

## MAKING A LAW

A proposal for a new law or a change to an existing one is called a **bill** (see *Bills and Laws*).

A bill can only become a law if it is passed by a majority vote in the House of Representatives and the Senate. The bill must be agreed to in identical form by both chambers, and given Royal Assent by the Governor-General. It is then known as an Act of Parliament.

### Stages of a bill

Most bills are introduced into the House of Representatives and then sent to the Senate. Bills may commence in the Senate, except for money and taxation bills. Most bills are introduced by government ministers; however, other members of parliament can introduce their own bills, known as private members' or private senators' bills.

### Duration and number of bills

It may take weeks or even months for a bill to pass through Parliament. However, an urgent bill can be passed in a matter of days. About 200 bills are introduced into Parliament each year and about 90 per cent are passed into law.

### History

The practice of the Clerk reading the bill aloud three times dates back to the early days of the British Parliament, before printing was invented or many people could read. The Clerk had to read the bill aloud so that members of parliament knew what the bill was about.

### LINKS

#### PEO website

Fact Sheet: *Amendments*  
[www.peo.gov.au/learning/fact-sheets/amendments.html](http://www.peo.gov.au/learning/fact-sheets/amendments.html)

#### APH website

House of Representatives Infosheet: *Making laws*  
[www.tinyurl.com/Infosheet7](http://www.tinyurl.com/Infosheet7)

Senate Brief: *The Senate and Legislation*  
[www.aph.gov.au/Senate/briefs/brief08](http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/briefs/brief08)

