

## PRIVATE MEMBERS AND SENATORS

In the House of Representatives a private member is considered to be a member who is not the Speaker, a minister or a parliamentary secretary. More than one third of the sitting time of the House of Representatives is devoted to non-government business, and this includes time for private members' business.

Private members' business is divided into:

- Private members' motions
- Members' Statements
- Petitions
- Grievance debate
- Adjournment debate
- Members' statements in the Main Committee (Second Chamber)
- Budget debate
- Address in reply

Every member of the House has the right to introduce bills. Though private members' bills rarely become laws, the government is sometimes influenced by a private member's bill to introduce a similar bill themselves. Private members' bills more often are introduced to signal publicly matters that members believe need legislative action or to create public debate on an issue.

In the Senate the term General Business is used for all business not conducted by the government.

General business usually consists of:

- Matters of public interest
- Petitions
- Adjournment debates
- Matters of public importance/urgency
- Resolutions of the Senate
- Referrals to committees
- Establishing of committees
- Private senators' bills
- Estimate Committees hearings

In the Senate a private senator's bill is treated in exactly the same way as a government bill.

Between 1901 and 2004 there were 279 private members' bills introduced into parliament, of which 15 were made law.

At any given time there are always private members' and private senators' bills before the parliament, waiting to be debated. For example, at the beginning of the 2005 parliamentary winter recess, 17 senator's bills were before the Senate and six were before the House of Representatives.