

## **GOVERNOR-GENERAL AMENDMENT (SALARY AND SUPERANNUATION) BILL 2008**

### **Second Reading**

[Mr ROBERT](#) (Fadden) (6.17 p.m.)—I rise to support the [Governor-General Amendment \(Salary and Superannuation\) Bill 2008](#). I am cognisant of section 3 of the Constitution which specifies a salary of ~10,000 pounds payable to the Governor-General until 'Parliament otherwise provides'. Clearly, ~10,000 would not be appropriate today, nor the currency easy to come by, so it is appropriate that parliament otherwise does provide. Parliament did not legislate on the salary of governors-general until the Governor-General Act 1974. Salaries are now set for each incoming Governor-General by an amendment to the act.

By way of history, the sum ~10,000 first appeared in financial estimates produced at the 1897 Constitutional Convention. These estimates were circulated during consideration of the draft Constitution and a salary of ~10,000 was ultimately included in the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1901. This amount was paid as salary to Australia's first Governor-General, Lord Hopetoun. In Sir Edmund Barton's view, both the 1897 Convention and the framers of the Constitution always intended to provide allowances additional to salary.

In May 1902, Sir Edmund Barton introduced a bill providing ~8,000 per annum 'to assist in defraying the Governor-General's establishment'. Lack of support, unfortunately, ensured the bill was never brought to the vote in its original form. Instead, parliament enacted an amendment that provided Lord Hopetoun with a one-off payment of ~10,000 to defray personal expenses incurred during the 1901 royal visit.

At parliament's apparent refusal to grant an ongoing increase in allowances, Lord Hopetoun resigned his commission, writing, 'I have already strained my private resources beyond all justification.' This was communicated via telegraph from Lord Hopetoun to Chamberlain, Secretary of State for Colonies, 5 May 1902. The salary of Governors-General and allowances, therefore, is quite topical in the history of our Governors-General, as the first Governor-General, Lord Hopetoun, was to ensure.

There were two consequences of the furore, it would seem: firstly, that estimates of establishment expenditure were consolidated so that parliamentarians could more easily grasp proposed expenditure and, secondly, successive governments seemed reluctant to approach the issue of vice-regal salary. Despite adjustments to establishment costs after 1902, many early Governors-General still found it necessary to meet certain requirements of the office from their own personal wealth and purse.

With the introduction of the Governor-General Bill 1974 the government acknowledged that appointment to the office of Governor-General should not depend on a candidate's 'personal wealth or the availability of other income'. The government also put forward two principles that are still applied when governments consider salaries: firstly, salary should be dealt with in a non-partisan fashion; secondly, salaries should recognise the importance and place of this high office.

The 1974 bill proposed an increase to \$30,000 for the incoming Governor-General, Sir John Kerr. By this time, while the salary had not increased, expenditure on the Governor-General's office and establishment had increased

markedly since the mid-1950s, rising to over \$708,000 in 1972-73. Successive Governors-General have received increasing salary increases. The Rt Hon. Sir Zelman Cowen received \$37,000; the Rt Hon. Sir Ninian Stephen, \$70,000; the Hon. William Hayden, \$95,000; the Hon. Sir William Deane, \$58,000, cognisant of his pension; the Hon. the Right Reverend Dr Peter Hollingworth, \$310,000; and Major General Michael Jeffery, the current Governor-General, excluding post-nominals, \$365,000. Parliament, therefore, has agreed to the salary arrangements for incoming Governors-General since 1974.

The Constitution also provides that this salary cannot be altered during a Governor-General's term of office, usually five years. It is also interesting to note that the Governor-General's salary is conventionally linked to the salary of the Chief Justice of the High Court. Although the link was not mentioned in debate on the 1974 bill or 1977 amendments, this convention has been outlined in parliament by the responsible ministers since 1982.

Prior to 2001, salary was set by calculating the after-tax equivalent of the chief justice's salary at the time of appointment. The average after-tax salary of the chief justice over a notional five-year term was estimated, taking into account future possible increases. The vice-regal salary was then set to 'moderately exceed' this average. The salary is now set to moderately exceed the estimated average salary of the chief justice over a notional three-year term of office. Thus this bill increases the Governor-General's salary to \$394,000, effective 5 September 2008, for the new Governor-General, Her Excellency Quentin Bryce, the current Governor of Queensland.

Considering the history of Governors-General in this nation, it is appropriate to acknowledge at this stage the extraordinary career of the current Governor-General, His Excellency Major General Jeffery, and his substantial contribution to this nation. I do so as both a parliamentarian and as a fellow Army officer, and one who was in the same RMC Duntroon class as His Excellency's son David Jeffery and His Excellency's son-in-law John Dutchy Van der Kluster. His Excellency also commenced his military career by attending the Royal Military College, Duntroon, graduating in 1958.

His Excellency served in a number of junior regimental appointments with 17 National Service Training Company and the Special Air Service Regiment in Perth. He was posted to Malaya in 1962 for operational service with the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the Royal Australian Regiment. In 1965 he was seconded to the British Special Air Service Regiment for an operational tour of duty in Borneo. He returned to Australia as Adjutant of the Special Air Service Regiment. From 1966-69 he served in Papua New Guinea with the 1st Battalion, the Pacific Islands Regiment, and was married during this posting to his wife, Marlana.

This was followed by a tour of Vietnam as an infantry company commander with the 8th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment. It was during this tour that His Excellency was awarded the Military Cross and the South Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry for bravery in battle and under fire. In 1972 he was selected to attend the British Army Staff College at Camberley, and was then promoted to Lieutenant Colonel to command the 2nd Battalion, the Pacific Islands Regiment in Wewak, Papua New Guinea. His Excellency was the last Australian to command a Pacific Islands regiment. In 1976, he assumed command of the Special Air Service Regiment in Perth and was then promoted to Colonel as the first Director of the Army's Special Action Forces, for services to which he was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia.

From 1981-83 His Excellency headed Australia's national counter-terrorist coordination authority in the rank of Brigadier, after which he was posted as Commander of the 1st Mechanised and Airborne Brigade in Holsworthy, Sydney. He was selected to attend the Royal College of Defence Studies in London in 1985. He was then promoted to Major General, and from 1986 commanded the Army's 15,000-person 1st Division. In June 1988, he was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia for his services to the Army and in 1989 as the Assistant Chief of the General Staff, Logistics. In January 1990 he became Deputy Chief of the General Staff, responsible for the day-to-day running of a 65,000-person Army. In February 1991 he was appointed Assistant Chief of the General Staff for Materiel, which involved the development and management of all Army equipment procurement and building construction projects.

On 1 November 1993, His Excellency was sworn in as the 27th Governor of Western Australia, and became a Companion of the Order of Australia, a Commander of the Royal Victorian Order and a Citizen of Western Australia for his services to the state. He was Governor until 2000. Major General Jeffery was sworn in as Australia's 24th Governor-General on 11 August 2003 at Parliament House. Upon being sworn in, he became the Chancellor and Principal Companion of the Order of Australia. The Queen, as Sovereign Head of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, also appointed Major General Jeffery Prior for the Priory in Australia and a Knight of Justice of the Order.

Major General Jeffery and his wife Marlena have three sons, a daughter and seven grandchildren. They have both admirably served this nation, and it is interesting to reflect that together they take part in a breathtaking number of commitments. They are patrons to more than 180 organisations, each of which they try and either visit or receive at Government House at least once each year. They host visiting royalty and international heads of state and, where once these visits averaged two a year, previous years have seen the number rise to 14 a year. The Jefferys also attend hundreds of events and present literally hundreds of speeches each year. They open the grounds for charity days, and invite more than 90 schools and a range of other special interest groups to tour the house and its 53 hectares of manicured grounds each year.

The 25th Governor-General, Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce—a prominent lawyer, academic, women's activist and former Sex Discrimination Commissioner—will commence on 5 September. She will be the first woman to hold the position in its 107-year history. Not only is she a great Queenslander of prominence; she is also a lady of great compassion. I know this first hand, as the first time my 2½-year-old son, Caleb, met Her Excellency was at the airport two weeks ago, when my son was trying desperately to get a muffin using a set of tongs. A set of tongs surely are a challenge for any poor little boy. Her Excellency quietly reached down and helped him out, explained quietly to him how to use the tongs and then assisted him to reach the muffin and put it on the plate. She was rewarded by a big grin and an equally cheery 'Ta'. If this is the measure of the grace and humanity of our next Governor-General then this nation is truly well served. I support the bill. I wish the 24th Governor-General, His Excellency Major General Jeffery and his family all the best, and I welcome the appointment of the 25th Governor-General, Her Excellency Quentin Bryce.