

Timeframes for the development of Bills

Estimated timeframe	Characteristics	What the estimated timeframe does and does not allow for	Other factors that will result in a longer timeframe being needed	Urgent Bills
2 to 7 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> small size (up to 10 pages long) low complexity - for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> requires a small number of provisions to be drafted/amended easy to identify what provisions/amendments are needed (some analysis or research may be required) involves applying well-established or often used drafting precedents or practices only 1 to 5 drafts required to finalise the Bill 	<p>The estimated timeframe for the development of a Bill starts when drafting instructions are received by OPC.</p> <p>It allows for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> drafting of the Bill (for more information, see OPC's drafting services: a guide for clients) clarification and refinement of the policy objectives by the instructing agency the instructing agency's capacity to respond to drafts and to issue additional instructions as required referral of provisions to other agencies for consideration (allow at least 7 business days) (for more information about the referral requirements, see Drafting Direction 4.2) editorial checking (allow 1 business day for small Bills, 3-5 business days for medium Bills and 5-10 business days for large Bills) additional policy approval to be sought from the Prime Minister the Legislation Approval Process to be completed for the Bill the printing of the Bill for introduction 	<p>There are many other factors that can affect the estimated timeframe for the development of a Bill. In many cases, these factors will result in a longer timeframe being needed.</p> <p>These factors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an exposure draft process consultation requirements for the Bill (whether internal or external) obtaining policy authority from the Cabinet requiring legal advice competing legislative priorities for OPC and the instructing agency how clear and well-developed the drafting instructions are (for more information about instructions, see OPC's drafting services: a guide for clients) how clear and well developed the policy objectives are changes in the policy objectives or approach once drafting has started the instructing agency's timeliness in responding to drafts and issuing additional instructions as required the need for substantial consequential amendments the need for substantial transitional, application and saving provisions <p>For more information about the processes and practices of the Cabinet, see the PM&C Cabinet Handbook</p>	<p>If a Bill is urgent, OPC can work with you to ensure it is developed within the required timeframe.</p> <p>However, the overall quality of the Bill may be impacted by a compressed timeframe because of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduced capacity to identify the best legislative solution and to identify and solve problems, gaps or other issues reduced capacity to identify policy, legal or implementation issues, to seek legal advice and to consult others reduced capacity to complete drafting and editorial checks <p>The following are some of the risks that come with developing a Bill in a compressed timeframe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased likelihood of unintended consequences or ineffective provisions increased likelihood of amendments being needed during the Parliamentary process and/or in the future increased likelihood of adverse comments from the Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills, other Parliamentary Committees, stakeholders and others
8 weeks to 6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> medium size (from 11 to 100 pages long) moderate complexity - for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> requires a reasonable number of provisions to be drafted/amended <u>or</u> a smaller number of complex provisions to be drafted/amended requires a reasonable amount of analysis or research to identify what provisions/amendments are needed involves a degree of original or novel drafting or the careful application of drafting precedents and practices raises some constitutional or legal issues and/or some political or other sensitivities a reasonable amount of work may be required to clarify the policy objectives may require up to 30 drafts to finalise the Bill 	<p>The estimated timeframe does <u>not</u> allow for the time needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> for an exposure draft process or other consultation requirements (whether internal or external) to obtain policy authority from the Cabinet to obtain agency or Ministerial clearances the time needed for any other factors mentioned in the next column <p>For more information about the size and complexity of a Bill, see Judging size and complexity of Bills.</p> <p>For more information about the requirements of the legislation process, see the PM&C Legislation Handbook</p>	<p>For more information about the processes and practices of the Cabinet, see the PM&C Cabinet Handbook</p>	
6 to 24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> large size (more than 100 pages long) high complexity - for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> requires a large number of provisions to be drafted/amended <u>or</u> a smaller number of highly complex provisions to be drafted/amended requires a significant amount of analysis or research to identify appropriate legislative solution involves a high degree of original or novel drafting or the careful application of drafting precedents and practices raises significant constitutional or legal issues and/or significant political or other sensitivities a significant amount of work may be required to clarify the policy objectives may require 30 or more drafts to finalise the Bill 	<p>The estimated timeframe does <u>not</u> allow for the time needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> for an exposure draft process or other consultation requirements (whether internal or external) to obtain policy authority from the Cabinet to obtain agency or Ministerial clearances the time needed for any other factors mentioned in the next column <p>For more information about the size and complexity of a Bill, see Judging size and complexity of Bills.</p> <p>For more information about the requirements of the legislation process, see the PM&C Legislation Handbook</p>	<p>For more information about the processes and practices of the Cabinet, see the PM&C Cabinet Handbook</p>	

NOTE

If a Bill has characteristics from more than one of the estimated timeframe categories, the category with the longest timeframe will apply.

For example, if a Bill is 11 to 100 pages long (8 weeks to 6 months timeframe) but raises significant legal issues (6 to 24 months timeframe) the longer 6 to 24 months timeframe will apply.