

AMENDMENTS

An amendment is a change made to an existing Act of Parliament (bill) using a legal procedure. The procedure requires Parliament to vote on each change or amendment.

Bills are amended as they go through Parliament. Existing Acts of Parliament can be changed with an amendment bill.

Amendments to bills usually take place during debates in both Houses. In the House of Representatives, amendments are proposed during the stage called 'consideration in detail' which occurs after the second reading debate and vote.

Any member or senator can move a motion to change any word or clause or paragraph. The motion for an amendment means that a vote is required to either pass or reject (negative) the motion for the amendment. Items can be deleted or inserted. In long and complicated bills, debating and voting on amendments may take many hours, even days, of detailed discussion and debate.

Any member or senator who wants to move an amendment usually submits the amendment to the Clerk, who circulates printed copies to everyone in the chamber, ensuring the details of the amendment are clearly understood. All parties have to decide in advance whether to support or oppose specific amendments.

The government introduces amendment bills to correct faults, omissions and other problems in existing Acts and to update existing Acts. Amendment Acts and bills contain the word amendment in their official title. For example:

Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Amendment Act (No. 2) 2004