

HOUSE REVIEW



Selected features of House of Representatives business

Sitting period 4 – 14 September (no. 62)

The second sitting fortnight for the spring sittings featured: the first speech by the new Member for Fadden, a motion of dissent from a ruling by the Speaker and the consideration of bills returned from the Senate with amendments or with requests for amendments to be made on the Senate's behalf.

Program of parliamentary sittings

On the final sitting day of the fortnight, the leader of the House presented a revised program of sittings for 2023 to which the House agreed after debate. The House will not sit as previously scheduled for the week beginning 23 October and will sit an additional day on 7 December.

First speech by the new Member for Fadden

On the first day of the sitting fortnight the Minister for Sport moved a suspension of standing orders to permit the Member for Fadden to speak without limitation of time. The Member for Fadden then made his first speech.



New Member for Fadden, Mr Cameron Caldwell, addressing the House during his first speech on 4 September. Photo courtesy DPS/AUSPIC.

Motion of dissent

On 6 September, during question time the Manager of Opposition Business moved a dissent from the Speaker's ruling. The dissent related to the speaker's ruling on a point of order raised by the leader of the Opposition. The dissent was defeated on division after debate and a motion to close the question was agreed on division.

Motions without notice

Motions to suspend standing order without notice in an attempt to bring matters forward for debate were moved by non-government members during sittings on 6, 7, 11, 12, and 14 September. On each occasion the suspension motions were negated on division after debate. Two of the suspension

motions were moved by the Leader of the Opposition during question time, and on each occasion the Leader of the House required that further proceedings in relation to the motion take place at a later hour in accordance with standing order 47(e).

Proposed Matter of Public Importance lapses

On 7 September the matter of public Importance lapsed not having received the necessary support. Although more than the required eight Members stood in support of the proposed discussion, this did not include the proposer, as required by the standing orders.

Marking the deaths of former Members

On 5 September debate resumed on the condolence motion for the Hon Simon Crean AM in the Federation Chamber. At the conclusion of debate, members stood as a mark of respect and the order of the day was returned to the House where it was reported and agreed to prior to question time the following day.

Ministerial statements

On 13 September the Minister for Skills and Training made a ministerial statement on revitalising national planning in vocational education and training. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition spoke in response. A motion to take note of the statement presented by the minister was moved and referred to the Federation Chamber, where it was debated later that afternoon and again on 14 September.



The House suspended briefly prior to question time on 12 September to enable AUSPIC to capture a photo of the Membership of the House in the 47th Parliament. Photo courtesy DPS/AUSPIC.

Statements on significant matters

On 6 September, the Minister for Skills and Training made a statement, pursuant to notice, in relation to National TAFE Day. The Shadow Minister also made a statement. The Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care then made a statement, pursuant to notice, in relation to Women's Health Week, and was followed by the Shadow Minister. A motion permitting further statements in the Federation Chamber was moved and agreed in relation to each. Members made statements in the Federation Chamber in relation to each matter on 7 September.

On 7 September, the Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention made a statement, pursuant to notice, in relation to World Suicide Prevention Day. The Shadow Minister also made a

statement on the matter. A motion permitting further statements in the Federation Chamber was moved and agreed to and further statements were made in that chamber on 13 September.

On 13 September, the Minister for Resources made a statement, pursuant to notice, in relation to building an offshore decommissioning industry. The Shadow Minister also made a statement.

Legislation

Introductions

Fifteen government bills were introduced during the fortnight, including one which originated in the Senate.

Amongst the 15 bills was the Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Closing Loopholes) Bill 2023 introduced by the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations on 4 September. After the Minister's second reading speech, when the question that the resumption of debate be made an order of the day for the next sitting was proposed, the Manager of Opposition Business moved, as an amendment, that the resumption of debate be made an order of the day for the first sitting after 16 October 2023. Debate ensued and the amendment was negated on division. The original question was then carried on the voices. On resumption of debate on the second reading the following day, the Manager of the Opposition Business moved to refer the bill to the Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training for consideration and an advisory report by 1 February 2024. Standing order 143 enables such motions to be moved without notice. Following debate, a division was called on the question that the motion be agreed to, and the division was deferred until after the day's discussion of a matter of public importance, and when it was held the question was negated.

Three private Members' bills were introduced during the fortnight. On 4 September, two bills relating to political donations were introduced by the Member for Mayo, one which proposed to increase the timeliness of political donation disclosures and another which sought to lower the political donation threshold. On 11 September the Member for Indi introduced a bill in relation to unlocking housing supply in regional Australia.



Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Hon Tony Burke MP, introduces the Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Closing Loopholes) Bill 2023 on 4 September. Photo courtesy DPS/AUSPIC.

Passing the House

Fifteen bills passed the House during the fortnight. This included three bills to establish the Parliamentary Workplace Support Service which passed the House on 7 September. The bills were returned to the House from the Senate on 14 September. Two of the bills were accompanied by schedules of Senate amendments to which the House agreed.

Communication with the Senate

On 6 September the House agreed to an amendment to the resolution of appointment for the Joint Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. The proposed amendment sought to increase the membership of the committee from 11 to 13. The resolution also provided for a message be sent to the Senate acquainting it of the resolution and requesting that it concur and take action accordingly. On 12 September a message from the Senate was reported informing the House that the Senate concurred with the resolution relating to the variation of the resolution of appointment.

On 13 September, Senate messages were reported transmitting the Housing Australia Future Fund Bill with requests for amendments and two related bills with amendments. The House considered the requests in relation to the first bill immediately and made the requested amendments. The Senate can request the House to make amendments to a bill that it cannot make itself. When the Senate requests amendments, the bill is not read a third time in the Senate. Once the House determines its position, the bill is transmitted to the Senate. By returning the bill prior to its being read a third time, the Senate maintains its power to not pass the measure. Had the bill been read a third time in the Senate and the House declined to make the requested amendment, the bill would nonetheless have passed both Houses in the same form and be in a condition to be submitted to the Governor-General for assent. Any Senate amendments are considered once the Senate has given the bill a third reading. Consideration of the Senate's amendments to the other two bills was deferred to a future time. On 14 September, Senate amendments to all three bills were considered and agreed to.

Parliamentary committees

A comprehensive list of reports, with hyperlinks, will be published in [Last Week in the House](#).

The House is scheduled to next meet on 16 October.

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.