

The Legislative Process

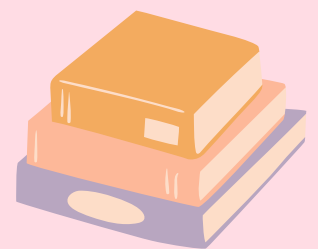


Bills

The legislative process refers to how laws are made. This process starts with bills. Bills are proposals of new laws or proposed changes to existing laws. Bills are usually introduced by ministers in the House of Representatives. However, other members of parliament can introduce bills, and parliamentary committees may recommend that a bill be introduced. Bills may start in the senate, except for money and taxation bills.

Three Readings

For bills to become laws, they must pass through both houses in the same form through a process of three readings. The first reading introduces the bill and the house votes if the bill should be discussed further. If so, it is read a second time and members are able to debate and suggest amendments. Recommendations and detailed examination may be sought from parliamentary committees made up of experts, community members and interest groups. The house then votes and if the bill passes, it is read a third time before going to the other house. Once the bill has passed in both houses the Governor-General approves it by giving it the royal assent.



Implementation

Once a bill has received royal assent it becomes a law, otherwise known as an act. For example: The Australian Education Act which outlines the aspirations the government has for school children. Ministers put the new laws into action by sharing information with the public via the media and by applying the laws to government policy and departments.



Interesting Fact

Despite a bill needing to be read three times in parliament, it is never read in its entirety. Clerks once read the entire bill as people were unable to read or access the bill. These days just the title is read.

