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5 DECEMBER 1996

Opening of Parliament

Jim Bolger

Prime Minister

The Commission Opening of Parliament is to be at 11am on **Thursday 12 December**.

The timing is agreed by the Governor-General on the advice of the Prime Minister. The proclamation will be gazetted in the morning.

Thursday 12 December is two days later than the nominal date for which the House was summoned when the last Parliament was dissolved on 6 September 1996, and one day before the deadline set by the Constitution Act 1986.

It is unremarkable for the nominal date to be changed in the light of the circumstances applying after an election (in 1993, for example, the day was put back a week from 14 to 21 December).

The Commission Opening sees the swearing in of members by the Clerk of the House, followed by the election of a Speaker with the Clerk acting at chairperson. After electing the Speaker the House automatically adjourns until the day of the State Opening.

The Speaker is to be presented to the Governor-General in the afternoon, when the Governor-General hosts a reception for the Speaker and members, with spouses and partners.

(13 December) The **State Opening is to be on the following day at 10am**. It is likely the House will not sit after the State Opening until a date in February 1997 which will be nominated in an adjournment motion.

The State Opening commences with the Speaker reporting to the House that the Governor-General has confirmed the appointment of the Speaker. The Speech from the Throne is then delivered by the Governor-General in the Legislative Council Chamber.

The Standing Orders of the House allow for other specified business then to be considered by the House on the motion of the Government. Discussions about such business are under way.

The House is required to resume in 1997 no later than Tuesday 25 February.



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