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## Parliament's Opening Week Deemed Remarkably Lively

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Australia's 48th Parliament began its first sitting week on 22 July 2025 with unexpected drama, as a ceremonial 19-gun salute outside Parliament House in Canberra was disrupted by pro-Palestinian protesters. The demonstrators stood in front of the artillery, forcing the interruption of proceedings intended to mark the formal opening of the new parliamentary session. The disruption raised immediate concerns about security arrangements and the potential for further political demonstrations on parliamentary grounds.

Inside Parliament, tensions also surfaced. Greens Deputy Leader Mehreen Faruqi staged a silent protest in the Senate chamber, holding up a placard calling for sanctions against Israel. Security staff had earlier prevented several protesters from entering the public

gallery. These events have sparked renewed debate about balancing the right to protest with the need to preserve the dignity of official government functions.

In the House of Representatives, maiden speeches captured public attention. Labor MP Ali France, who defeated former Opposition Leader Peter Dutton in the Queensland seat of Dickson, delivered an emotional tribute to her late son, who died of leukemia in 2024. She also reflected on her journey following a serious accident in 2011 that resulted in the loss of her leg. France is the first challenger in Australian federal history to unseat a sitting Opposition Leader.

New MP Renee Coffey, representing Griffith, addressed the House with a focus on her experience with multiple sclerosis and her advocacy for better representation of people with disabilities. Other first-time parliamentarians also used their speeches to spotlight personal struggles and political convictions, setting a passionate and at times polarising tone for the new session.

While the opening week was described by observers as lively and engaging, it has prompted public concern over disruptions to parliamentary protocols. Though not directly linked to the government, questions have been raised about its preparedness to manage public demonstrations and maintain order. The tone of the week has left many Australians watching closely as the new Parliament finds its footing.