEE

The Deputy Speaker reported that the Main Committee had returned the Bill for further consideration (*see item No. 3, Minutes of Proceedings of the Main Committee*), and presented a certified copy of the Bill.

Remainder of Bill, by leave, taken as a whole and agreed to.

Consideration in detail concluded.

Leave granted for third reading to be moved forthwith.

On the motion of Mr Slipper (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration), the Bill was read a third time.

23 APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2) 2003-2004—REPORT FROM MAIN COMMITTEE

The Deputy Speaker reported that the Main Committee had returned the Bill for further consideration (*see item No. 4, Minutes of Proceedings of the Main Committee*), and presented a certified copy of the Bill.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed—Bill read a second time.

Leave granted for third reading to be moved forthwith.

On the motion of Mr Slipper (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration), the Bill was read a third time.

24 APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENTARY DEPARTMENTS) BILL (NO. 1) 2003-2004—REPORT FROM MAIN COMMITTEE

The Deputy Speaker reported that the Main Committee had returned the Bill for further consideration (*see item No. 5, Minutes of Proceedings of the Main Committee*), and presented a certified copy of the Bill.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed—Bill read a second time.

Leave granted for third reading to be moved forthwith.

On the motion of Mr Slipper (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration), the Bill was read a third time.

25 MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

Message No. 266, 18 June 2003, from the Senate was reported acquainting the House of the following resolution agreed to by the Senate:

That, pursuant to section 29 of the *Intelligence Services Act 2001*, the following matter be referred to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD for inquiry and report by 2 December 2003:

- (a) the nature and accuracy of intelligence information received by Australia's intelligence services in relation to:
 - (i) the existence of,
 - (ii) the capacity and willingness to use, and
 - (iii) the immediacy of the threat posed by, weapons of mass destruction (WMD);
- (b) the nature, accuracy and independence of the assessments made by Australia's intelligence agencies of subparagraphs (a)(i), (a)(ii) and (a)(iii) above;
- (c) whether the Commonwealth Government as a whole presented accurate and complete information to Parliament and the Australian public on subparagraphs (a)(i), (a)(ii) and (a)(iii) above during, or since, the military action in Iraq; and
- (d) whether Australia's pre-conflict assessments of Iraq's WMD capability were as accurate and comprehensive as should be expected of information relied on in decisions regarding the participation of the Australian Defence Forces in military conflict.

26 MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE

Messages from the Senate, 19 June 2003, were reported returning the following Bills without amendment:

Message—

No. 267—Australian Prudential Regulation Authority Amendment 2003.

No. 268—Acts Interpretation Amendment (Court Procedures) 2003.

No. 269—Maritime Legislation Amendment (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) 2003.

No. 270—Intellectual Property Laws Amendment 2002.

No. 271—Murray-Darling Basin Amendment 2002.

27 ADJOURNMENT

It being 4.30 p.m.—The question was proposed—That the House do now adjourn.

Debate ensued.

The House continuing to sit until 5 p.m.—The Speaker adjourned the House until Monday next at 12.30 p.m.

PAPERS

The following papers were deemed to have been presented on 19 June 2003:

Export Control Act—Export Control (Orders) Regulations—Orders—2003 Livestock Export (Merino) Amendment (No. 1).

Quarantine Act—Determination—2003 Quarantine Service Fees 2003–2005 (Australia Post) (No. 1).

Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act—Statements under subsection 230A(1)—

Financial assistance for small APRA funds exposed to the Confidens Investment Trust.

Financial assistance for trustee for the Wealthy & Wise Master Plan.

Telecommunications (Carrier Licence Charges) Act—Determination under paragraph 15(1)(b)—2003 No. 2.

Telecommunications (Consumer Protection and Service Standards) Act—Determination—2003 Telecommunications Universal Service Obligation (Eligible Revenue).

ATTENDANCE

All Members attended (at some time during the sitting) except Mr Downer, Mr Hockey, Dr Kemp, Mr I. E. Macfarlane*, Ms O’Byrne, Mr Prosser, Mr Sidebottom and Mr M. A. J. Vaile.

* On leave

I. C. HARRIS

Clerk of the House of Representatives

2002-03

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**SUPPLEMENT TO VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS**

No. 102

MAIN COMMITTEE**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

THURSDAY, 19 JUNE 2003

1 The Main Committee met at 9.40 a.m.

2 MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Members' statements were made.

3 APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 1) 2003-2004

The order of the day having been read for further consideration in detail of the Bill—

Schedule—

Proposed expenditures—

Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, \$2 334 603 000—debated and agreed to.

Attorney-General's Department, \$1 877 893 000—debated and agreed to.

Department of Family and Community Services, \$3 448 113 000—debated and agreed to.

Department of Transport and Regional Services, \$602 544 000—debated.

Mr Tuckey (Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government) moved—That further proceedings be conducted in the House.

Question—put and passed—Bill to be returned to the House.

4 APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2) 2003-2004

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the question—That the Bill be now read a second time—

Mr Tuckey (Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government) moved—That further proceedings be conducted in the House.

Question—put and passed—Bill to be returned to the House.

5 APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENTARY DEPARTMENTS) BILL (NO. 1) 2003-2004

The order of the day having been read for the resumption of the debate on the question—That the Bill be now read a second time—

Mr Tuckey (Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government) moved—That further proceedings be conducted in the House.

Question—put and passed—Bill to be returned to the House.

6 ADJOURNMENT

Mr Tuckey (Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government) moved—That the Main Committee do now adjourn.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and passed.

At 1.32 p.m. the Deputy Speaker adjourned the Main Committee until 9.40 a.m. on Wednesday, 25 June 2003.

B. C. WRIGHT
Clerk of the Main Committee