

HOUSE REVIEW



Selected features of House of Representatives business

Sitting period 21 November – 1 December 2022 (no. 53)

The final sitting period for 2022 featured a busy legislative program, the presentation of the final report of the Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary Standards and a censure motion.

Presentation of report by Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary Standards

The Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary Standards was established in response to the *Set the Standard* report. On 29 November, the Chair, Ms Claydon, presented the committee's [final report](#) and made a statement by leave. Mrs Marino, a member of the committee, also made a statement by leave in regard to the report. The report presents behaviour standards and codes which it recommends that the House and the Senate adopt into their respective standing orders in the first sitting week after the establishment of the Independent Parliamentary Standards Commission. The committee also recommends the adoption of interim behaviour standards.

On 30 November, the Speaker made a statement updating the House on the implementation of responses to the 28 recommendations of *Set the Standard* report.

Censure motion

On 29 November, shortly before the House adjourned the Clerk reported to the House that a notice of motion had been received from the Leader of the House expressing censure of the Member for Cook. This announcement was made pursuant to standing orders, which require the Clerk to report such a motion to the House at the first convenient opportunity.

The following morning, Mr Burke moved that the House censure the Member for Cook for 'failing to disclose his appointments to the House of Representatives, the Australian people and the Cabinet'. The motion was agreed to on division after debate in which 19 members spoke.

Condolence motions

On 21 November the Prime Minister moved a condolence motion on the death of the Honourable Peter Keaston Reith, the Member for Flinders from 1982 to 1983 and 1984 to 2001 and a former Minister. The Leader of the Opposition spoke before the motion was referred to the Federation Chamber for further debate.

On 1 December the order of the day was reported back to the House together with orders of the day expressing condolence on the deaths of the Honourable Robert James Ellicott, the Honourable Anthony Austin Street, the Honourable John Michael Spender and commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the Bali bombings. All members present rose in silence as a mark of respect.

Personal explanations

On Monday, 28 November, the Speaker reminded members of practice in relation to personal explanations. Under standing order 68, to make a personal explanation, a member should rise and seek permission from the Speaker, should not interrupt another member and must not debate the matter. The Speaker outlined that a personal explanation should be a short, succinct statement on the misrepresentation, should not deal with matters affecting the party and should not make attacks on another member.

Legislation

Introductions

The government introduced 21 bills, including two from the Senate.

Three private members' bills were introduced. These related to fuel and vehicle standards, regulating 'loot boxes' in video games and amendments to the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*.

Passing the House

A high volume of legislation passed the House with 24 bills receiving their third readings.

Much of government business time in the first week was devoted to consideration of a package of bills relating to the establishment of a National Anti-Corruption Commission. On 22 and 23 November, the Leader of the House successfully moved to suspend standing orders to enable the second reading debate on both bills to occur together and the House to sit past 8 pm each evening to continue the second reading debate.

After Dr Ryan moved an amendment to the motion 'That the bill be read a second time', two further members moved amendments in turn to add text to Dr Ryan's amendment. These were put and negatived in turn before the bill was read a second time on 24 November. During consideration in detail, 36 government amendments were made. Opposition and crossbench members also moved detail amendments; none were agreed. The bill, as amended, was agreed to and read a third time.

Amendments to bills covered by a cognate debate

When there are two or more closely related bills before the House, it may suit the House for the second reading of the principal bill to cover all bills. This is known as a cognate debate. At the end of a cognate debate, the question on the second reading is put on the first bill only. Separate questions are then put on each bill as required.

On 21 November, a cognate debate took place on a package of bills relating to free trade agreements. After the debate had concluded, the first three bills in the package passed through their remaining stages without amendment or debate. When the fourth bill in the package was called on, a member moved a second reading amendment, which was negatived on the voices, and then unsuccessfully moved an amendment to the bill during consideration in detail.

Distinguished visitors

During Question Time the Speaker announced the presence of the many visitors in the gallery, including ministers, parliamentarians, delegations and diplomats from Indonesia, Italy, New Zealand, Uruguay, Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia, participants in the Australian Defence Force Parliamentary Program and members of the government's Youth Steering Committee and Regional Development Australia.

On 1 December the Deputy Speaker announced the presence in the galleries of diplomats from the United Kingdom, Vanuatu, France, Japan, India, Indonesia, the United States, Singapore, Brunei, Fiji and Malaysia for the ministerial statement by the Minister for Climate Change and Energy. During Question Time the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition made statements by indulgence recognising the presence of Professor Sean Turnell and Dr Ha Vu.

Parliamentary committees

On 21 November, the Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties presented reports on the Free Trade Agreement between Australia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Australia-India Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement. By leave, both the Chair and the Deputy Chair made statements in connection with the reports. Motions to take note of each report will be debated in the Federation Chamber.

Federation Chamber

Consideration of appropriation bills

On Monday, 21 November, while the Federation Chamber considered private members' business, the appropriation bills were returned to the House, where the second reading debate continued, before standing referred again to the Federation Chamber at the end of the day. On Wednesday, debate on the second reading of Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2022-2023 concluded and the bill was read a second time.

The Federation Chamber then proceeded to consider the bill in detail. Consideration of the main appropriation bill differs from the consideration of other bills. The schedule of the bill which lists the services for which the appropriation is to be made and the amounts appropriated, by government portfolio, is considered first.

As is usual, the Federation Chamber agreed to consider portfolios in the order set out in a schedule proposed by a minister. While the times set out in the schedule are not strictly enforced, it is a useful guide to assist ministers and members to arrange their commitments. At the beginning of consideration in detail, the Deputy Speaker reminded members that this stage is a debate, and the call is alternated between government and non-government sides. Even though this debate sometimes takes the format of question and answer, ministers are not required to respond on every occasion. Both ministers and government backbench members are considered as speakers on the government side.

Consideration in detail continued until Thursday, 24 November. On that day, proceedings were suspended eight times due to divisions in the House before the Federation Chamber adjourned after its scheduled adjournment time of 1pm without having concluded consideration in detail. The Deputy Speaker then made a determination that the Federation Chamber would meet that afternoon at 3.30, and it completed its consideration of the appropriation bills. The bills were returned to the House, where they were agreed to and read a third time later that afternoon.

Other business

In the second sitting week, further statements were made in the Federation Chamber in relation to floods, Judith Durham AO, Dame Olivia Newton-John AC DBE and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Communication with the Senate

Both the House and the Senate sat this week, and there was considerable message traffic.

On 30 November, a message was received informing the House that the Senate had made amendments to the National Anti-Corruption Commission Bill and the amendments were agreed on the voices.

For the final sitting of 2022, on 1 December, standing orders 31 (adjournment) and 33 (new business) were suspended to enable the House to continue to sit and consider actions by the Senate on government bills. The House suspended at 6.22pm that evening and the sitting resumed at 8am on the following day. Senate messages were reported returning six bills without amendment, including the Restoring Territory Rights Bill 2022 introduced by Mr Gosling.

Two further messages were reported transmitting bills with amendments. Amendments to the Financial Sector Reform Bill were agreed on the voices and amendments to the Fair Work Legislation (Secure Jobs, Better Pay) Bill 2022 were agreed to on division, after debate. The House adjourned on the motion of the Leader of the House at 8.41am.

The House is scheduled to next meet on 6 February 2023.

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 and Sessional Orders](#), as at 2 August 2022—the House’s rules of procedure

[Procedural Digest](#)—a record of selected procedural events in the House of Representatives Chamber and the Federation Chamber. It includes Speaker’s rulings, precedents and unusual situations.