

PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL

**Drafting Direction No. 4.8
Parliamentary amendments—various matters**

Document release 2.3

Reissued January 2025

Contents

Part 1—Introduction 2

Part 2—Amendment of Bills on return to originating House 2

Part 3—Revised versions and replacement of amendments already circulated in the Parliament 3

 Revised versions of amendments already circulated 3

 Replacement of amendments already circulated 3

Part 4—Amendments of long title in House of Representatives 4

Part 5—Keeping parliamentary amendment statistics 4

Part 6—Non-government parliamentary amendments 4

Part 1—Introduction

1 This Drafting Direction deals with various matters relating to parliamentary amendments.

2 However, it does not deal with the matters listed in the following table. Those matters are dealt with in the documents listed in the table.

Matters that relate to parliamentary amendments but are not dealt with in this Drafting Direction		
Item	This matter:	Is dealt with in this document:
1	Sections 53 and 56 of the Constitution: parliamentary amendments that should be moved as requests parliamentary amendments that need Governor-General’s messages	Drafting Direction No. 4.9
2	Limits on what provisions can be inserted or amended by a single parliamentary amendment	Amending Forms Manual
3	Amending forms for parliamentary amendments	Amending Forms Manual
4	Sending finalised amendments to Parliament	Word Note No. 6.8
5	Parliamentary amendments of long titles	Drafting Direction No. 1.1
6	Amendments of taxation proposals	Drafting Direction No. 3.2

Part 2—Amendment of Bills on return to originating House

3 This Part deals with the situation in which a Bill that originated in one House of the Parliament (the *originating House*) is passed by the originating House, and is then returned to the originating House for consideration of amendments, or requests for amendments, made by the other House. The originating House’s powers to further amend the Bill on its return are restricted by the Standing Orders of that House.

4 Senate Standing Order 126 applies to Bills originating in the Senate. Standing Order 126(3) is as follows:

- (3) An amendment shall not be proposed to an amendment of the House of Representatives that is not relevant to it, *and an amendment may not be moved to the bill unless it is relevant to, or consequent upon, the acceptance, amendment or rejection of a House of Representatives amendment.* (my italics)

5 House of Representatives Standing Order 160 applies to Bills originating in the House. It is as follows:

160 Further amendments to a bill must be relevant

The House may only amend a House bill which has been returned from the Senate if its further amendment is relevant to or consequent on the Senate amendments or requests for amendments.

6 The effect of the Standing Orders quoted above is that an attempt to move “new” amendments to a Bill when it returns to the originating House is out of order, and the amendments may only be moved if Standing Orders are suspended.

7 If you are asked to draft amendments that would offend against the relevant Standing Order, you should draw the matter to your instructor’s attention and point out that the amendments can only be moved if Standing Orders are suspended. If the amendments are likely to be in any way controversial, it may be wiser in general not to proceed in a way which requires a procedural debate before the amendments can be moved (especially if the originating House is the Senate).

Part 3—Revised versions and replacement of amendments already circulated in the Parliament

Revised versions of amendments already circulated

8 If amendments that have been circulated in either House of the Parliament are revised, the revised amendments should be marked in the top right-hand corner as “REVISED” or “FURTHER REVISED” to distinguish them from the amendments circulated earlier (and thus prevent confusion). The marking should be included by manually editing the header to insert the relevant text at the top right-hand corner, as follows:



9 If you are not sure whether a particular set of amendments that have been sent to the Table Office of a House of Parliament have been circulated, you can check with that Office.

10 With Government amendments some confusion could arise if there were 2 sets of different amendments to the same Bill, and one set were revised. The use of the word “revised” on one set could lead members to think that the other (different) set had been superseded. In such a case the amendments should be consolidated if possible.

11 When asked to draft, revise, or otherwise advise on, a set of amendments to be moved by a private Member, it is important to ascertain whether another set of amendments has been circulated in the name of the same member.

Replacement of amendments already circulated

12 If you prepare a parliamentary amendment document (the **replacement document**) that is to replace a parliamentary amendment document (the **old document**) with a different file name that has already been circulated in either House of Parliament, you should ensure that the replacement document supplied to the Table Office indicates that it replaces the old document. In the replacement document, you should refer to the old document by its unique identifier (i.e. the string of letters and/or digits that appears in the top right-hand corner of the first page of the old document). This is done by manually editing the header to insert the words “REPLACEMENT FOR [insert old document identifier]” at the top right-hand corner, directly above the replacement document’s identifier, as follows:

gal-Privilege¶
REPLACEMENT FOR PA102.¶
RZ113.¶

Part 4—Amendments of long title in House of Representatives

13 House of Representatives Standing Order 150 requires parliamentary amendments of the long title of a Bill to be reported to the House of Representatives. To assist the House of Representatives to comply with the order, at the finalisation stage for the amendments an email will be generated to go to staff in the House of Representatives alerting them to an amendment of the long title.

Part 5—Keeping parliamentary amendment statistics

14 All drafters should keep statistics on the number of amendments drafted for moving in the Parliament.

15 Amendments should be classified according to whether they were drafted on the instructions of the Government or otherwise, and according to whether they were necessary to correct drafting errors in the Bill concerned, to give effect to changed policy or to give effect to a new policy.

16 Drafters should ensure that there is no double counting of amendments arising from amendments being recorded by each member of a team.

17 This information should be recorded for each financial year. Drafters should provide the information to First Parliamentary Counsel as soon as possible after the end of each financial year. Drafters may also be requested to provide up-to-date information shortly before hearings of Senate Estimates Committees (usually around May and October).

18 Drafters should keep statistics of each amendment drafted (whether or not it inserts several new clauses or items), not each document containing amendments.

Part 6—Non-government parliamentary amendments

19 This part addresses questions that have arisen where OPC is instructed to draft non-government parliamentary amendments, specifically whether those amendments need to be finalised in the usual OPC process and what information should be included in the sponsor field of the amendment sheet.

20 Non-government amendments do not need to be finalised. This is because the House Clerk's Office or the Senate Procedure Office will ultimately take carriage of the draft after it is sent out. Drafters should, however, continue to ensure non-government amendments undergo the usual editorial checking process where time permits. Drafters may also wish to run the Delete Author macro before sending out drafts of non-government amendments.

21 Similarly, if you are drafting amendments that you know are intended to be moved by a non-government Member or Senator, you should include information in the sponsor field of the amendment sheet to indicate it is a non-government amendment (note, the template for parliamentary amendments provides guidance on including this information). The House Clerk's Office or the Senate Procedure Office will check and correctly complete the field at a later stage.

Meredith Leigh
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31 January 2025

Document History

Release	Release date	Document number
1.0	1 May 2006	s06rd396.v01.doc
1.1	2 May 2007	s06rd396.v03.doc
2.0	15 Nov 2007	s06rd396.v07.doc
2.1	1 May 2013	s06rd396.v17.doc
2.2	4 February 2019	s06rd396.v20.docx
2.3	31 January 2025	s06rd396.v25.docx

Note: Before the issue of the current series of Drafting Directions, this Drafting Direction was known as Drafting Direction No. 9 of 2004.