

Procedural Digest

No. 9

46th Parliament

8 April 2020

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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

9.01 Introduction and passage of coronavirus economic response package and appropriation bills

In accordance with Standing Order 180(b), messages from His Excellency the Governor-General were announced, recommending appropriation for the purposes of the two appropriation bills in the package:

- Appropriation Bill (No. 5) 2019-2020; and
- Appropriation Bill (No. 6) 2019-2020.

Following the reading of the Governor-General's messages, and in accordance with the resolution agreed that morning (see 9.03), the Treasurer presented the following bills together:

- Coronavirus Economic Response Package (Payments and Benefits) Bill 2020;
- Coronavirus Economic Response Package Omnibus (Measures No. 2) Bill 2020;
- Appropriation Bill (No. 5) 2019-2020; and
- Appropriation Bill (No. 6) 2019-2020.

Following the first reading of the bills together, the Treasurer moved a single motion that the bills be read a second time and made his second reading speech. Debate ensued and the Shadow Treasurer moved a second reading amendment. Debate continued and during the Leader of the Opposition's speech, he moved an amendment to the proposed second reading amendment, adding two paragraphs. The Manager of Opposition Business, during his speech, moved an amendment to the amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition, also adding a paragraph. During the debate, six more shadow ministers and shadow assistant ministers moved amendments in this way.

Debate was interrupted at 2 pm to allow for Question Time. On resumption of debate, all proposed amendments were disagreed to on division. The questions on the amendments were put in a form such that members did not have to move across the chamber to vote (see entry 9.06).

In accordance with the resolution agreed earlier, the House proceeded to consider the bills in detail, together. An opposition amendment to the Coronavirus Economic Response Package (Payments and Benefits) Bill 2020 circulated was deemed to have been moved and was disagreed to on division.

Following consideration in detail, messages from His Excellency the Governor-General were announced, recommending appropriation for the purposes of the remaining bills in the package:

- Coronavirus Economic Response Package (Payments and Benefits) Bill 2020; and
- Coronavirus Economic Response Package Omnibus (Measures No. 2) Bill 2020.

The bills were then read a third time.

Later that evening, the bills were passed by the Senate without amendment.

Hansard: 8 April 2020, 2918-63; 2982-98

Votes and Proceedings: 2020/841-843; 844-849

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

Business

9.02 Special sitting of the House

On 23 March, the House agreed to a revised program of sittings for 2020, which set 11 August as the next day of sitting. On 2 April, in accordance with standing order 30(c), the Speaker wrote to all Members informing them that he had changed the next day of sitting to Wednesday, 8 April 2020.

The special sitting was arranged to allow the House to consider bills relating to further economic response to the coronavirus crisis. The House met at 10 am and adjourned at 10.52 pm.

Hansard: 8 April 2020, 2905

Votes and Proceedings: 2020/839

SO 30

9.03 Suspension of standing orders – consideration of bills

The Leader of the House moved that standing orders be suspended to rearrange the order of business for the sitting. This suspension of standing orders included, but was not limited to:

- allowing the Prime Minister to make a ministerial statement, with the Leader of the Opposition to respond;
- the business for the sitting to be restricted to bills relating to the further economic response to the coronavirus crisis, Question Time and any other business agreed between a Minister and the Manager of Opposition Business; and
- special provisions for the introduction and passage through all stages of the Coronavirus Economic Response Package.

The motion also provided that the Federation Chamber would not meet that day. The question was carried on the voices.

Hansard: 8 April 2020, 2907-9

Votes and Proceedings: 2020/840-1

SO 47

9.04 Ministerial statement regarding COVID-19

Following the suspension of standing orders, the Prime Minister made a ministerial statement relating to the protection of the nation's sovereignty in the face of the coronavirus global health pandemic. The Prime Minister thanked a number of groups and individuals for their support during this crisis. The Prime Minister recognised efforts taken to flatten the curve of infection rates and encouraged the continuation of these practices. In closing, the Prime Minister outlined action taken by the Government to reduce the financial and health impacts of the coronavirus.

In response, the Leader of the Opposition spoke to the need for Australians to unify during this period, while acknowledging the hard work of medical officers and frontline personnel. The Leader of the Opposition emphasised Labor's focus on the relationship between employers and employees during this period of economic downturn. The Leader of the Opposition added that a number of amendments would be moved by the opposition during the second reading debate on the Coronavirus Economic Response Package due to concerns with the current proposed structure of JobKeeper payments. However, the Leader of the Opposition reiterated his assurance that the day's meeting would be constructive as the nation demanded unity and a common sense of purpose. [\[Watch\]](#)

*Hansard: 8 April 2020, 2909-17
Votes and Proceedings: 2020/841*

SO 63A

9.05 Statements on indulgence – Easter

Following Question Time, the Prime Minister, on indulgence, made a statement regarding Easter travel. The Prime Minister urged Australians to stay home and not travel during the Easter break, in efforts to continue reducing the spread of coronavirus. The Leader of the Opposition supported this message and wished everyone a happy and holy Easter. [\[Watch\]](#)

Hansard: 8 April 2020, 2981

9.06 Statement on indulgence – Parliamentary arrangements

The Manager of Opposition Business acknowledged that a number of divisions on amendments (see entry **9.01**) would be called shortly and noted that normal procedure would require Members to cross the floor to vote. Given the potential of this to affect appropriate social distancing measures, the Manager of Opposition Business asked the Speaker if the form in which the questions were put could be changed to allow the Government and Opposition to stay on the side they were sitting on.

In response, the Speaker advised the House that questions would be put in such a way that Members did not need to move from one side of the Chamber to the other. This approach was also adopted for the 23 March sitting.

In a division, the Speaker directs Members voting 'Aye' to move to the right side of the Chair, and Members voting 'No' to move to the left. Normally, the Speaker would put the question 'that the amendment be agreed to'. On this occasion, with the consent of the House, for the amendments to the second reading amendment, the Speaker put the question 'that the amendment be disagreed to', so government Members, voting 'Aye', would stay to the right of the Chair and opposition Members, voting 'No', would stay to the left. The question on the second reading amendment, that all words after 'That' be omitted

with a view to substituting other words, was then put in the form 'that the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question'. This formulation (which had previously been used by the House) meant that Members voted 'Aye' if they disagreed with the second reading amendment. As government Members opposed the amendment, this avoided the need for Members to swap sides when dividing on the question.

Hansard: 8 April 2020, 2982

Members

9.07 Leave of absence to all Members

The Leader of the House moved that leave of absence be given to every Member of the House from the determination of this sitting of the House to the date of its next sitting. The question was carried on the voices.

Hansard: 8 April 2020, 2998
Votes and Proceedings: 2020/849

SO 26

9.08 Names of Members not in attendance placed on the record

By indulgence, the Chief Government Whip and the Chief Opposition Whip placed on record the names of the Members who had provided pairs and had not attended the sitting to minimise the health risks associated with a sitting of the House during the coronavirus crisis. By indulgence, the Leader of the Australian Greens noted that three non-aligned Members—the Members for Kennedy, Clark and Mayo—were also absent for the same reason.

Earlier in the sitting, the Leader of the House presented two letters received from the Members for Clark and Mayo, in which they placed on record their views on the Coronavirus Economic Response Package.

Hansard: 8 April 2020, 2981; 2998-3000
Votes and Proceedings: 2020/843

SO 199