



PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY

INFORMATION ANALYSIS ADVICE

CHRONOLOGY

RESEARCH PAPER SERIES, 2016–17

23 DECEMBER 2016

Australia's Parliament House in 2014 and 2015: a chronology of events

Anna Hough, Dr Joy McCann and Dr Dianne Heriot
Politics and Public Administration Section

Introduction

Parliament House, which was officially opened in 1988, is the home of the Parliament of Australia. It is located on a 32-hectare site on Capital Hill in Canberra, the capital city of Australia.

In 2013 the Parliamentary Library published a chronology of events, [*Australia's Parliament House—more than 25 years in the making!*](#), in recognition of the building's 25th anniversary.

This chronology continues the focus on Australia's Parliament House, highlighting significant milestones associated with the building and the Parliament between January 2014 and December 2015. Appendix 1 presents a list of key legislation passed by the Commonwealth Parliament in 2014 and 2015. This chronology of events has been compiled from published sources and includes images and links to audio-visual and documentary records.

Abbreviations

AG	Australian Greens
ALP	Australian Labor Party
Hon.	Honourable
Ind	Independent
Lib	Liberal Party of Australia
NP	The Nationals
Retd	Retired
PUP	Palmer United Party

2014

Milestones	Details
11 February	New senator for Queensland Senator Barry O'Sullivan (NP, Qld) is chosen by the Parliament of Queensland under Section 15 of the Constitution to represent that state in the Senate. He fills the casual vacancy created by the resignation of Barnaby Joyce MP (NP, New England, NSW) to stand for election to the House of Representatives in 2013. Senator O'Sullivan is sworn in on 13 February 2014 and makes his first speech on 19 March 2014.  Senator Barry O'Sullivan Image source: Parliament of Australia
12 February	Ministerial statements: Closing the Gap The Prime Minister, Tony Abbott MP (Lib, Warringah, NSW), makes the Closing the Gap statement to the House of Representatives. This annual statement provides an update on progress towards the Closing the Gap targets, which seek to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across a range of areas. In his statement, he says: I can report that our country is on track to achieve some of the Closing the Gap targets. The target to halve the gap in child mortality within a decade is on track to be met. We are already close to meeting the target to have 95 per cent of remote children enrolled for preschool ... The target to halve the gap in year 12 attainment by 2020 is also on track to be met. That is the good news. The bad news is that there has been almost no progress in closing the life expectancy gap between Aboriginal and other Australians, which is still about a decade. There has been very little improvement towards halving the gap in reading, writing and numeracy. And Indigenous employment, I deeply regret to say, has, if anything, slipped backwards over the past few years.¹

¹ T Abbott (Prime Minister), '[Closing the Gap: Prime Minister's Report 2014](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 12 February 2014, p. 156 ff. Please note: all internet sources in this paper have been accessed between 19 and 21 December 2016 unless otherwise specified.

Milestones	Details
13 February	100th Victoria Cross for Australia awarded The Prime Minister, Tony Abbott MP (Lib, Warringah, NSW), informs the House of Representatives that the 100th Victoria Cross for Australia has been awarded posthumously to the late Corporal Cameron Baird VC MG. Corporal Baird was killed during an engagement with insurgents in southern Afghanistan in 2013, and was the 40th Australian soldier to be killed in Afghanistan. His Victoria Cross citation reads: For most conspicuous acts of valour, extreme devotion to duty and ultimate self-sacrifice at Ghawchak village, Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan as a Commando Team Commander in Special Operations Task Group on Operation SLIPPER.² Victoria Cross MoD/MOD Image source: Wikimedia Commons Watch: VC announcement—Corporal Cameron Baird VC MG
18 February	High Court declares void the WA half-Senate election On 15 November 2013, following the loss of 1,370 ballots, the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) lodges a petition with the Court of Disputed Returns seeking an order that the election of six senators in Western Australia be declared void. An inquiry commissioned by the AEC and led by former Australian Federal Police Commissioner Mick Keelty AO identifies significant and systemic shortfalls and failings in Senate ballot paper security, storage and handling in Western Australia.³ On 18 February 2014, the High Court, sitting as the Court of Disputed Returns, declares void the 2013 half-Senate election in Western Australia, the first time that this has occurred. It finds that: the conclusion that the loss probably affected the result of the election was inevitable. The number of ballot papers lost far exceeded the margin between the candidates at the determinative point in the count.⁴ On 21 February, the Special Minister for State, Senator Michael Ronaldson (Lib, Vic.), announces the resignations of the Electoral Commissioner, Ed Killesteyn, and the Australian Electoral Officer for Western Australia, Peter Kramer. Tom Rogers is appointed as Electoral Commissioner on 15 December 2014, having acted in that position since

² Department of Defence, '[Corporal Cameron Stewart Baird VC MG](#)', Department of Defence website.

³ [Inquiry into the 2013 WA Senate election, December 2013](#), Report commissioned by the Australian Electoral Commission and produced by M J Keelty AO, 2 December 2013.

⁴ High Court of Australia, '[The Australian Electoral Commission v Johnston & Ors; Wang v Johnston & Ors; Mead v Johnston & Ors](#)' [2014], HCA 5 Judgement Summary.

Milestones	Details
	Killesteyn's resignation.
27 February	House of Representatives 'admonishes' a senator The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Julie Bishop MP (Lib, Curtin, WA) expresses concern about remarks made by the Shadow Minister for Defence, Senator Stephen Conroy (ALP, Vic.) about Lieutenant General Angus Campbell during a Senate Estimates hearing.⁵ The action has no effect as, while each House is able to discipline its own members, it has no such powers over members of the other House.⁶ The Senate has determined by resolution that it 'would not be proper for the Senate to seek to censure a private member of the other House.'⁷
5 March	Censure motion against Assistant Minister for Health The Senate votes in favour of a motion to censure the Assistant Minister for Health, Senator Fiona Nash (NP, NSW), for misleading the Senate over a conflict of interest within her office, failing to comply with an order for production of documents, or to account to the Senate for her actions. The censure motion is passed 37 votes to 31. Censure motions are relatively rare in the Senate. They express the view of a majority of the Senate and, although they can have no direct constitutional or legal consequences, they may have a political impact.⁸
19 March	Ministerial accountability: Assistant Treasurer stands aside Assistant Treasurer Senator Arthur Sinodinos (Lib, NSW) stands aside⁹ after the Opposition suspends standing orders to move a motion requiring him to provide a full explanation to the Senate about his interest in Australian Water Holdings after allegations about the company were raised in the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC).¹⁰ He will formally resign as Assistant Treasurer in December 2014 pending the outcome of the ICAC inquiry.

⁵ J Bishop (Minister for Foreign Affairs), '[Questions without notice: Australian Defence Force](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 27 February 2014, p. 1167.

⁶ Australia, The Senate, [Senate Procedural Information Bulletin no. 279](#), Parliament of Australia website.

⁷ H Evans and R Laing, *Odgers' Australian Senate Practice*, 13th edition, Canberra, 2012, p. 589.

⁸ P Wong, '[Motions: Assistant Minister for Health, Censure](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 5 March 2014, p. 864; Senate, [Censure motions](#), Parliamentary business, Parliament of Australia.

⁹ A Sinodinos, '[Australian Water Holdings](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 19 March 2014, p. 1487.

¹⁰ P Wong, '[Australian Water Holdings](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 19 March 2014, p. 1460.

Milestones	Details	
28 March	New Governor-General sworn in Peter Cosgrove is sworn-in as the 26th Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and is appointed Knight of the Order of Australia.¹¹ He replaces the 25th Governor-General, Quentin Bryce. She is the first woman to hold the vice-regal position, and she is appointed Dame of the Order of Australia (AD) on 25 March 2014.¹²	 Governor-General Peter Cosgrove Image source: ParlView, 28 March 2014 Watch: Governor-General swearing-in ceremony, 28 March 2014 Read: Address to the Joint Sitting of Parliament on the occasion of the swearing in of the Governor-General
28 March	Motion of no confidence in the Speaker The Manager of Opposition Business, Tony Burke MP (ALP, Watson, NSW), moves a motion of no confidence against the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Bronwyn Bishop MP (Lib, Mackellar, NSW), accusing her of partiality in favour of Government members rather than acting as ‘the custodian of the rights and privileges of elected Members of the Parliament’.¹³ The motion is unsuccessful, 83 votes to 51. According to <i>House of Representatives Practice</i>, the Speaker’s actions can only be criticised by a substantive motion, including dissent from a Speaker’s ruling or a censure or want of confidence motion. Whilst they are rare, there have been several substantive motions criticising the actions of a Speaker in the history of the Parliament.¹⁴	 Motion of no confidence in the Speaker Image source: ParlView, 28 March 2014
5 April	Western Australian Senate election Western Australians go to the polls to elect six senators in the 2014 WA Senate election. This new election is conducted following the discovery of missing ballots during the 2013 WA Senate election and the decision of the High Court, sitting as the Court of Disputed Returns, to declare the 2013 Western Australian Senate election void. Two days before the election, the AEC admits failing to properly secure 75 ballot papers at a mobile pre-polling booth at an aged care facility. The results are announced by the AEC on 29 April 2014.¹⁵ The composition of the new Senate sets a record, with 18	 Senate chamber, Parliament House

¹¹ [His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC \(Retd\) and Her Excellency Lady Cosgrove](#), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia website; [‘Governor-General swearing in ceremony’](#), Parliament of Australia, Canberra, 28 March 2014.

¹² Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia website, [‘The Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO and Mr Michael Bryce AM AE’](#). The Knight/Dame of the Order of Australia was offered between 1976 and 1986 and between 2014 and 2015.

¹³ T Burke, [‘Motions: Speaker’](#), House of Representatives, *Debates*, 27 March 2014, p. 3404.

¹⁴ See Table 6.2: Motions of censure of or no confidence in the Speaker, Acting Speaker or Deputy Speaker, and related motions, [‘Criticism of Speaker’s actions and conduct’](#), in B C Wright, ed, *House of Representatives Practice*, 6th edn, Department of the House of Representatives, Canberra, 2012.

¹⁵ Australian Electoral Commission, [Senators for Western Australia have been decided](#), media release, 29 April 2014.

Milestones	Details
	senators on the crossbench including 10 senators representing the Australian Greens. As a result of the 2013 Senate election issue, questions are raised about the need for electoral reform. The AEC commences an overhaul of its policies and processes in December 2013, focusing on improving ballot paper security.¹⁶ In May 2014 the Australian National Audit Office undertakes an independent performance audit in the AEC, while the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) undertakes an inquiry into the election (the final report is released in April 2015).¹⁷
24 April	Royal reception His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, attend a Reception in the Great Hall at Parliament House during their Australian tour. His Royal Highness gives a speech reflecting on Australia's qualities and role in the Asia-Pacific region.¹⁸  Reception for the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, Parliament House Image source: ParlView, 24 April 2014 Watch: Parliamentary reception in the presence of their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge Watch: Speech to the Parliament by His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge, 24 April 2014
13 May	Treasurer's 2014 Budget speech The Treasurer, Joe Hockey MP (Lib, North Sydney, NSW) introduces the 2014 Budget into Parliament. It is the first Budget of the Coalition Government.¹⁹ Budget Day is the busiest day of the year for Parliament House, with almost 11,000 people visiting the building.²⁰ The Budget proves to be controversial, particularly in regard to unlegislated savings measures.²¹  Joe Hockey

¹⁶ 'The year in review', *Australian Electoral Commission Annual report 2013–14*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2014.

¹⁷ Australian National Audit Office, [The Australian Electoral Commission's storage and transport of completed ballot papers at the September 2013 federal general election](#), Audit report no 31, 2013–14, Performance audit, 2014; Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, [The 2013 federal election: report on the conduct of the 2013 election and matters related thereto](#), Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, Canberra, April 2015.

¹⁸ [Parliamentary Reception in the presence of their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge](#), Parliament of Australia, 24 April 2014.

¹⁹ Australian Government, [Budget 2014–15: Budget review 2014–15](#), Research Paper series, 2013–14, Parliamentary Library, 30 May 2014.

²⁰ [Department of Parliamentary Services Annual Report 2013–2014](#).

²¹ See: Parliamentary Budget Office, [Unlegislated measures carried forward in the budget estimates—June 2016 update](#), Parliamentary Budget Office, Canberra, issued 9 June 2016.

Milestones

Details

Image source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

Read: [The Treasurer's Budget speech and Budget papers](#)

26 May

'Pipe bomb' produced at Senate Estimates hearing

[Senator Bill Heffernan](#) (Lib, NSW) produces a fake 'pipe bomb' at a Senate Estimates hearing of the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee in order to support his argument that '[t]his building is no longer secure' because of new security arrangements introduced by the Department of Parliamentary Services.²² The new arrangements, introduced on 19 May 2014, were initially to be trialled over a twelve-month period. However, full screening is reinstated on 2 July 2014, in preparation for the visit by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, and remains in place thereafter.²³



Bill Heffernan with fake 'pipe bomb'

Image source: [ParlView](#), 26 May 2014

27 May

Pacific nations call on Parliament to act on climate change

A delegation from the Pacific Island nations of Kiribati, Tuvalu and Papua New Guinea perform a song on the lawns of Parliament House, urging Australia's parliamentarians to take urgent action on climate change. The delegation seeks cuts in carbon emissions and assistance to mitigate the impact of climate change on their countries.

8 June

The Federation Chamber turns 20

The Federation Chamber of the House of Representatives celebrates its twentieth anniversary.²⁴ The Federation Chamber (known as the Main Committee prior to 2012) is a debating committee established as an alternative venue to the Chamber of the House. It operates in parallel with the Chamber in order to allow two streams of business to be debated concurrently.²⁵

The number of bills before the House had increased steadily since Federation, resulting in less time for detailed consideration of each bill. In the first decade of Federation, for example, the House had sat for 25 hours for each Act passed. This had been reduced to just two hours per Act by 1992. In addition, in 1986 the Senate had introduced deadlines for the receipt of bills from the House. In response, the House increased the number of bills declared urgent by using the procedure known as the 'guillotine' in order to speed up the process, resulting in fewer opportunities for members to contribute to debate on a bill.²⁶ In 1986 the Procedure Committee (34th Parliament) recommended the use of legislation committees but, in 1993, the Procedure



Federation Chamber, Parliament House

²² B Heffernan, [Australian Federal Police](#), Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee, *Estimates*, Attorney-General portfolio, 26 May 2014, p. 21.

²³ Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee, Answers to Questions on Notice, Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services, Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2014, [Question 185](#).

²⁴ Standing Committee on Procedure (44th Parliament), [Role of the Federation Chamber: celebrating 20 years of operation](#), Canberra, June 2015.

²⁵ 'What is the Federation Chamber?', *Infosheet 16: The Federation Chamber*, House of Representatives.

²⁶ Standing Committee on Procedure (37th Parliament), [About time: Bills, questions and working hours: Report of the inquiry into reform of the House of Representatives](#), AGPS, Canberra, October 1993.

Milestones	Details
	Committee (37th Parliament) rejected this recommendation on the basis that legislation committees did not appear to save the House time. As a result the 'committee of the whole' stage of bill consideration was abolished and the House agreed to several reforms including the Main Committee to act as a second chamber. The Main Committee met for the first time on 8 June 1994. ²⁷ On 22 June 2015, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Procedure report ' Role of the Federation Chamber: Celebrating 20 years of operation ' becomes the first report to be tabled in the Federation Chamber. ²⁸
18 June	A matter of privilege: the use of CCTV footage On joint motion of Senators Cory Bernardi (Lib, SA) and John Faulkner (ALP, NSW), the Senate refers to the Committee of Privileges the Department of Parliamentary Service's use of CCTV footage in an internal disciplinary matter. The Committee's Terms of Reference are to inquire as to: whether there was any improper (actual or attempted) interference with a senator in the free performance of his duties; and whether disciplinary action was taken against any person in connection with the provision of information to a senator.²⁹ The Privileges Committee tables its report on 5 December 2015.
26 June	Inquiry into Department of Parliamentary Services The Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration receives a reference to conduct an inquiry into the performance of the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS). The Terms of Reference include progress in implementing the Committee's 2012 reports into the performance of DPS with regard to workplace culture and employment issues, heritage, building and asset management issues, and contract management. The inquiry is completed in September 2015.³⁰

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ D Farrell, '[Committees: Standing Committee on Procedure—Report](#)', House of Representatives, Federation Chamber, *Debates*, 22 June 2016, p. 7147.

²⁹ C Bernardi, '[Privileges Committee: Reference](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 18 June 2014, p. 3280.

³⁰ Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration, [Department of Parliamentary Services final report](#), The Senate, Canberra, September 2015.

Milestones	Details	
1 July	New senators commence Twelve new senators commence their terms on 1 July 2014 following the 2013 federal election and the 2014 WA Senate election.³¹ In May 2014, the Electoral Matters Committee had tabled an interim report on the conduct of the 2013 election recommending that the Senate electoral system be changed to remove Group Voting Tickets and introduce optional preferential voting above and below the line.³²	 Senate chamber, Parliament House
2 July	Senate meets to fill vacancy The Senate meets on 2 July in order to appoint Senator Deborah O'Neill (ALP, NSW) to fill a vacancy left by the resignation of former senator Bob Carr in October 2013. Senator Carr had submitted a double resignation — that is, from both his current term and from the term to which he had been elected (to commence from 1 July 2014). A full explanation of the process is outlined in the Senate's Procedural Information Bulletin No 284.³³	
7 July	New President of the Senate Senator Stephen Parry (Lib, Tas.) becomes the 24th President of the Senate. In his address to the chamber Senator Parry says: I truly appreciate the honour that each of you has bestowed upon me. It is something that I do not take lightly ... I intend to defend the parliament as being truly independent, especially independent from the executive government. I think that is an important aspect about every Presiding Officer. The executive government has a right to govern, and we must respect that, but, equally, the parliament itself should be independent from the executive.³⁴	 Senator Stephen Parry, President of the Senate Image source: Parliament of Australia
7 July	New Senate sworn in The new Senate is sworn in by the Governor-General, Peter Cosgrove). The new Senate includes 14 new senators³⁵ and comprises: • 33 Coalition senators • 25 Australian Labor Party senators • 10 Greens senators • 8 senators from smaller parties.³⁶	 Image source: ParlView, 7 July 2014 Watch: Swearing-in of new senators and Morning Tea in Members' Hall

³¹ Parliament of Australia, [Senate composition](#), Parliament of Australia website.

³² D Muller, 'The 2013 Federal Election report from JSCEM', FlagPost, Parliamentary Library blog, 16 April 2015.

³³ [New Senate](#), *Procedural Information Bulletin No 284*, for the sitting period 7 to 18 July 2014.

³⁴ S Parry (President of the Senate), 'Parliamentary office holders: President', Senate, *Debates*, 7 July 2014, p. 4155.

³⁵ Parliamentary Library, [Parliamentary Handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia](#), 44th Parliament, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 2014.

Milestones	Details
8 July	Address by the Prime Minister of Japan During his visit to Australia the Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe, gives an address to members and senators in the House of Representatives.³⁷  Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe addressing the Parliament Image source: Auspic Watch: Address to the Parliament by Shinzo Abe, 8 July 2014 Read: Address to the Parliament by Shinzo Abe, 8 July 2014
16 July	Visitor celebrates 100th birthday at APH During Question Time the Speaker, Bronwyn Bishop MP, acknowledges Beryl James from Cairns, stating that '(i)t was her wish that she celebrate her 100th birthday in the Australian Parliament'.³⁸
19-22 July	Malaysian Airlines MH17 tragedy Prime Minister Tony Abbott MP announces that the Australian National Flag will be flown at half-mast on all Australian Government establishments in Australia and overseas, including Parliament House, as a mark of respect to the Australians who lost their lives on Malaysia Airlines Flight 17.³⁹ The scheduled international passenger flight from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur crashed on 17 July 2014 after being shot down, killing all 283 passengers and 15 crew on board, including 38 Australians. On 22 July 2014 a ceremony takes place in the Marble Hall of Parliament House for the official signing of the Condolence Book in support and sympathy for those tragically killed on Flight MH17.⁴⁰ A National Day of Mourning and National Memorial Service for the victims are planned for 7 August 2014. Watch: Signing of the official Condolence Book in support and sympathy for those tragically killed on Flight MH17

³⁶ Parliamentary Library, 'Composition of Australian Parliaments by Party and Gender, as at 2 July 2014', in J McCann, '[Women in Australian parliaments](#)', FlagPost, Parliamentary Library blog, 23 July 2014.

³⁷ His Excellency Mr Shinzo Abe (Prime Minister of Japan), '[Address by the Prime Minister of Japan](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 8 July 2014, p. 7647.

³⁸ B Bishop (Speaker), '[Distinguished visitors](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 16 July 2014, p. 8143.

³⁹ T Abbott (Prime Minister), '[Flags at half-mast for victims of MH17](#)', media release, 18 July 2014.

⁴⁰ T Abbott (Prime Minister), '[Message of condolence](#)', 22 July 2014.

Milestones	Details	
26 August	Condolence motion for Ukraine air disaster Prime Minister Tony Abbott MP moves a condolence motion expressing the House of Representative's 'outrage and condemnation at the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 over Eastern Ukraine on 18 July', and extending the House's sympathy to the families, friends and loved ones of those who perished in the disaster.⁴¹ The Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten MP (ALP, Maribyrnong, Vic.), makes a statement in support of the condolence motion, describing the events as 'a global tragedy which has struck at Australian hearts.'⁴²	 Condolence motion in the House of Representatives for the Ukraine air disaster Image source: ParlView, 26 August 2014
1 September	Parliamentary approval for troop deployments Senator Christine Milne (AG, Tas.), Leader of the Australian Greens, moves a motion relating to parliamentary approval for the deployment of Australian troops in Iraq. When leave is not granted, Senator Milne seeks unsuccessfully to suspend standing orders to enable such a motion to be moved and debated. In Australia, the power to declare war and deploy troops remains the prerogative of the Executive.⁴³ The Senate later that day debates a ministerial statement on Iraq.⁴⁴	
3 September	Australian National Flag Day A flag raising ceremony takes place in the Forecourt of Parliament House to mark the occasion of Australian National Flag Day. The day celebrates the first time the flag was flown, on 3 September 1901.	 Image source: ParlView, 3 September 2014 Watch: Flag raising ceremony

⁴¹ T Abbott, '[Condolences: Ukraine air disaster](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 26 August 2014, p. 8549.

⁴² B Shorten, '[Condolences: Ukraine air disaster](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 26 August 2014, p. 8551.

⁴³ D McKeown and R Jordan, '[Parliamentary involvement in declaring war and deploying forces overseas](#)', Background Note, Parliamentary Library.

⁴⁴ D Johnston (Minister for Defence), '[Ministerial statements: Iraq and Syria](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 1 September 2014, p. 6048.

Milestones	Details	
4 September	Parliament’s role in overseas military activity The Leader of the Australian Greens, Senator Christine Milne, asks the Senate to pass a private senator’s bill—Defence Legislation Amendment (Parliamentary Approval of Overseas Service) Bill 2014—to insert a new section into the <i>Defence Act 1903</i> requiring decisions to deploy members of the Australian Defence Force overseas to be debated and voted on by the Parliament. The attempt is defeated 54 votes to 12.⁴⁵ The bill is introduced in the context of Australia’s involvement in the Middle East conflict, and follows previous attempts since 1985 by the Australian Democrats, and more recently by the Australian Greens, to remove the exclusive power of the government to commit Australia to war. Since 1901 successive Australian governments have adopted the convention that the government of the day, rather than the Parliament, has the ultimate responsibility for making decisions involving Australia’s overseas military activity. The Constitution does not expressly say who is responsible for declaring war or deploying troops.⁴⁶ Whilst the Parliament could legislate (under the defence power in section 51(vi) of the Constitution) to ensure that all major decisions regarding Australia’s commitment to war are first approved by the Parliament, this has not been done in the history of the Parliament.⁴⁷	 Image source: Ssolbergj/Wikimedia Commons
4 September	Senator resigns from Democratic Labour Party Senator John Madigan (Ind, Vic.) informs the Senate that he has resigned from the Democratic Labour Party and will continue his term as an independent senator. His decision changes the composition of the Senate, with the number of independents rising to two.⁴⁸	
7 September	Death of Harry Evans Harry Evans, the longest serving Clerk of the Australian Senate, dies. Evans served as Clerk from 1988 to 2009,⁴⁹ and was editor of the 7th to 12th editions of <i>Odgers’ Australian Senate Practice</i>. On 9 September, the Clerk of the Senate, Dr Rosemary Laing, releases a statement paying tribute to Mr Evans. She says: Harry was known – notorious even in some circles – as a defender of the Senate and the rights of individual senators as he worked tirelessly to assist them to perform their constitutional duties. He was fearless in emphasising the necessary distinction between the	 Former Clerk of the Senate, Harry Evans Image source: Brian Jenkins/Wikimedia Commons

⁴⁵ C Milne, ‘[Bills: Defence Legislation Amendment \(Parliamentary Approval of Overseas Service\) Bill 2014: Second reading](#)’, Senate, *Debates*, 4 September 2014, p. 6426.

⁴⁶ ‘[Part V: Powers of the Parliament](#)’, *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act*, Parliament of Australia website.

⁴⁷ See D McKeown and R Jordan, [Parliamentary involvement in declaring war and deploying forces overseas](#), Background Note, Parliamentary Library, 22 March 2010, 2009–10.

⁴⁸ Parliament of Australia, ‘[Numbers in the Senate: Senate composition](#)’, Parliament of Australia website.

⁴⁹ E Abetz, ‘[Condolences: Mr Harry Evans](#)’, Senate, *Debates*, 22 September 2014, p. 6577.

Milestones

Details

parliament and the executive, even though that made him unpopular with various governments over the years.⁵⁰

21 September

Increased security at Parliament House

Following an urgent review of the safety of Parliament House, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) assumes responsibility for internal and external security for Australian Parliament House amid heightened security concerns. According to the Prime Minister, Tony Abbott MP:

In this building, there will be more armed police, fewer points of access, and more scrutiny of parliamentary passes.⁵¹

The move to increase security measures follows the raising of the National Terrorism Public Alert from medium to high on 12 September, the first time the threat has been raised since the system was introduced in 2003.⁵²



Parliament House

Image source: Phillip Minnis/Shutterstock.com

22 September

National security

Prime Minister Tony Abbott MP updates the House of Representatives on challenges to Australia's national security. He acknowledges the Opposition's bipartisan support for ensuring the safety of all Australians and outlines three key messages:

- that the Government will do whatever is possible to keep people safe
- that Australia's security measures at home and abroad are directed against terrorism, not religion, and
- Australians should live normally because the terrorists' goal is 'to scare us out of being ourselves'.⁵³

The [Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten MP](#), makes a statement in reply.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ R Laing, [Tribute to Harry Evans](#), Statement by the Clerk of the Senate, 9 September 2014.

⁵¹ T Abbott (Prime Minister), '[Ministerial statements: National security](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 22 September 2014, p. 9957.

⁵² S Parry (President of the Senate), [Security and Parliament House](#), n.d.

⁵³ T Abbott (Prime Minister), '[Ministerial statements: National security](#)', op. cit.

⁵⁴ B Shorten (Leader of the Opposition), '[Ministerial statements: National security](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 22 September 2014, p. 9960.

Milestones	Details	
24 September	Counter-terrorism Bill introduced The Attorney-General Senator George Brandis (Lib, Qld) introduces the Counter-Terrorism Legislation Amendment (Foreign Fighters) Bill 2014 to the Senate.⁵⁵ The Bill seeks to respond to the threat posed by Australians engaging in, and returning from, conflicts in foreign states, including by implementing recommendations made in a recent review of Australia's counter-terrorism laws. The Bill, incorporating amendments recommended by the bipartisan Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCIS), is passed by the Senate on 29 October and the House on 30 October.⁵⁶	 Image source: Ken Hodge/Wikimedia Commons
24 September	Recommendations on use of electronic devices The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Procedure finalises its report on the Use of electronic devices in the Chamber and Federation Chamber. This inquiry was generated by a concern from members regarding the appropriate use of electronic devices in the Chamber and Federation Chamber—what rules apply and what guidance might assist members to be aware of and understand their responsibilities. The report recommends that: - the current 'Guidelines for members on the status and handling of their records and correspondence' be updated to include communications by members via electronic devices, and - the House consider and adopt a resolution that clarifies how electronic devices are to be used in the Chamber.⁵⁷ A motion on electronic devices in the Chamber is passed by the House of Representatives on 26 March 2015, allowing their use subject to certain conditions.⁵⁸	 Image source: maradonna 8888/Shutterstock.com
30 September	Guest lecture by Speaker of the House of Commons The Speaker of the House of Commons, John Bercow MP, addresses some of the challenges faced by modern parliaments and representatives across the Commonwealth, in the era of the digital revolution and 'disruptive' technology.⁵⁹	 John Bercow MP, Speaker of the House of Commons

⁵⁵ Parliament of Australia, [Counter-Terrorism Legislation Amendment \(Foreign Fighters\) Bill 2014 homepage](#), Australian Parliament website.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ House of Representatives Standing Committee on Procedure, [Use of electronic devices in the Chamber and Federation Chamber](#), House of Representatives, Canberra, September 2014.

⁵⁸ C Pyne (Minister for Education and Training), 'Motions: Chamber Procedures', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 26 March 2015, p. 3553.

⁵⁹ [The Right Honourable John Bercow MP, Speaker of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom](#), Guest of Parliament lecture, 30 September 2014.

Milestones	Details
	Image source: ParlView, 30 September 2014 Watch: The Speaker of the House of Commons presenting a Guest of Parliament lecture
30 September	Select Committee on Queensland Government The Senate resolves to establish a Select Committee on Certain Aspects of Queensland Government Administration related to Commonwealth Government Affairs to be chaired by Senator Glenn Lazarus (PUP, Qld). It commences hearings on 13 November 2014. The Terms of Reference include the Queensland Government's administration of Commonwealth funds allocated to Queensland since 2012, judicial independence and separation of powers in the Queensland courts and judicial system, the approval process for development of projects for export of resources and services and the Commonwealth Government's oversight of approvals for coal seam gas projects in Queensland.⁶⁰ The Committee tables its report in March 2015.
2 October	Presiding Officers' decision on covered visitors to Parliament House In the context of heightened national security concerns the President of the Senate, Senator Stephen Parry and the Speaker, Bronwyn Bishop MP introduce interim security measures to ban face-coverings from being worn in the building. Under the interim measures, people who enter the building 'covering themselves in such a way they cannot be clearly identified',⁶¹ will be asked to be identified and to produce identification. They will then be free to move around the building but will be required to sit in the glassed enclosures in order to view parliamentary proceedings. On 20 October the Presiding Officers issue a further ruling that people with face coverings be visually identified upon entry to Parliament House, 'thereby enabling persons with facial coverings to move from that point freely into the public portions of the building, including the chamber galleries'.⁶²

⁶⁰ Senate Select Committee on Certain Aspects of Queensland Government Administration related to Commonwealth Government, [Terms of Reference](#), Senate, 30 September 2014.

⁶¹ S Parry (President of the Senate), '[Questions to the President: Parliament House security](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 2 October 2014, p. 7659.

⁶² Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee, [Official Committee Hansard](#), 20 October 2014, p. 9, accessed 1 July 2016, and B Bishop (Speaker of the House of Representatives), '[Questions to the Speaker: Parliament House Security](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 20 October 2014, p. 11,338.

Milestones	Details
21 October	Former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam dies Former Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam (ALP, Werriwa, NSW) dies aged 98 years. Mr Whitlam served as Australia's 21st Prime Minister before being dismissed from office by Governor-General Sir John Kerr on 11 November 1975. His contribution to Australia is marked in condolence motions led by the Prime Minister, Tony Abbott MP and Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten MP. The Prime Minister states that: In every sense, Gough Whitlam was a giant figure in this parliament and in our public life. He was only Prime Minister for three years—three tumultuous years—but those years changed our nation and, in one way or another, set the tone for so much that has followed. Whether you were for him or against him, it was his vision that drove our politics then and which still echoes through our public life four decades on.⁶³ A NSW state memorial service is held at the Sydney Town Hall on 5 November.
22 October	National Week of Deaf People Julie Owens MP (ALP, Parramatta, NSW) gives a speech to the House of Representatives acknowledging the 2014 National Week of Deaf People. She simultaneously delivers her speech in Auslan (sign language).⁶⁴ Note: The Department of Parliamentary Services noted in response to a Question on Notice at a Senate Estimates hearing in July 2014 that it was assessing whether live broadcasts of parliamentary proceedings could be captioned. Live captioning of parliamentary proceedings begins with the commencement of the 45th Parliament, initially for five hours per day for each chamber, with the goal of having all parliamentary video recordings live-captioned by mid-2018.⁶⁵



Gough Whitlam (1955)

Image source: Wikimedia Commons

Watch: Condolence motions from [the Prime Minister, Tony Abbott MP](#) and [the Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten MP](#)



Julie Owens MP delivering her speech in Auslan

Image source: [ParlView](#), 22 October 2014

Watch: [Julie Owens MP making a speech to Parliament in Auslan](#)

⁶³ T Abbott (Prime Minister), [Condolences: Whitlam, Hon Edward Gough, AC, QC](#), House of Representatives, *Debates*, 21 October 2014, p. 11517.

⁶⁴ J Owens, [‘Statements by Members: National Week of Deaf People’](#), House of Representatives, *Debates*, 22 October 2014, p. 11616.

⁶⁵ Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS), [Department of Parliamentary Services Annual Report 2015-16](#), DPS, Canberra, 2016, accessed 30 November 2016.p. 56.

Milestones	Details	
23 October	Terrorist attack on Canadian Parliament Prime Minister Tony Abbott MP, and Leader of the Opposition Bill Shorten MP express their condolences at the loss of life and injury sustained during a terrorist attack on the Canadian Parliament and the Canadian National War Memorial on the previous day. The Prime Minister states that: So an attack on their parliament is an affront to this parliament too. So today we stand shoulder to shoulder with our Canadian comrades in defiance and resolution.⁶⁶ The Speaker, Bronwyn Bishop MP asks the Canadian High Commissioner, Michael Smith, who is present in the House of Representatives chamber, to convey the Australian Parliament's sentiments and support to the Canadian Parliament.	 Canadian Parliament Buildings, Ottawa Image source: Steven W Dengler/Creative Commons
23 October	Statement by Speaker regarding Parliament House security The Speaker, Bronwyn Bishop MP makes a statement to the House of Representatives concerning security arrangements around Parliament House in view of the terrorist attack on the Canadian Parliament on 22 October. She notes that the design of the Australian Parliament is very different to that of the Canadian Parliament, and that there are 'layers of security measures' in place that would prevent such an attack from succeeding here.⁶⁷	 Parliament House forecourt
14 November	Address by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom David Cameron, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, gives an address to members and senators in the House of Representatives chamber.⁶⁸	 Prime Minister of the United Kingdom David Cameron addressing the Parliament Image source: ParlView, 14 November 2014 Watch: Address by David Cameron, MP, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

⁶⁶ T Abbott (Prime Minister), '[Statements: Ottawa: attack](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 23 October 2014, p. 11812.

⁶⁷ B Bishop (Speaker), '[Statement by the Speaker: Ottawa: Attack, Parliament House: Security](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 23 October 2014, p. 11743.

⁶⁸ D Cameron (Prime Minister of the United Kingdom), '[Address by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 14 November 2014, p. 12710.

Milestones	Details	
17 November	Address by the President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, gives a speech at a dinner held in the Great Hall of Parliament House.⁶⁹	 Address by President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping Image source: ParlView, 17 November 2014 Watch: Speech by Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China
18 November	Address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of India Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, gives an address to members and senators in the House of Representatives chamber.⁷⁰	 Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi addressing the Parliament Image source: ParlView, 18 November 2014 Watch: Address by Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India
19 November	State visit by the President of the French Republic François Hollande, President of the French Republic, visits Parliament House during his State Visit to Australia, which coincides with the meeting of world leaders attending the G20 Summit in Canberra.⁷¹	 President of France François Hollande at joint media conference Image source: http://parlview.aph.gov.au/mediaPlayer.php?videoID=243872 ParlView, 19 November 2014.

⁶⁹ Xi Jinping (President of the People's Republic of China), '[Address by the President of the People's Republic of China](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 17 November 2014, p. 12720.

⁷⁰ N Modi (Prime Minister of the Republic of India), '[Address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of India](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 18 November 2014, p. 12730.

⁷¹ Parliament of Australia, '[State visit to Australia by Mr François Hollande, President of the French Republic: Joint media conference](#)', 19 November 2014.

Milestones	Details
	November 2014 Watch: State visit to Australia by François Hollande, President of the French Republic, joint media conference with the Prime Minister Tony Abbott MP
24 November	Senator resigns from Palmer United Party Senator Jacqui Lambie (Ind, Tas.) informs the Senate that she has resigned from the Palmer United Party and that she will to continue her term as an independent senator.⁷² Her decision again changes the composition of the Senate, with the number of independents rising to three.⁷³  Senator Jacqui Lambie Image source: Parliament of Australia
26 November	Censure motion against Minister for Defence The Senate votes in favour of a motion to censure the Minister for Defence, Senator David Johnston (Lib, WA) over his comment on 25 November that he would not trust the Government's shipbuilder, the Australian Submarine Corporation, to 'build a canoe'. The censure motion is passed by 37 votes to 31.⁷⁴
26 November	Security Management Board for Parliament House The Speaker, Bronwyn Bishop, MP introduces the Parliamentary Service Amendment Bill 2014 into the House. The Bill amends the composition of the Security Management Board include the Australian Federal Police. In introducing the Bill, the Speaker states that: ... the security arrangements in the parliamentary precincts are under continual and careful assessment, and I am working closely with a range of departments including security and intelligence agencies, in carrying out the necessary security works within the parliamentary precinct.⁷⁵ During the Bill's second reading in the Senate, the President notes that the authority to make decisions regarding security for Parliament House remains vested in the Presiding Officers.⁷⁶ The Bill passes both Houses on 26 March 2015.  Parliament House flagpole

⁷² J Lambie, '[Statements: Palmer United Party](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 24 November 2014, p. 8967.

⁷³ Parliament of Australia, '[Numbers in the Senate: Senate composition](#)', Parliament of Australia website.

⁷⁴ P Wong, '[Motions: Minister for Defence: Censure](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 26 November 2014, p. 9376.

⁷⁵ B Bishop (Speaker), '[Bills: Parliamentary Service Amendment Bill 2014: Second Reading](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 26 November 2014, p. 13225.

⁷⁶ S Parry (President of the Senate), '[Second reaching speech: Parliamentary Service Amendment Bill 2014](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 26 March 2015, p. 2576.

Milestones	Details
4 December	Labor MP ejected from House of Representatives The Speaker ejects Nick Champion MP (ALP, Wakefield, SA) from the House of Representatives for disorderly behaviour after taking a bunch of bananas into Question Time to illustrate his point that by closing car manufacturing in Australia '[t]his government has gone completely bananas.' The Speaker Bronwyn Bishop MP says: 'The Member for Wakefield and his bananas will leave under 94(a).'  Nick Champion MP Image source: Parliament of Australia Read: R Lundie, <i>'That's it, you're out': disorderly conduct in the House of Representatives from 1901 to 2013</i>, Research Paper Series, 2013–14, Parliamentary Library, 11 December 2013

⁷⁷ B Bishop (Speaker), ['Questions without Notice: Maranoa Electorate: Drought'](#), House of Representatives, *Debates*, 4 December 2014, p. 14324.

2015

Milestones	Details
6 February	Resignation of Senator John Faulkner Senator John Faulkner resigns, creating a casual vacancy in the Senate.⁷⁸ Senator Faulkner served as a senator for 25 years, including as a Minister.⁷⁹ The President of the Senate, Senator Stephen Parry, informs the Senate of the vacancy on 9 February.⁸⁰  John Faulkner Image source: Parliament of Australia
9 February	Martin Place siege remembered The House of Representatives passes a motion, moved by the Prime Minister, acknowledging the courage of those held during the siege of the Lindt Café in Martin Place, Sydney, in December 2014, and extending the sympathies of the House to the family and friends of Katrina Dawson and Tori Johnson, who were killed in the siege.⁸¹ The families of Ms Dawson and Mr Johnson, along with survivors of the siege, are present to hear the speeches. The Senate also expresses its sympathy to the victims and their families.⁸²
10 February	Enhanced security arrangements at Parliament House The Speaker, Bronwyn Bishop MP, announces that, as part of the continuing upgrade to security at Parliament House, she has agreed to an armed Australian Federal Police (AFP) presence in the attendants' booth adjacent to the chamber.⁸³
11 February	Ministerial statements—Closing the Gap The Prime Minister, Tony Abbott MP, advises the house of progress toward the Closing the Gap targets since his 2014 Closing the Gap statement. The Prime Minister notes that: Last year ... I said that our challenge was to turn good intentions into better outcomes ... There are some improvements in education and health outcomes ... However, the other targets—to close the gap in life expectancy within a generation; to ensure access to early childhood education for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; and to halve the gaps in employment outcomes—have either not been met or are not on track to be met.⁸⁴

⁷⁸ A McEwen, 'Motion: [Senate Casual Vacancies](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 26 March 2015, p. 2562.

⁷⁹ Parliament of Australia, '[Former Senator the Hon John Faulkner](#)', Parliament of Australia website.

⁸⁰ S Parry (President), '[Parliamentary Representation: New South Wales](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 9 February 2015, p. 1.

⁸¹ T Abbott (Prime Minister), '[Motions: Sydney - Martin Place Siege](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 9 February 2015, p. 21.

⁸² '[Statements: Sydney – Martin Place Siege](#)', Senate, *Journals*, 9 February 2015, p. 25.

⁸³ B Bishop (Speaker), '[Statement by the Speaker](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 10 February 2015, p. 303.

⁸⁴ T Abbott (Prime Minister), '[Ministerial Statements: Closing the Gap](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 11 February 2015, p. 464.

Milestones	Details
	Opposition Leader Bill Shorten MP says: A great nation includes everyone, and a good society leaves no-one behind, but this report confronts us with two nations—two Australias.⁸⁵
12 February	Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran: the Parliament calls for sentence commutation The House of Representatives and the Senate pass cross-party motions calling on the Indonesian government to ‘give consideration to the circumstances of Mr Chan and Mr Sukumaran and their rehabilitation in prison, their suffering and that of their families, and commute their sentences to an appropriate term of imprisonment.’⁸⁶ Speaking to the motion in the House, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Julie Bishop MP states: this motion goes to the heart of what we believe will be a grave injustice against two Australian citizens facing execution in Indonesia. Whatever one's views of the rights and wrongs of this situation, after speaking to the mothers of Australian citizens Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran I ask others to place themselves just for a moment in the shoes of these young men and their families—sons, brothers—facing death by firing squad for shocking actions, for shocking mistakes made over a decade ago. Australia's strong opposition to the death penalty at home and abroad is reflected in the government's determination to do all possible to seek a stay of execution and clemency for Andrew and Myuran. At the same time ..., we acknowledge the very serious drug-smuggling crimes for which Andrew and Myuran were convicted.⁸⁷ In the Federation Chamber Sarah Henderson MP (Lib, Corangamite, Vic), speaking, in Bahasa Indonesia, appeals to President Joko Widodo to ‘please give mercy’.⁸⁸ Some 100 senators and members also sign a letter to the Indonesian Ambassador requesting that the sentences be commuted.⁸⁹ On 5 March, around 40 parliamentarians join a candlelight vigil in the Parliament House forecourt, organised by the Australian Parliamentarians against the Death Penalty (convened by Philip Ruddock MP (Lib, Berowra, NSW) and Chris Hayes MP (ALP, Fowler, NSW). Despite concerted diplomatic representations, a public

⁸⁵ B Shorten (Leader of the Opposition), ‘[Ministerial Statements: Closing the Gap](#)’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 11 February 2015, p. 467.

⁸⁶ ‘Motions: Death Penalty’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 12 February 2015 pp. 656ff; L. Singh, ‘[Motions: Death Penalty](#)’, Senate, *Debates*, 10 February 2015, p. 296.

⁸⁷ J Bishop (Minister for Foreign Affairs), ‘[Motions: Death Penalty](#)’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 12 February 2015, p. 656.

⁸⁸ S Henderson, ‘[Motions: Death Penalty](#)’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 12 February 2015, p. 795.

⁸⁹ T Allard, ‘[Federal politicians call for mercy for Chan and Sukumaran](#)’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 February 2015.

Milestones	Details
	campaign, and the pleas of friends and family, the two men are executed with six other prisoners on 29 April 2015. In Australia, the death penalty for crimes under federal and territory laws was abolished in 1973 by the Death Penalty Abolition Act; this was extended to state laws in 2010 with the Commonwealth Crimes Legislation Amendment (Torture Prohibition and Death Penalty Abolition) Act 2010.⁹⁰ The last person to be judicially executed for a crime in Australia was Ronald Ryan, in 1967.⁹¹ In June 2015, the Member for Fairfax (Qld), Clive Palmer MP (PUP), introduces into the House the Foreign Death Penalty Offences (Preventing Information Disclosure) Bill 2015. The purpose of this private member's bill is to prevent the disclosure of information by public officials in circumstances that may lead to the imposition of the death penalty in foreign countries. The Bill is removed from the Notice Paper on 20 October.⁹²
18 February	New guidelines for official witnesses appearing at parliamentary committees Revised Government guidelines for official witnesses before Parliamentary Committees and related matters are tabled out of sitting. The <i>Guidelines</i>, developed by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, are 'designed to assist departmental and agency officials, statutory office holders and the staff of statutory authorities in their dealings with the parliament'.⁹³ The revised <i>Guidelines</i> are long-awaited, having not been updated since 1989.
23 February	State visit by the King and Queen of Norway Their Majesties King Harald V and Queen Sonja of Norway attend an official dinner at Parliament House as part of their official visit to Australia (22 to 27 February 2015). They are accompanied by a delegation of senior government and business leaders.
	 Their Majesties King Harald V and Queen Sonja of Norway with Prime Minister Tony Abbott MP at Parliament House Image source: Auspic
23 February	Parliament celebrates the release of journalist Peter Greste On 2 February, Australian journalist Peter Greste was freed from an Egyptian prison where he had been held for over 400 days. Mr Greste had been sentenced to seven years in jail on

⁹⁰ G Butler, '[Attitudes towards the death penalty at home and abroad](#)', FlagPost, Parliamentary Library, 20 February 2015.

⁹¹ M Richards, '[Ryan, Ronald Joseph \(1925-1967\)](#)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 16, Melbourne University Press, 2002.

⁹² The Bill is removed from the Notice Paper in accordance with House of Representatives Standing Order 42, which states that '(t)he Clerk shall remove from the Notice Paper items of Private Members' business ... which have not been called on for eight consecutive sitting Mondays'.

⁹³ Parliament of Australia, '[Government Guidelines for Official Witnesses before Parliamentary Committees and Related Matters – February 2015](#)', Parliament of Australia website.

Milestones	Details
	charges that included aiding a terrorist group in a case that sparked international condemnation.⁹⁴ A motion in the House of Representatives, moved by Jane Prentice MP (Lib, Petrie, Qld): ... commends the Greste family on its courage, resilience and grace for more than 400 days; and ... notes that 'Telling the truth is not terrorism and journalism is not a crime'.⁹⁵
23 February	Hansard controversy During Senate Estimates, the Department of Agriculture is questioned over a Freedom of Information request relating to possible interference with the Hansard record. The Hansard in question relates to a response by the Minister for Agriculture, Barnaby Joyce MP to a question on notice.⁹⁶ The issue is also canvassed at a further Estimates hearing on 5 March.⁹⁷ The head of the Department of Agriculture, Dr Paul Grimes PSM, steps down in March 2015, amid reports that his relationship with the Minister has broken down over the issue.⁹⁸ In October 2016, a letter from Dr Grimes to Mr Joyce dated 2 March 2015 is released, following a lengthy legal battle to prevent its release.⁹⁹
2 March 2016	Report into the use of CCTV material in Parliament House The President of the Senate, Senator Stephen Parry, tables a report by the Senate Standing Committee on Privileges concerning the use of closed circuit television (CCTV) material within Parliament House.¹⁰⁰ The report examines (among other things) the use of CCTV footage by the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) for internal investigations involving DPS staff and 'whether there was any improper interference, or attempted improper interference, with the free performance by Senator Faulkner or any other senator of their duties as a senator'.¹⁰¹
3 March	Censure of the Attorney-General Having suspended standing orders, the Senate debates an Opposition motion to censure the Attorney-General, Senator George Brandis, for his conduct towards the President of the Australian Human Rights Commission, Gillian Triggs, including failing to defend her from 'malicious attack' and seeking to

⁹⁴ B Miller, '[Peter Greste: Australian Al Jazeera journalist says release from prison in Egypt like a "rebirth"](#)', Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) News Online, 3 February 2015.

⁹⁵ J Prentice, '[Private Members' Business: Peter Greste's Release](#)', House of Representatives, *Votes and Proceedings*, HVP No. 96, 23 February 2015.

⁹⁶ Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee, '[Official committee Hansard](#)', 23 February 2015, pp. 45-63.

⁹⁷ Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee, '[Official committee Hansard](#)', 5 March 2015.

⁹⁸ H Aston, '["Lack of trust" leads to sacking](#)', *Canberra Times*, 14 March 2015, p. 6.

⁹⁹ H Aston, '[Ag chief questioned Barnaby Joyce's "integrity" days before being sacked](#)', *Canberra Times*, 25 October 2016, p. 2.

¹⁰⁰ '[Documents: Tabling](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 2 March 2015, p. 823.

¹⁰¹ Senate Standing Committee on Privileges, '[160th Report: The use of CCTV material in Parliament House](#)', Parliament of Australia, Canberra, 5 December 2014, p. 1.

Milestones	Details
	obtain her resignation.¹⁰² These issues were also canvassed at length during the Australian Human Rights Commission's appearance before the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee in the February estimates hearings.¹⁰³ The motion is carried 35 votes to 32.¹⁰⁴ A similar censure motion in the House of Representatives on 25 February 2015 was unsuccessful.¹⁰⁵
3 March	Parliament's role in overseas military activity The Leader of the Australian Greens, Senator Christine Milne, unsuccessfully seeks to suspend standing orders to enable the Senate to debate a motion about the deployment of Australian forces to Iraq.¹⁰⁶ On 4 March, Senator Scott Ludlam (AG, WA) reintroduces a bill seeking to give the Parliament authority for approving troop deployments, the Defence Legislation Amendment (Parliamentary Approval of Overseas Service) Bill 2015, noting that 'this is the 30th year that this bill has been on the <i>Notice Paper</i> in one form or another.'¹⁰⁷ These moves follow a Ministerial Statement on the Middle East by the Minister for Defence, Kevin Andrews MP (Lib, Menzies, Vic) on 26 February 2015.¹⁰⁸ In September, the Australian Greens also unsuccessfully seek to suspend standing orders for a debate on a motion related to parliamentary approval of the involvement of Australian forces in Syria.¹⁰⁹ While the issue is debated in the Senate the following day, time for the debate expires without a vote.¹¹⁰
5 March	Senator Muir's first speech Senator Ricky Muir (Australian Motoring Enthusiast Party, Vic.) delivers his 'first speech', the last of the cohort of senators elected in 2013 to do so. He tells the Senate: 'it may have taken eight months and four days, but finally I am standing here in the great chamber presenting my first speech'.¹¹¹ Senator Muir has, however, already spoken in debates and Question Time.



Christine Milne

Image source: [Parliament of Australia](#)



Ricky Muir

Image source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

¹⁰² '[Attorney-General: Censure](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 2 March 2015, pp. 719ff. An earlier censure motion of the Attorney-General had failed to pass the House of Representatives on 25 February 2015.

¹⁰³ Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee, [Estimates](#), 24 February 2015, Attorney-General's Portfolio, pp. 7ff.

¹⁰⁴ '[Attorney-General: Censure](#)', Senate, *Debates* 2 March 2015, p. 719.

¹⁰⁵ '[Attorney-General: Attempted Censure – Division](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 25 February 2015, p. 1286, accessed 6 December 2016.

¹⁰⁶ C Milne, '[Motions: Deployment of Australian Troops](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 3 March 2015 p.923.

¹⁰⁷ S Ludlam, '[Defence Legislation Amendment \(Parliamentary Approval of Overseas Service\) Bill 2017](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 4 March 2015, p. 1174.

¹⁰⁸ K Andrews (Minister for Defence), '[Ministerial Statement: Middle East](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 26 February 2015, p. 1437, accessed 1 December 2016.

¹⁰⁹ R Di Natale, '[Motions: Syria](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 9 September 2015, p. 6406.

¹¹⁰ '[Motions: Syria](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 10 September 2015, p. 6605.

¹¹¹ R Muir, '[First Speech](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 5 March 2015, p. 1351.

Milestones	Details
5 March	Intergenerational Report The Treasurer, Joe Hockey MP, makes a ministerial statement on the 2015 Intergenerational Report, describing it as ‘an incredibly important document to start a serious conversation about the challenges and opportunities ahead for Australia’.¹¹² Speaking in response, the Shadow Treasurer Chris Bowen MP (ALP, McMahon, NSW) is sharply critical of the report, describing it as ‘fundamentally flawed’.¹¹³ The Charter of Budget Honesty Act 1998 (Cth) requires the Australian Government to produce an Intergenerational Report at least every five years which is to ‘assess the long term sustainability of current Government policies over the 40 years following the release of the report, including by taking account of the financial implications of demographic change’.¹¹⁴ Read: the Intergenerational Report speeches by Mr Hockey and Mr Bowen
5 March	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Recognition Act 2013 extended The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Recognition (Sunset Extension) Bill passes both houses. The Bill amends the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Recognition Act 2013 (Cwth) (Act of Recognition) to ensure that it continues to operate until a referendum to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the Constitution can be held.¹¹⁵
13 March	Another senator resigns from the Palmer United Party Senator Glenn Lazarus (Ind, Qld) announces his resignation from the Palmer United Party and his decision to continue his term as an independent senator. He confirms this decision in a short statement in the Senate a few days later.¹¹⁶ His resignation changes the composition of the Senate again, with the number of independents rising to four (of 18 crossbench senators).¹¹⁷  Glenn Lazarus Image source: Parliament of Australia Watch: Senator Lazarus’ statement to the Senate

¹¹² J Hockey (Treasurer), ‘[Ministerial Statements: Intergenerational Report: 2015](#)’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 5 March 2015, p. 2186.

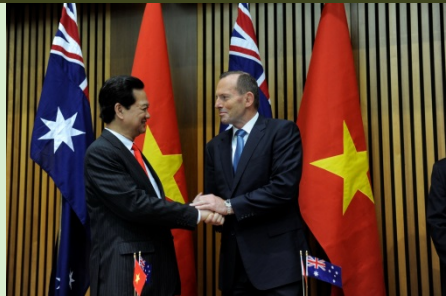
¹¹³ C Bowen, ‘[Ministerial Statements: Intergenerational Report: 2015](#)’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 5 March 2015, p. 2189.

¹¹⁴ *Charter of Budget Honesty Act 1998* (Cth), Part 6.

¹¹⁵ Parliament of Australia, ‘[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Recognition \(Sunset Extension\) Bill 2015 home page](#)’, Australian Parliament website.

¹¹⁶ G Lazarus, ‘[Statements: Palmer United Party](#)’, Senate, *Debates*, 16 March 2015, p. 1421.

¹¹⁷ Parliament of Australia, ‘[Numbers in the Senate: Senate composition](#)’, Parliament of Australia website.

Milestones	Details
18 March	Visit by the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Mr Nguyen Tan Dung, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, visits Parliament House during his State Visit to Australia (16-18 March). During his visit, the two Prime Ministers sign the Australia-Vietnam Enhanced Comprehensive Partnership and the two countries establish a Memorandum of Understanding establishing a youth exchange program.  Prime Minister of Vietnam Nguyen Tan Dung with Prime Minister Tony Abbott MP Image source: Auspic Watch: His Excellency Mr Nguyen Tan Dung, PM of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam arrive at Parliament House; and The signing of the Australia-Vietnam Enhanced Comprehensive Partnership Read: the Prime Ministers' Joint Statement on the Comprehensive Partnership The Declaration on Enhancing the Australia-Vietnam Comprehensive Partnership
19 March	Crown succession law changes The Succession to the Crown Bill 2015 is passed by both Houses. The legislation follows the <i>Succession to the Crown Act 2013</i> (UK), which was enacted on 25 April 2013, and like that Act, ends the system of male primogeniture so that the order of succession is determined by the order of birth. The legislation also removes provisions under which members of the royal family who marry a person of the Roman Catholic faith lose their place in the succession.¹¹⁸ Before the legislation could be passed, all Australian states were required to pass legislation requesting the Commonwealth to enact legislation for the whole of Australia.¹¹⁹ Australia was the last of the 16 realms that have Queen Elizabeth II as their head of state to complete its legislation. On 26 March 2015, the changes to succession to the Crown across all the realms came into effect simultaneously.¹²⁰
19 March	Private senator's Bill passes the Senate The Senate passes a private Senator's bill put forward by Senator Jacqui Lambie.¹²¹ The Defence Amendment (Fair Pay

¹¹⁸ M Coombs, [Succession to the Crown Bill 2015](#), Bills digest, 84, 2014-15, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 2015, p. 2.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ A Twomey, 'Power to the princesses: Australia wraps up succession law changes', The Conversation (website), 26 March 2015.

¹²¹ J Lambie, 'Defence Amendment (Fair Pay for Members of the ADF) Bill 2014: Third Reading', Senate, *Debates*, 19 March 2015, p. 1903.

Milestones	Details
	for Members of the ADF) Bill 2014 seeks to amend the <i>Defence Act 1903</i> to link annual wage increase for members of the Australian Defence Force to whichever is the higher of increases in parliamentary allowance or the consumer price index.¹²² The bill lapses at the prorogation of the Parliament on 15 April 2016,¹²³ without having been debated in the House of Representatives.
20 March	Former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser dies Former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser (Lib, Wannon, Vic.) dies aged 84 years. Mr Fraser served as Australia's 22nd Prime Minister from 1975 to 1983, taking office after the dismissal of the Whitlam Government by Governor-General John Kerr in November 1975. His contribution to Australia is marked in condolence motions led by the Prime Minister, Tony Abbott MP, and Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten MP. The Prime Minister states that: Fraser was not an avid social reformer like Whitlam, nor a mould-breaking economic reformer like Hawke, but he gave the country what we needed at that time. He restored economic responsibility while recognising social change. His government passed the Northern Territory land rights act and he was the first Prime Minister to visit the Torres Strait. He established the Special Broadcasting Service and began large-scale Asian immigration to Australia by accepting 50,000 Vietnamese refugees fleeing communism. In 1983 Malcolm Fraser left parliament, proud of his government and its achievements. As he said at the time, 'Australia is handed over in as good or better condition than any other western country in the world.'¹²⁴ A state memorial service is held at the Melbourne's Scots' Church on 27 March.
24 March	Member for Bowman is suspended from the House Mr Andrew Laming MP (Lib, Bowman, Qld) is suspended from the House for disorderly conduct. To give emphasis to his speech on a motion relating to cruise liner emissions (in the Federation Chamber the previous evening), Mr Laming pours crude oil over his hands, spilling it onto the desk and chamber carpet. In suspending the Member for Bowman, the Speaker, Bronwyn Bishop MP, says: Setting aside the member's offence in making use of props, it is highly disorderly to bring dangerous and flammable substances into either of the chambers. I consider the member's actions to be totally disorderly,



Malcolm Fraser

Image courtesy of Polixeni Papapetrou and [State Library of Victoria](#).

Watch: [Condolence motions in the House of Representatives](#)

Watch: [Mr Laming's speech in the Federation Chamber](#)

¹²² Parliament of Australia, '[Defence Amendment \(Fair Pay for Members of the ADF\) Bill 2014 homepage](#)', Australian Parliament website.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ T Abbott (Prime Minister), '[Condolences: Fraser, Rt Hon. John Malcolm, AC, CH](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 23 March 2015, p. 3085.

Milestones	Details
	disrespectful of the House and the Federation Chamber, and potentially dangerous to the health and safety of members and staff of the Federation Chamber. I understand that there has been damage to the Federation Chamber which we are endeavouring to repair.¹²⁵ Mr Laming subsequently pays \$256 for the costs of the repairs.¹²⁶
26 March	Parliament House security upgrade Both the House of Representatives and the Senate approve a proposal to upgrade the security of Parliament House. The new security measures to be taken include a perimeter fence, a gatehouse facility at the Ministerial Wing entrance, and additional vehicle bollards.¹²⁷ The proposed works are referred to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee for inquiry and report by 13 May 2015.¹²⁸
21 April	Secretary leaves Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) Carol Mills' appointment as Secretary of DPS is terminated. Ms Mills has been the subject of criticism in a Privileges Committee report on the Department of Parliamentary Services' use of CCTV footage in an internal disciplinary matter tabled in December 2014—criticism which she has rebutted.¹²⁹ (The Senate adopts the recommendations of the Privileges Committee report on 12 February).¹³⁰ In February 2015 an ANAO report highlighted weaknesses in the management of assets and contracts at Parliament House. The performance of the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) is also the subject of an inquiry before the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration. (The inquiry is completed in September 2015.) The new Secretary, Mr Robert Stefanic, takes up his position on 14 December 2015, the Parliamentary Librarian having acted in that position in the interim.

¹²⁵ B Bishop (Speaker), '[Statement by the Speaker: Incident in the Federation Chamber](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 25 March 2015, p. 3429.

¹²⁶ [Question on notice number 55](#), Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee—Budget Estimates Hearing—May 2015.

¹²⁷ B Bishop (Speaker), '[Appropriations and Administration Committee: Report](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 26 March 2015, pp. 3552.

¹²⁸ N Xenophon, '[Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee: Reference](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 26 March 2015, p. 2559.

¹²⁹ See [additional documents](#) provided to Finance and Public Administration Committee inquiry into the performance of DPS; Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee *Estimates* 23 February 2015, pp. 23ff.

¹³⁰ Senate, [Journals of the Senate](#), 2013-15, No 78, p. 2184.

Milestones	Details	
6 May	New leader for the Australian Greens Victorian Senator Richard Di Natale is elected as leader of the Australian Greens following the resignation of Senator Christine Milne from that position.¹³¹ Senator Milne has served as party leader since April 2012. Senators Larissa Waters (Qld) and Scott Ludlam (WA) are elected as co-deputy leaders of the party.	 Senator Richard Di Natale Image source: Parliament of Australia
6 May	New senator for New South Wales Jennifer McAllister (ALP) is appointed by joint sitting of the two Houses of the NSW Parliament to the casual vacancy created by the resignation of Senator John Faulkner on 6 February.¹³² Senator McAllister is sworn in on 11 May. The delay in the senator's appointment is due to the NSW Parliament's being in recess ahead of the state election in March 2015. While the Constitution (section 15) provides that: the Governor of the State, with the advice of the Executive Council thereof, may appoint a person to hold the place until the expiration of fourteen days after the beginning of the next session of the Parliament of the State, or until the election of a successor, whichever first happens NSW does not avail itself of that provision, 'thus denying itself full representation in the Senate for the autumn sittings'.¹³³ On 26 March the Senate agrees to an Opposition motion reaffirming the view that 'casual vacancies in the Senate should be filled as expeditiously as possible' and calling on the NSW Government and Parliament to 'ensure that the people of that state are not denied full representation in the Senate for any time longer than is strictly necessary'.¹³⁴	 Senator Jennifer McAllister Image source: Parliament of Australia

¹³¹ C Milne, '[Statement from Christine Milne](#)', The Greens website, 6 May 2015.

¹³² Senate, '[Casual Vacancies—New South Wales](#)', *Journals of the Senate, 2013-15*, No. 90, 26 March 2015, p. 2465, and Senate, '[Vacancy in the Representation of New South Wales—Choice of Jennifer McAllister](#)', *Journals of the Senate*, No. 91, 11 May 2015, p. 2515.

¹³³ Department of the Senate, [Procedural Information Bulletin](#), No. 292, 15 May 2015.

¹³⁴ '[Motion: Senate Casual Vacancies](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 26 March 2015 p. 2562.

Milestones	Details
12 May	Budget 2015 The Treasurer, Joe Hockey MP, hands down the 2015 Budget. It is Mr Hockey's second Budget, and he tells the House: This budget is responsible, measured and fair. We are creating opportunities for job seekers, young and old. We are caring for our most vulnerable. And we are keeping the country safe and secure. ... This is a budget as much for the miners of the Pilbara as it is for the farmers in the Mallee. It is as much for a family in Brisbane as it is for a start-up business in Adelaide. This is a budget that helps build a stronger, safer and more prosperous Australia.¹³⁵ In his speech in reply on 14 May, Opposition Leader Bill Shorten MP says: The test for this budget was to plan for the future, to lift productivity, to create jobs, to boost investment, to turbocharge confidence for the years and decades ahead, to restore hope, but this budget fails every test. It is a hoax, a mirage, a smokescreen.¹³⁶
12 May	Centenary of Gallipoli – Motion by the Prime Minister In a motion marking the centenary, on 25 April 2015, of Australian and New Zealand troops landing at Gallipoli, the Prime Minister says: On Anzac Day, the Leader of the Opposition and I stood together with thousands of Australians and New Zealanders on the distant shores of Gallipoli ... (W)e paid our respects to the Anzacs whose spirit has moved our people for a century. We went to honour the generation of young men who rallied to serve our country when our country called and who were faithful even unto death. At dawn at Anzac Cove and later at Lone Pine, these places of peace that were once battlefields, we remembered the original Anzacs. This parliament was only 13 years old when the Great War broke out. This parliament still sat in Melbourne. Nine sitting MPs served in the Great War. In all, some 120 members of the Commonwealth parliament served in World War I. On behalf of all members, I pay my respects to them ... On every Anzac Day, the phrase echoes around our services: 'Lest we forget'. But we have not forgotten and we will not forget.¹³⁷



Joe Hockey

Image source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

¹³⁵ J Hockey (Treasurer), '[Appropriation Bill \(No. 1\) 2015-16, Second Reading](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 12 May 2015, p. 3812.

¹³⁶ B Shorten (Leader of the Opposition), '[Appropriation Bill \(No. 1\) 2015-16, Second Reading](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 14 May 2015, p. 4185.

¹³⁷ T Abbott (Prime Minister), '[Motion: Centenary of Anzac](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 12 May 2015, pp. 3709.

Milestones	Details
21 May	New senator for Queensland Senator Joanna Lindgren (Lib) is appointed by the Queensland Parliament to the casual vacancy caused by the resignation of Senator Brett Mason;¹³⁸ she is sworn in on 15 June. In her first speech, Senator Lindgren pays tribute to her great uncle, Neville Bonner, long-serving senator for Queensland (Lib, Ind, Qld, 1971-83) and the first Indigenous Australian to sit in the Australian Parliament.¹³⁹  Senator Joanna Lindgren Image source: Parliament of Australia Watch: Senator Lindgren's first speech
27 May	Remonstrance from the Norfolk Legislative Assembly The Speaker of the Norfolk Island Legislative Assembly, David Buffett, delivers both Houses of Parliament a Remonstrance, setting out the Assembly's grievances regarding the removal of self-government 'without genuine consultation and negotiation'.¹⁴⁰ (A remonstrance is a formal document setting out grievances or complaints and seeking their redress.) Norfolk Island, an Australian external territory, has enjoyed partial self-government since 1979, with its government responsible for the delivery of local, state and some commonwealth services. However, a series of Commonwealth government and parliamentary reports have indicated the need for major reforms in administration, social services, finance and governance. The Norfolk Island Legislative Amendment Act 2015, which receives Royal Assent on 26 May, abolishes the Norfolk Island Legislative Assembly and replaces it with an Advisory Council, which will transition to an elected Regional Council with local and municipal responsibilities from July 2016.¹⁴¹
1 June 2015	Motion of dissent moved The Opposition moves a motion of dissent from a ruling made by the Speaker, Bronwyn Bishop MP, that a question directed at the Minister for Agriculture, Barnaby Joyce MP is out of order.¹⁴² The motion is defeated.¹⁴³ Motions of this type are rarely moved.

¹³⁸ Senate, '[Vacancy in the Representation of Queensland—Choice of Joanna Lindgren](#)', *Journals of the Senate*, 2013-15, No.95, p. 2630, and Senate, '[Vacancy in the Representation of Queensland](#)', *Journals of the Senate*, 2013-15, No. 91, p. 2515.

¹³⁹ J Lindgren, '[First Speech](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 11 August 2015, p. 4978.

¹⁴⁰ '[Legislative Assembly of Norfolk Island—Self Government](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 27 May 2015, p. 4796, and '[Legislative Assembly of Norfolk Island: Remonstrance — Tabling](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 15 June 2015, p. 3403.

¹⁴¹ C Madden, '[Norfolk Island Legislative Amendment Bill 2015](#)', Bills Digest, Parliamentary Library, 12 May 2015.

¹⁴² T Burke, '[Motions: Dissent from Ruling](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 1 June 2015, p. 5222.

¹⁴³ Australia, House of Representatives, '[Questions](#)', *Votes and proceedings*, HVP 119, 1 June 2015.

Milestones	Details
11 June 2015	New Commonwealth Auditor-General Grant Hehir is appointed to a ten-year term as Auditor-General for Australia.¹⁴⁴ Mr Hehir had previously served as the Auditor-General of New South Wales.¹⁴⁵ The Auditor-General is an independent officer of the Parliament, appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit (JCPAA)¹⁴⁶ and the Prime Minister.¹⁴⁷ The role involves assisting the parliament by scrutinising and reporting on the performance and actions of the Executive.¹⁴⁸
15 June	Magna Carta birthday celebrations 2015 sees a worldwide program of events to mark the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta. Parliament House, home to one of only four known surviving manuscripts of the 1297 issue of the Magna Carta, hosts a busy program of events. On the morning of 15 April, the Presiding Officers, the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten MP, celebrate the anniversary at a reception in the Great Hall of Parliament House—which has the distinction of being the first Magna Carta anniversary celebration in the world. Speaking at the event, the Prime Minister describes the Magna Carta as ‘perhaps the most important constitutional document of all time, that has shaped our history and that of so much of the modern world’.¹⁴⁹ That evening, 600 people gather in the Great Hall for a special ‘Magna Carta’ edition of the ABC’s Q&A program. In May the President of the Senate, Senator Stephen Parry, launches the second edition of ‘Australia’s Magna Carta’. In June, the British High Commissioner to Australia, Menna Rawlings CMG, presents a Senate Occasional Lecture on the Magna Carta. Later that month, the Prime Minister delivers the British High Commission’s annual Magna Carta Lecture On 9 July, the Great Hall is the venue for the National Archives’ Constitution Day Speakers’ Forum on the Magna Carta broadcast by Radio National’s Big Ideas program. And in October the Department of the Senate and the Rule of Law Institute of Australia jointly host a two day Magna Carta Symposium.



DPS staff install the Magna Carta in the Great Hall of Parliament House for the 800th anniversary event

Image source: Auspic

Watch:

[The Magna Carta 800th Anniversary Celebration](#)

[The Senate Occasional Lecture by Her Excellency Mrs Menna Rawlings CMG](#)

[Big Ideas Constitution Day Speakers’ Forum: Magna Carta](#)

Magna Carta Symposium [part one](#) and [part two](#)

Read: [The Prime Minister’s Magna Carta Lecture](#)

¹⁴⁴ Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), ‘[Auditor-General and the Office](#)’, ANAO website.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit, ‘[44th Parliament completed inquiries](#)’, Statement on the appointment of the Auditor-General, 25 May 2015.

¹⁴⁷ ANAO, op. cit.

¹⁴⁸ P Hamilton, *The Auditor-General*, Research paper series, 2015-16, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 3 November 2015.

¹⁴⁹ T Abbott (Prime Minister), speech at the [Magna Carta 800th Anniversary Celebration](#), ParView, 15 June 2015.

Milestones	Details
17 June	First time former opposing state/territory leaders in the same chamber Former ACT Chief Minister, now senator for the ACT, Katy Gallagher (ALP), gives her first speech in the Senate. Senator Gallagher is chosen by the ACT Legislative Assembly on 25 March 2015 to represent the Territory in the Senate after the resignation of Senator Kate Lundy (ALP).¹⁵⁰ She is sworn in on 26 March 2015.¹⁵¹ Senator Gallagher's appointment to the casual vacancy marks the first time that a Premier or Chief Minister has faced their former opposition counterpart in the same chamber in the same Parliament. Senator Zed Seselja (Lib, ACT) was Leader of the ACT Opposition (December 2007—June 2013) before resigning to stand for the Senate at the 2013 election.
	 Senator Katy Gallagher Image source: Parliament of Australia Watch: Senator Gallagher's first speech Read: Simon Speldewinde, 'First time opposing state/territory leaders in the same chamber', FlagPost, Parliamentary Library 17 June 2015
25 June	Report on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples The Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples publishes its final report. A key recommendation of the report is that 'a referendum be held on the matter of recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian Constitution'.¹⁵²
1 July	Australian Border Forces commences operations The Australian Border Force (ABF) begins operating within the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, which merges with the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service on the same date. The creation of the ABF was announced in the 2014-15 Budget. Its establishment marks a shift in the focus of the Department of Immigration – from nation building and migrant settlement towards a stronger emphasis on border security – the biggest transformation in the Department's 70-year history.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Senate, *Journals of the Senate*, 2013-15, [No. 89](#), 25 March 2015, p. 2385, [no. 90](#), p. 2431.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, '[Final Report](#)', 25 June 2015, p. xi.

¹⁵³ H Spinks, '[The Department of Immigration: from building the nation to managing the border](#)', FlagPost, Parliamentary Library blog, 12 June 2015.

Milestones	Details	
17 July	National memorial service marking the anniversary of the downing of flight MH17 On 17 July a national memorial service is held in the Great Hall of Parliament House to commemorate the lives lost in the downing of MH17 over the Ukraine. A memorial plaque is unveiled in the House of Representatives Eastern Formal Gardens the same day.	 The Governor-General addresses the National Memorial Service honoring the victims of Flight MH17 Image source. Parlview video Watch: the National Memorial Service Read: the addresses to the MH17 National Memorial Service by His Excellency Sir Peter Cosgrove and the Prime Minister, Tony Abbott MP
21 July	Death of the Member for Canning Liberal MP Don Randall dies in Boddington, WA. Mr Randall has represented the electorate of Canning (WA) since 2001, having previously served as the Member for Swan (1996-1998). Mr Randall's death is marked by a minute's silence and several speeches in Adjournment in the Senate, and by a condolence motion in the House of Representatives.¹⁵⁴ A white rose is placed on Mr Randall's desk. On 17 August, the Speaker informs the House of Representatives that the by-election to fill the vacancy in the division of Canning will be held on 19 September. It is won by the Liberal candidate, former SAS officer Andrew Hastie, with 55.26% of votes (two party preferred), a 6.5% swing against the government. He is sworn in on 12 October and gives his first speech on 13 October.	 Don Randall Image source: Auspic Watch: the condolence motion in the House of Representatives  Andrew Hastie MP Image source: Auspic

¹⁵⁴ 'Condolences: Randall, Mr Donald James', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 10 August 2015, pp. 7748ff and Senate, *Debates* 10 August 2015, p. 4691.

Milestones	Details	
2 August 2015	Resignation of the Speaker Bronwyn Bishop MP resigns as Speaker of the House of Representatives,¹⁵⁵ the third resignation of a Speaker since 2011, and the ninth since 1901.¹⁵⁶ Mrs Bishop's resignation follows sustained criticism of her use of travel entitlements, in particular the use of a chartered helicopter to attend a Liberal Party function. That same day the Prime Minister, Tony Abbott MP, announces the establishment of a committee to review the parliamentary entitlements system, co-chaired by the former Secretary of the Department of Finance, Mr David Tune AO PSM, and the Chair of the Remuneration Tribunal, Mr John Conde AO. The committee releases its report in March 2016.¹⁵⁷	 Former Speaker Bronwyn Bishop Image source: Auspic
10 August	A new Speaker of the House of Representatives Tony Smith MP (Lib, Casey, Vic.) is elected unopposed to the position of Speaker of the House of Representatives, the 32nd person to hold this office. In his address to the chamber Mr Smith says: I thank the House for the confidence you have placed in me. There is no greater honour within the parliament than to be elected by one's peers. I am a servant of this House and all of its members. There is, however, a mutual obligation between presiding officers and individual members. I want to say at the outset that I will give a fair go to all on the floor of this chamber. But in return I do expect a level of discourse that reflects that. Parliament is a robust place. It should be a robust place. It is where we battle our view of a better Australia. It is the arena for the battle of ideas and ideals. I make that point because often people say parliament should not be robust. It should, but it need not be rude and it need not be loud.¹⁵⁸ In the same address, Mr Smith also indicates that he will not be attending weekly party meetings while he is Speaker.¹⁵⁹	 Tony Smith MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives Image source: Parliament of Australia  Speaker Tony Smith being conducted to the Speaker's Chair Image source: Auspic Watch: The election of the Speaker
13 August	Family Court fee increases The Federal Court rejects a legal challenge that would have	

¹⁵⁵ '[Parliamentary Office Holders](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 10 August 2015, p. 7743.

¹⁵⁶ N Horne, '[Resignations of Speakers](#)', FlagPost, Parliamentary Library blog, 4 August 2015.

¹⁵⁷ Review Committee—An Independent Parliamentary Entitlements System, '[An Independent Parliamentary Entitlements System: Review](#)', 23 March 2016, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet webpage.

¹⁵⁸ T Smith, '[Parliamentary Office Holders](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 10 August 2015, p. 7747.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

Milestones	Details
	forced the federal government to refund an estimated \$1 million in extra court fees for divorce applications. The application, brought by Graham Perrett MP (ALP, Moreton, Qld), Senator Claire Moore (ALP, Qld) and three divorce applicants, sought to strike out Commonwealth regulations raising Family Court fees. The fees had been raised for less than a month before they were disallowed by the Senate on 11 August. The Attorney-General, Senator George Brandis, had reintroduced the increases by regulation after the Senate blocked a previous attempt in June.¹⁶⁰
17 August	Cross-party bill on same-sex marriage A bill introduced into the House of Representatives by Warren Entsch MP (Lib, Leichhardt, Qld) and co-sponsored by MPs Teresa Gambaro (Lib, Brisbane, Qld), Terri Butler (ALP, Griffith, Qld), Laurie Ferguson (ALP, Werriwa, NSW), Adam Bandt (AG, Melbourne, Vic.), Cathy McGowan (Ind, Indi, Vic.) and Andrew Wilkie (Ind, Denison, Tas.) is the first cross-party bill on same-sex marriage to be introduced into the parliament. It follows a bill introduced into the House by Opposition leader Bill Shorten on 1 June 2015, which was the first time a leader of a political party had introduced a same-sex marriage bill.¹⁶¹ On 19 August 2015, the Marriage Equality Plebiscite Bill 2015 is introduced into the Senate. The bill lapses at the prorogation of the 44th Parliament. A subsequent bill, the Plebiscite (Same-Sex Marriage) Bill 2016 is defeated in November 2016.¹⁶² The parliaments of New South Wales,¹⁶³ Western Australia,¹⁶⁴ and Tasmania¹⁶⁵ have each passed motions opposing the proposed plebiscite.¹⁶⁶
17 August	Australia Post issues new Parliament House stamp The President of the Senate, Senator Stephen Parry, launches an Australia, New Zealand and Singapore joint stamp issue marking 50 years of bilateral relations between the three countries. Designed by Sonia Young of Australia Post, the stamps feature the parliament houses of the three countries.¹⁶⁷ Senator Stephen Parry, President of the Senate Image Source: Auspic

¹⁶⁰ J Robertson, '[Labor party's divorce fees challenge rejected by federal court](#)', The Guardian website, 13 August 2015.

¹⁶¹ D McKeown, '[Chronology of same-sex marriage bills introduced into the federal parliament: a quick guide](#)', Research paper series 2016-17, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 2016, updated 21 July 2016, p. 1.

¹⁶² '[Plebiscite \(Same-Sex Marriage\) Bill 2016: Second Reading — Division](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 7 November 2016, p. 97.

¹⁶³ N Hasham, '[NSW Parliament unanimous vote on same-sex marriage pressures Prime Minister Tony Abbott to allow free vote](#)', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 June 2015.

¹⁶⁴ A O'Connor, '[Colin Barnett questions same-sex marriage plebiscite as WA Parliament calls for conscience vote](#)', ABC News website, 24 September 2015.

¹⁶⁵ A Morton, '[Tasmanian parliament votes in support of marriage equality](#)', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 November 2015.

¹⁶⁶ The Australian Capital Territory followed in 2016.

¹⁶⁷ Australia Post website, '[Australia, New Zealand and Singapore acknowledged in new joint stamp issue](#)', 12 August 2015.

Milestones	Details
19 August	New Tasmanian senator Nick McKim (Australian Greens) is appointed by the Parliament of Tasmania to the casual vacancy caused by the resignation of Senator Christine Milne on 10 August.¹⁶⁸ Senator McKim is sworn in 20 August 2015 and delivers his first speech on 9 September.  Senator Nick McKim Image source: Parliament of Australia Watch: Senator McKim's first speech
20 August	Women athletes In 2015, Australian women excel on the sporting field, and the issue of equal pay for women athletes receives increased attention. A reception is held at Parliament House for the Australian Diamonds netball team, following the team's victory in the Netball World Cup on 16 August. Prime Minister Tony Abbott, a self-described 'netball dad', describes the win as an 'extraordinary victory'.¹⁶⁹ Opposition leader Bill Shorten says '(t)here is no doubt that elite women professional athletes have not received the equal treatment they deserve in Australian sport.'¹⁷⁰ The Australian Women's Cricket Team, the Southern Stars, are recognised in September for their victory over England in the Ashes series.¹⁷¹ In November 2015, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Opposition Leader Bill Shorten both congratulate jockey Michelle Payne for her historic Melbourne Cup victory.¹⁷² Meanwhile, the Australian women's soccer team, the Matildas, are engaged in a pay dispute with the Football Federation Australia.¹⁷³ The Senate passes a motion supporting 'fair working conditions for all female Australian athletes.'¹⁷⁴ Watch: Reception for the Diamonds netball team
21 August	Anniversary of parliamentary broadcasting The Senate celebrated 25 years since the proceedings of the chamber were first televised in 1991. Daily sessions of the House of Representatives began to be televised in 1991. Prior

¹⁶⁸ *Journals of the Senate* 2013-14, no. 110, 20 August 2015, p. 3022, and no. 103, p. 2857.

¹⁶⁹ T Abbott (Prime Minister), '[Statements on Indulgence: Netball World Cup](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 17 August 2015, p. 8461.

¹⁷⁰ B Shorten (Leader of the Opposition), '[Statements on Indulgence: Netball World Cup](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 17 August 2015, p. 8461.

¹⁷¹ C Moore, '[Motion: Women's Cricket](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 17 September 2015, p. 7119.

¹⁷² M Turnbull (Prime Minister), '[Statements on Indulgence: Sport](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 9 November 2015, p. 12395; and B Shorten (Leader of the Opposition), '[Statements on Indulgence: Sport](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 9 November 2015, p. 12396.

¹⁷³ D Bossi, '[Matildas irate as FFA rejects paid maternity leave proposal](#)', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 September 2016, p. 52.

¹⁷⁴ R Di Natale, '[Motions: Sport - Matildas](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 15 September 2016, p. 6822.

Milestones	Details
	to 1991, television broadcasts of Parliament had taken place on 17 February 1959 (for the opening of the 23rd Parliament) and in 1974 (for the joint sitting of Parliament). ¹⁷⁵
8 September	Motion concerning John Dyson Heydon AC QC Senator Penny Wong (ALP, SA) moves a motion requesting that the Governor-General revoke the Letters Patent issued to John Dyson Heydon AC QC, on the grounds that Mr Heydon, who is conducting the Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption, ‘by his conduct in accepting an invitation to speak at a function raising campaign funds for the Liberal Party of Australia ... has failed to uphold the standards of impartiality expected of a holder of the office of Royal Commissioner’.¹⁷⁶ In her statement regarding the motion, Senator Wong states that ‘it is untenable for a royal commissioner who is conducting a politically charged inquiry to be politically compromised.’ The motion is unsuccessful.¹⁷⁷ Such a motion has not been moved since 1931.¹⁷⁸
15 September	A new Prime Minister and a new ministry Malcolm Turnbull MP (Lib, Wentworth, NSW) is sworn in as Australia’s 29th Prime Minister. This follows his resignation from the ministry on 14 September, citing the failure of Prime Minister Tony Abbott to provide economic leadership. Mr Turnbull wins the resultant leadership ballot 54 votes to 44, becoming Australia’s fourth prime minister since the 2007 election. It is the fourth leadership spill in the Liberal Party since the 2007 election, and follows a failed leadership spill motion on 9 February.¹⁷⁹ Mr Abbott has been Prime Minister for only 726 days; he leaves office declaring that ‘there will be no wrecking, no undermining and no sniping’.¹⁸⁰ Julie Bishop MP (Lib, Curtin, WA) defeats Kevin Andrews MP (70 votes to 30) for the position of Deputy Leader—a position which she has held since 2007, serving with three opposition leaders and two prime ministers.¹⁸¹ Mr Turnbull announces his new Ministry on 20 September,¹⁸² increasing to five the number of women in Cabinet and the number of women in the Ministry overall to nine. The Member for Hasluck (WA), Ken Wyatt MP, is appointed as Assistant Minister for Health, and is the first Indigenous Australian to be appointed to the Executive Council.



Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull MP

Image source: [Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet webpage](#)

¹⁷⁵ Parliamentary Education Office website, ‘[Latest News: Anniversary of Parliamentary Broadcasting, Sitting period 10–20 August \(2015\)](#)’.

¹⁷⁶ P Wong, ‘[Motion: Royal Commission on Trade Union Governance and Corruption](#)’, Senate, *Debates*, 8 September 2015, pp. 6234.

¹⁷⁷ ‘[Trade Union Governance and Corruption—Royal Commission—Proposed Address to the Governor-General](#)’, Senate, *Journals*, 112, 8 September 2015, p. 3054.

¹⁷⁸ R Lewis, ‘[Labor struggles in Senate push to oust Heydon](#)’, *The Australian*, 8 September 2015.

¹⁷⁹ M Kenny and J Massola, ‘[PM proves he has the numbers](#)’, *Canberra Times*, 10 February 2015, p. 1.

¹⁸⁰ T Abbott, [Press Conference 15 September 2015](#), APH website.

¹⁸¹ C Madden, ‘[Prime Ministers and recent Liberal Party leadership challenges](#)’ FlagPost, Parliamentary Library, 19 September 2015

¹⁸² M Turnbull (Prime Minister), ‘[Changes to the Ministry](#)’, Media Release 20 September 2015.

Milestones	Details
	Wyatt Roy MP (Lib, Longman, Qld) becomes the youngest ever Commonwealth minister (25) when he is commissioned Assistant Minister for Immigration—a record previously held by Kate Ellis MP (ALP, Adelaide, SA) who in 2007 became a minister at the age of 30. Senator Marise Payne (NSW) is appointed Minister for Defence, and is, the Prime Minister says, ‘the first woman to be Minister for Defence in our nation’s history’.¹⁸³ Other female parliamentarians have previously held Defence-related ministries/assistant ministries.
	 Turnbull Cabinet Image source: Auspic Watch: Malcolm Turnbull announcing his new ministry
16 September	National Disability Insurance Scheme agreement In one of his first official duties as Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull announces agreements between the Commonwealth and the governments of New South Wales and Victoria to roll out the National Disabilities Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in those states (with negotiations with other states and territories to continue).¹⁸⁴ The Prime Minister states that ‘(t)his marks a huge milestone towards the delivery of one of the largest social policy reforms in our nation’s history’.¹⁸⁵
22 September	New senator for South Australia Robert Simms (Australian Greens) is appointed¹⁸⁶ to the Senate by the Parliament of South Australia to fill a casual vacancy caused by the resignation of Senator Penny Wright on 10 September 2015;¹⁸⁷ he is sworn in as a senator on 12 October and makes his first speech the next day. He is the fifth senator to be appointed to a casual vacancy in 2015.
	 Senator Robert Simms Image source: Parliament of Australia Watch: Senator Simms’ first speech
15 October	‘Anthea’s law’ The Attorney-General, Senator George Brandis, and Senator Nick Xenophon (Ind, SA) co-sponsor the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Harming Australians) Bill 2015. The bill extends the retrospective application of the offences of murder and manslaughter of Australians overseas.¹⁸⁸ (The existing

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ M Turnbull (Prime Minister), [‘Transcript of joint press conference: Canberra: 16 September 2015: NDIS agreement’](#), 16 September 2015.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Senate, [‘Vacancy in the Representation of South Australia—Choice of Robert Andrew Simms’](#), *Journals of the Senate*, 2013–15, No. 119 p. 3177.

¹⁸⁷ Senate, [‘Vacancy in the Representation of South Australia’](#), *Journals of the Senate* 2013–15, No. 114, p. 3081.

¹⁸⁸ J Mills, [‘Crimes Legislation Amendment \(Harming Australians\) Bill 2015’](#), Bills Digest, 48, 2015–16, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 12 November 2015.

Milestones	Details
	offences were originally introduced in 2002 with only very limited retrospectivity to capture the Bali Bombings in October that year.) The provisions enable prosecution of these offences in Australia under Australian law should the foreign country not properly investigate the crime.¹⁸⁹ Senator Xenophon had introduced an earlier version of the Bill in 2013 in response to the murder of Anthea Bradshaw-Hall in Brunei in 1994.¹⁹⁰ The Bill passes both Houses of Parliament and receives Royal Assent on 30 November.
21 October	Former Treasurer Joe Hockey leaves parliament Joe Hockey MP gives his valedictory speech, after announcing his resignation on 21 September following a reshuffle which saw him replaced as Treasurer by Scott Morrison MP (Lib, Cook, NSW).¹⁹¹ Mr Hockey is later appointed Australia's ambassador to the United States of America.¹⁹²
22 October	Electronic petitions The Speaker, Tony Smith MP, informs members that the Departments of the House of Representatives and of Parliamentary Services are working to develop an electronic petitions website and system for the House, foreshadowing the need for the House to consider changes to its Standing Orders.¹⁹³ Senate standing orders already enable the presentation of electronic petitions in that chamber (SO 70). The Standing Orders of the House are amended in 2016 to provide for an electronic petitions system.
9 November	House of Representatives trials new arrangements for Question Time The House begins a trial of new arrangements for Question Time under which time is set aside each day for private government members to ask ministers constituency questions. Announcing the change, the Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull MP, says 'local issues are absolutely the bread and butter of every member's job'.¹⁹⁴ The changes will be trialled until the end of the year.¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁹ J Collins, '[Crimes Legislation Amendment \(Harming Australians\) Bill 2015: Second Reading](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 12 November 2015 p. 8440.

¹⁹⁰ M Doran, '[Parliament passes legislation dedicated to murder victim Anthea Bradshaw-Hall allowing police to investigate overseas killings](#)', ABC online news, 23 November 2015, accessed 14 January 2016. N. Xenophon, '[After two decades of struggle for the Bradshaws: Anthea's Law introduced today](#)', media release 15th October 2015.

¹⁹¹ D Wroe and A Davies, '[Hockey's exit an act of diplomacy](#)', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 September 2015, p. 6.

¹⁹² M Kenny, '[Hockey to replace Beazley as ambassador to Washington](#)', *The Age*, 8 December 2015, p. 7.

¹⁹³ T Smith (Speaker), '[Development of Electronic Petitions Website and System—Statement by Speaker](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 22 October 2015, p. 12145.

¹⁹⁴ M Turnbull (Prime Minister), '[Statements on Indulgence: Questions without notice](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 20 October 2015.

¹⁹⁵ M Turnbull (Prime Minister), '[Changes to Question Time to Focus on Local Issues](#)', media release, 20 October 2015.

Milestones	Details	
15 November	Parliament House illuminated for France Parliament House is illuminated with the French Tricolore as a mark of solidarity with the people of France in the wake of a series of terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November. Parliament House continues to be illuminated until 22 November. When Parliament resumes on 23 November, the Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, MP,¹⁹⁶ and the Leader of the Opposition, Bill Shorten, MP,¹⁹⁷ express their condolences.	 Parliament House illuminated with the French Tricolore Image source: Auspic Read: Mr Turnbull's statement Mr Shorten's statement Watch: the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition's statements on the Paris terrorist attacks
18 November	The 'Big Picture' on the move The Tom Roberts painting <i>The Opening of the first Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia by HRH Duke of Cornwall and York (later King George V) on May 9, 1901</i> is removed from its home in the foyer of the Main Committee Room and loaned to the National Gallery of Australia. There it is the centrepiece of a major Tom Roberts exhibition (December 2015 to March 2016). It will be returned to Parliament House during the 2016 autumn recess. This is the first time the painting—which weighs over 400kg and stands almost 4m high—has left Parliament House since its installation in 1988.	 Tom Roberts, <i>Opening of the First Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia by H.R.H. The Duke of Cornwall and York (Later King George V), May 9, 1901</i>, 1903, oil on canvas Image source: Parliament of Australia  The team involved in the move Image source: Auspic

¹⁹⁶ M Turnbull (Prime Minister), '[Statements on Indulgence](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 23 November 2015, pp. 13250ff.

¹⁹⁷ B Shorten (Leader of the Opposition), '[Statements on Indulgence](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 23 November 2015, pp. 13251.

Milestones	Details	
24 November	Prime Minister's statement on national security In the wake of recent terrorist attacks, the Prime Minister makes a statement to inform the House about 'Australia's global, regional and domestic policies to respond to terrorist attacks'.¹⁹⁸ He states that the 'threat from ISIL is a global problem that must be addressed at its source, in the Middle East'. However, 'governments cannot win this battle alone. Community leaders and groups have great responsibility both in denouncing violent extremism and teaching unity in diversity'.	Watch: the Prime Minister's National Security Statement
25 November	White Ribbon Day—cross-party motions and new research on domestic and family violence On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women/White Ribbon Day, the Senate agrees a cross party motion noting that 'across the world, violence against women and girls remains one of the most serious and the most tolerated human rights violations'.¹⁹⁹ Senator Claire Moore introduces the motion on behalf of Senators Michaelia Cash (Lib, WA), Sue Lines (ALP, WA) and Larissa Waters (AG, Qld). On 11 November the Senate passed a related motion sponsored by the four senators, marking the release of a new report on family violence and 'acknowledging the need for a cross party approach to enforcing a long-term strategy for ending the scourge of family and domestic violence'.²⁰⁰ Also on 25 November, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and the Ministers for Women (Senator Michaelia Cash) and Human Services (Christian Porter MP), jointly release a report entitled 'Reducing violence against women and their children'.²⁰¹ The research will inform the development of a jointly funded national campaign to begin in early 2016.	
25 November	Tjuringa gifted to the Parliament and the Australian people by the Warlpiri people On behalf of the Parliament, the President of the Senate, Senator Stephen Parry, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tony Smith MP, accept the gift of a tjuringa (a traditional Indigenous ceremonial object). The tjuringa had originally been given by the Warlpiri people to the then Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Ian Viner AO QC in 1978, in exchange for the title deed to their traditional lands at Yuendumu (Northern Territory).²⁰²	 Warlpiri community representatives Harry Tjakamarra Nelson, Otto Jungarryi

¹⁹⁸ M Turnbull (Prime Minister), '[Ministerial Statements: National Security](#)', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 24 November 2015, p. 13483.

¹⁹⁹ '[Motions: Domestic and Family Violence](#)', Senate, *Debates* 25 November 2015, p. 8975.

²⁰⁰ '[Motions: Domestic and Family Violence](#)', Senate, *Debates*, 11 November 2015, p. 8308. The report is Our Watch, VicHealth and ANROWS, [Change the Story: a Shared Framework for the Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women and their Children in Australia](#).

²⁰¹ M Turnbull (Prime Minister), M Cash (Minister for Women) and C Porter (Minister for Social Services), '[Attitudes to domestic violence exposed](#)', media release 25 November 2015. Department of Social Services and TNS, '[Reducing violence against women and their children](#)', November 2015.

²⁰² Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS), '[Annual Report 2015-16](#)', DPS, Canberra, 2016, p. 75.

Milestones	Details
	Sims and Robin Granites Japanangka with the President and the Speaker Image source: Auspic
2 December	Nursing mothers in the House On 2 December the House of Representatives Procedure Committee tables the report of its inquiry into the adequacy of provisions for nursing mothers in the Chamber.²⁰³ This follows the Committee's roundtable discussions with members of the House on 12 November. Current Standing Orders include 'special provisions for nursing mothers', enabling them to vote by proxy 'for any division except that on the third reading of a bill which proposes an alteration of the Constitution' if they are nursing an infant at the time of the division.²⁰⁴ The Committee recommends that standing orders be amended to allow members to bring their infants into the Chamber and Federation Chamber when needed so that members are able to participate fully in the work of the House. The Government response, tabled in February 2016, accepts the Committee's recommendation.²⁰⁵ Since 2003, Senate standing orders (175.3) have permitted a senator to bring an infant into the chamber while breast-feeding but not at other times.²⁰⁶
5 December	North Sydney by-election On 5 December the by-election for North Sydney is held following the resignation of the Treasurer, Joe Hockey, on 23 October. Liberal candidate Trent Zimmerman is elected as the Member for North Sydney. He wins the seat (by a margin of 15,575 votes two-party preferred).²⁰⁷ Mr Zimmerman is subsequently sworn-in when Parliament meets in February 2016.  Trent Zimmerman MP Image source: Parliament of Australia

²⁰³ Procedure Committee, '[Provisions for a more family-friendly Chamber](#)', 2 December 2015. See also M Rodrigues, '[Children in the parliamentary chambers](#)', Research Paper no. 9, 2009-10, Parliamentary Library, November 2009.

²⁰⁴ 'Special Provisions for nursing mothers: resolution adopted 13 February 2008, am' in House of Representatives, [Standing Orders](#), Canberra, 2015, p.119

²⁰⁵ Procedure Committee, '[Provisions for a more family-friendly Chamber — Government response](#)', 2 February 2016, accessed 5 December 2016.

²⁰⁶ R Laing, [Annotated Standing Orders of the Australian Senate](#), Chapter 29, 'Visitors'.

²⁰⁷ Australian Electoral Commission, [2015 North Sydney by-election](#), AEC webpage.

Milestones	Details
29 December	Ministerial responsibility: one resigns, another stands aside Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull announces the resignation of the Minister for Cities and the Built Environment, Jamie Briggs MP (Lib, Mayo, SA), for failing to ‘uphold high standards of behaviour as set out in the Ministerial Standards’.²⁰⁸ Mr Briggs issues a media release attaching his letter to the Prime Minister regarding the matter.²⁰⁹ Mr Turnbull’s media release also announces that Mal Brough MP (Lib, Fisher, Qld) has stood aside as Special Minister of State and as Minister for Defence Materiel and Science, pending the completion of an AFP investigation into the unauthorised disclosure of the diary of the former Speaker Peter Slipper MP. In January Mr Brough is reported as asking to return to a back benchers’ salary and office pending the conclusion of the investigation.²¹⁰



Jamie Briggs

Image source: [Parliament of Australia](#)



Mal Brough

Image source: [Parliament of Australia](#)

²⁰⁸ M Turnbull (Prime Minister), ‘[Ministerial Arrangements](#)’, Media release issued 29 December 2015.

²⁰⁹ J Briggs (Minister for Cities and the Built Environment), ‘[Resignation as Minister for Cities and the Built Environment](#)’, Media Release, 29 December 2015. See also Frances Keany, ‘[Jamie Briggs resigns over late-night bar scandal in Hong Kong, Mal Bough stands aside over Slipper affair.](#)’ ABC news online 30 December 2015..

²¹⁰ R Lewis, ‘[Brough requests pay cut during AFP investigation](#)’, *The Australian*, 6 January 2016, p. 2.

Appendix 1: Key Commonwealth Acts passed in 2014

Administrative law

Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2014) Act 2014	D Spooner, J Chowns, Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2014) Bill 2014, Bills digest , no. 67, 2013-14, 9 May 2014.	This Act is part of a package of repeal Acts which remove duplication between different levels of government and between different agencies of government. Many of the amendments repeal provisions have long ceased to have effect.
Amending Acts 1901-1969 Repeal Act 2014	J Murphy, <i>Amending Acts 1901-1969 Repeal Bill 2014</i> , Bills digest , no. 59, 2013-14, 8 April 2014.	To repeal over 1,000 amending and repeal Acts identified by the Government as being redundant.
Amending Acts 1970 to 1979 Repeal Act 2014	K Magarey, <i>Amending Acts 1970 to 1979 Repeal Bill 2014</i> , Bills digest , no. 57, 2014-15, 27 November 2014.	To repeal 656 amending and repeal Acts identified as redundant.

Energy law

Minerals Resource Rent Tax Repeal and Other Measures Act 2014		An Act to remove the minerals resource rent tax, or mining tax, among other things.
Carbon Farming Initiative Amendment Act 2014	K Swoboda, A St John, J Tomaras, <i>Carbon Farming Initiative Amendment Bill 2014</i> , Bills digest , no. 23, 2014-15, 3 September 2014.	Amends the <i>Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011</i> to implement the main part of the Coalition Government's 'direct action' emissions reduction policy—the establishment of arrangements to support the purchase of domestic emissions abatement through the 'emissions reduction fund'.
Clean Energy Legislation (Carbon Tax Repeal) Act 2014		Part of a package of 8 bills to remove the carbon pricing mechanism.

Family law

Australian Citizenship Amendment (Intercountry Adoption) Act 2014	M Neilsen, <i>Australian Citizenship Amendment (Intercountry Adoption) Bill 2014</i> , Bills digest , no. 8, 2014-15, 14 July 2014.	To create an entitlement to citizenship for children adopted under bilateral arrangements equivalent to the entitlement currently provided for children adopted under Hague Convention arrangements.
---	---	--

Immigration and Refugee law

Migration and Maritime Powers Legislation	E Karlsen, J Phillips, H Spinks, <i>Migration and Maritime Powers Legislation Amendment (Resolving the Asylum Legacy Caseload) Bill</i>	The measures broaden the maritime enforcement powers used to intercept and return vessels carrying asylum seekers.
---	---	--

[Amendment
\(Resolving the Asylum
Legacy Caseload\) Act
2014](#)

2014, [Bills digest](#), no. 40, 2014-15,
23 October 2014.

Tax law

[Tax Laws Amendment
\(Temporary Budget
Repair Levy\) Act 2014](#)

B Pulle, K Swoboda, T Dale, *Tax
Laws Amendment (Temporary
Budget Repair Levy) Bill 2014*,
[Bills digest](#), no. 89, 2013-14,
16 June 2014.

One of a package of 15 Bills which is a
temporary tax for 3 financial years to improve
the fiscal balance.

Terrorism and National Security law

[National Security
Legislation
Amendment Act \(No.
1\) 2014](#)

M Biddington, C Barker,
*National Security Legislation
Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2014*,
[Bills digest](#), no. 19, 2014-15,
28 August 2014.

The main purpose of the Bill is to implement
recommendations made in Chapter 4 of the
PJCS's [Report of the Inquiry into Potential
Reforms of Australia's National Security
Legislation](#).

[Counter-Terrorism
Legislation
Amendment \(Foreign
Fighters\) Act 2014](#)

C Barker, M Biddington,
M Coombs, M Klapdor, *Counter-
Terrorism Legislation
Amendment (Foreign Fighters)
Bill 2014*, [Bills digest](#), no. 34,
2014-15, 17 October 2014.

To make amendments to several existing
Commonwealth Acts, to address the
Government's response to the increased
threat of terrorism posed by Australians
engaging in, and returning from, conflicts in
foreign States.

Appendix 2: Key Commonwealth Acts passed in 2015

Administrative law

[Treasury Legislation Amendment \(Repeal Day\) Act 2015](#)

L Nielson and K Swoboda, *Treasury Legislation Amendment (Repeal Day) Bill 2014*, [Bills digest](#), no. 67, 2014-15, 4 February 2015.

To repeal redundant provisions and to rewrite existing provisions into more accessible and easily used forms and location.

[Amending Acts 1980 to 1989 Repeal Act 2015](#)

K Magarey, *Amending Acts 1980 to 1989 Repeal Bill 2015*, [Bills digest](#), no 103, 2014-15, 12 May 2015.

To remove a significant number of 'spent Acts' – amending or repealing Acts which are no longer required as the legal changes they were designed to make have occurred. Schedule 1 repeals 870 obsolete or redundant amending or repeal Acts.

[Norfolk Island Legislation Amendment Act 2015](#)

C Madden, [Norfolk Island Legislation Amendment Act 2015](#), [Bills digest](#), no. 102, 2014-15, 12 May 2015.

Introduced to radically overhaul the governance arrangements that currently operate on NI and starts the transition of NI from a self-governing territory to a modern local government type authority.

Family law

[Enhancing Online Safety for Children Act 2015](#)

G Butler, *Enhancing Online Safety for Children Bill 2014*, [Bills digest](#), no 78, 2014-15, 2 March 2015.

The Bill creates a new statutory office, the Children's e-Safety Commissioner, and provides for the Commissioner to administer a complaints scheme regarding harmful cyber-bullying material targeted at an Australian child.

Terrorism and National Security law

[Australian Border Force Act 2015](#)

C Barker, *Australian Border Force Bill 2015 [and] Customs and Other Legislation Amendment (Australian Border Force) Bill 2015*, [Bills digest](#), no. 94, 2014-15, 7 May 2015.

To establish the Australian Border Force and ABF Commissioner within the Department of Immigration and Border Protection. The Commissioner will be responsible for enforcement of customs laws and border-related revenue collection.

[Telecommunications \(Interception and Access\) Amendment \(Data Retention\) Act 2015](#)

J Murphy and M Biddington, *Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Amendment (Data Retention) Bill 2014*, [Bills digest](#), 89, 2014-15, 26 March 2015.

Creates new obligations on telecommunications and internet service providers to retain prescribed information or documents (metadata) for a period of two years for the purposes of access by national security authorities, criminal law-enforcement agencies and enforcement agencies. The Bill also requires service providers to encrypt the retained metadata (subject to certain exemptions).

Biosecurity

[Biosecurity Act 2015](#)

The Bill represents a major rewrite of the *Quarantine Act 1908* and is based not just on the quarantine power, but also on a number of other *Constitutional* powers which provide the foundation for broader coverage to address changing patterns of overseas trade and Australia's international obligations.

Courts

[Tribunals Amalgamation Act 2015](#)

M Coombs, C Petrie and D Spooner, *Tribunals Amalgamation Bill 2015*, [Bills digest](#), no. 83, 2014–15, 19 March 2015.

To amend a number of Acts to amalgamate the Social Security Appeals Tribunal and the Migration Review Tribunal—Refugee Review Tribunal with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

[Judiciary Amendment Act 2015](#)

M Coombs, *Judiciary Amendment Bill 2015*, [Bills digest](#), no. 105, 2014–15, 13 May 2015.

To consolidate the Australian Government Solicitor into the Attorney-General's Department. The Bill implements a decision announced part of the Government's Smaller Government Reform Agenda.

Citizenship law

[Australian Citizenship Amendment \(Allegiance to Australia\) Act 2015](#)

M Harrison-Smith and C Barker, *Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia) Bill 2015*, [Bills digest](#), 15, 2015–16, 2 September 2015.

The Bill will amend the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007* to provide for 'automatic' cessation of the Australian citizenship (including that obtained at birth) of a dual national where that person:

- renounces their Australian citizenship by engaging in certain conduct relating to terrorism and 'foreign incursions'
- fights for, or is in the service of, a 'declared terrorist organisation' outside Australia (expanding an existing provision concerning serving in the armed forces of a country at war with Australia) or
- is convicted of a specified offence.

Immigration and Refugee law

[Migration Amendment \(Strengthening Biometrics Integrity\) Act 2015](#)

MA Neilsen, *Migration Amendment (Strengthening Biometrics Integrity) Bill 2015*, [Bills digest](#), no. 111, 2014–15, 4 June 2015.

To consolidate and strengthen the legislative framework for the collection of personal identifiers under the *Migration Act 1958*.

[Migration Amendment \(Regional Processing Arrangements\) Act 2015](#)

To provide statutory authority which applies where the Commonwealth has entered into an arrangement with another country with

respect to the regional processing functions of that country.

Health law

[Australian Immunisation Register Act 2015](#)

A Grove, *Australian Immunisation Register Bill 2015*, [Bills digest](#), no. 25, 2015–16, 1 October 2015.

To create a consolidated legislative framework to govern the operation of Australian immunisation registers and to expand the age range covered by the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register from children under seven to ‘young individuals’ under 20 years of age.

Social Services law

[Social Services Legislation Amendment \(No Jab, No Pay\) Act 2015](#)

M Klapdor, *Social Services Legislation Amendment (No Jab, No Pay) Bill 2015*, [Bills digest](#), no. 36, 2015–16, 22 October 2015.

Amends the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999* (the FA Act) to tighten the immunisation requirements for the FTB-A supplement, CCB and CCR. It will remove the exemption from the immunisation requirements for those who submit a conscientious objection to immunisation and will remove the Minister for Social Services’ power to exempt a class of persons from the requirements by legislative instrument.

Criminal law

[Crimes Legislation Amendment \(Harming Australians\) Act 2015](#)

J Mills, *Crimes Legislation Amendment (Harming Australians) Bill 2015*, [Bills digest](#), 48, 2015–16, 12 November 2015.

To amend the *Criminal Code Act 1995* to extend the existing retrospective application of the offences of murder and manslaughter of Australians overseas to apply to offences occurring prior to 1 October 2002.

Property law

[Register of Foreign Ownership of Agricultural Land Act 2015](#)

Establishes a register, operated by the Australian Taxation Office, of foreign ownership of agricultural land.

Intellectual Property law

[Copyright Amendment \(Online Infringement\) Act 2015](#)

To introduce a key reform to reduce online copyright infringement.

© Commonwealth of Australia



Creative Commons

With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, and to the extent that copyright subsists in a third party, this publication, its logo and front page design are licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Australia](#) licence.

In essence, you are free to copy and communicate this work in its current form for all non-commercial purposes, as long as you attribute the work to the author and abide by the other licence terms. The work cannot be adapted or modified in any way. Content from this publication should be attributed in the following way: Author(s), Title of publication, Series Name and No, Publisher, Date.

To the extent that copyright subsists in third party quotes it remains with the original owner and permission may be required to reuse the material.

Inquiries regarding the licence and any use of the publication are welcome to webmanager@aph.gov.au.

This work has been prepared to support the work of the Australian Parliament using information available at the time of production. The views expressed do not reflect an official position of the Parliamentary Library, nor do they constitute professional legal opinion.

Any concerns or complaints should be directed to the Parliamentary Librarian. Parliamentary Library staff are available to discuss the contents of publications with Senators and Members and their staff. To access this service, clients may contact the author or the Library's Central Enquiry Point for referral.