

BILLS AND ACTS

One of the major tasks of Parliament is to create laws. A proposed law is called a bill. The word bill probably comes from the Latin word *bull*a or seal, and refers to the seal on documents written by a king or person in authority. During the 16th century in England, the word bill came to mean a draft for an Act of Parliament.

The main parts of a bill are:

- The title which refers to the content and the year of the bill. eg. *The Broadcasting Services Act 1999*. If several bills about the same subject and with the same title are passed in the same year, they each have a number eg. *The Broadcasting Services Act 1999 (No.2)*.
- The bill always states the date on which the Act will begin.
- Sometimes there is a list of definitions at the beginning of the bill.
- The main part of the bill is divided into clauses, subclauses and paragraphs.
- The schedule is a section of the bill that contains lists or complicated details. The schedule is like an appendix.

All bills have a statement about the legal source of the bill. The main source for bills in the Australian Parliament is the Constitution, especially Section 51, which lists the powers of the Commonwealth Parliament.

A bill becomes an Act of Parliament after it has been passed by both the House of Representatives and the Senate, and signed by the Governor-General or given Royal Assent.