



Australian Government

Office of Parliamentary Counsel

Compilations Handbook

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Foreword

The Compilations Handbook is produced by the Office of Parliamentary Counsel (OPC) for departmental officers as an aid in preparing compilations for registration on the Federal Register of Legislation (the Register).

This Handbook has its origins in Chapter 5 of the Instruments Handbook, which for many years provided guidance on the preparation of compilations. As compilation practices developed and the body of guidance has grown, it has become clear that compilations deserve a dedicated resource.

For readers of Commonwealth legislation, compilations, by bringing together amendments and presenting legislation as in force at a particular point in time, make the law easier to find, understand and apply. They are therefore a critical part of ensuring that Commonwealth legislation remains accessible to all Australians.

Preparing compilations requires attention to detail, technical skill and a sound understanding of legislative practice. In preparing compilations, I encourage you to keep four key principles in mind: accessibility, accuracy, timeliness and consistency. These principles are closely connected and collectively support the production of high-quality compilations that are useful, reliable and easy for users to access and understand.

This Handbook offers guidance, practical assistance and models of best practice to help you prepare, lodge and maintain compilations accurately, efficiently and in accordance with legislative requirements.

If you need help in navigating the Handbook or understanding its contents, please remember we are only a phone call or email away ((02) 6120 1350 or lodge@legislation.gov.au). If you have suggestions on how we could improve the support we offer, we'd love to hear it.

Yours sincerely



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15 September 2026

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Part 1—Introduction to compilations

Chapter 1—Principles

Main points

- A compilation is a version of a law that includes all amendments and presents the text of the law as it is in force at a particular point in time.
- Accessibility both within a document and across the statute book is important for readers to understand the law. This is done by ensuring the timeliness, navigability and accuracy of compilations on the Register to the widest range of users.
- A compilation should allow readers to readily understand the changes to the law. Accuracy, consistency and predictability are guiding principles to consider.
- The compilation must be prepared in a form and format that can be accurately converted for publication on the Register. Any security markings and author information should not be published on the Register.

What is a compilation?

1 A compilation is a version of a law that includes all amendments and represents the text of the law as it is in force at a particular point in time. A compilation of a title should be available for each point in time at which the text changed. This allows readers to see not only the current state of the law but also how that law has changed over time.

2 The Federal Register of Legislation (accessible at <https://www.legislation.gov.au/>) is the authorised whole-of-government website for Commonwealth legislation and related documents. The Register contains the full text of laws, as well as details of the lifecycle of individual laws and the relationships between them.

3 Requirements for compilations are set out in:

- (a) the *Acts Interpretation Act 1901*;
- (b) the *Legislation Act 2003*; and
- (c) the *Legislation Rules 2026*.

Who prepares compilations?

4 Rule-makers must prepare compilations of legislative and notifiable instruments ([LA](#) s 15R(1)).

5 There are two exceptions:

- (a) OPC prepares compilations for all instruments and Acts that must be drafted by OPC. For more information on OPC's tied work, see paragraph 52 of the [Instruments Handbook](#);
- (b) OPC can prepare compilations on behalf of agencies on a fee-for-service basis.

6 Where an editorial change is necessary, OPC must prepare the compilation; see paragraphs 52–58 for more information. For more information about OPC's compilation services and fees, please contact OPC (lodge@legislation.gov.au or (02) 6120 1350).

Accessibility

General

7 Given their legal nature, it is essential that all registered documents are accessible to the widest range of users, including people who may rely on assistive technology such as screen readers. This is a requirement of the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)—see section 29 of that Act in particular on the administration of Commonwealth laws and programs.

8 In addition, in the Data and Digital Government Strategy, the Australian Government has committed to ensuring all websites and services meet the latest [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#). Agencies should consider whether their documents meet accessibility requirements.

9 A compilation seeks to allow readers to readily understand the changes to the law. The overall navigability of a document, as well as information to aid readers such as the amendment history, helps readers better situate themselves within the document and move through content.

Alt text

10 Alt text (short for alternative text) is a short textual description of an image within a document that is not visible on the face of the document, but instead sits within the properties of the image.

11 To meet accessibility requirements, alt text must be applied to any images contained in a compilation, including formulas, as screen readers rely on the alt text description. More information on alt text, including examples and guidance on what alt text to include, can be found in [OPC Drafting Direction 1.9](#).

12 An additional service fee will apply if OPC is required to add alt text to any images or objects. See paragraph 162 of the [Instruments Handbook](#) for further information on OPC's special requirement and additional services fees.

Accuracy

Textual amendments

13 It is critical that amendments and their incorporation be accurate because amendments directly change the text of the law. Accuracy in compilations in terms of both the

amendments and the useability features of a document is important for readers to trust the legislation.

14 An amendment therefore needs to be accurate enough to pinpoint its intention with sufficient clarity. This means:

- (a) the text specified in the amending legislation must exactly match the text to be changed (including capitalisation, punctuation and type face);
- (b) the location specified in the amending item must be precise, for example by reference to its unit (section, subsection etc.), Schedule number (if applicable), or occurrence of the phrase (if applicable); and
- (c) the instruction must be able to be followed.

15 If the amendment is accurate, relevant text is cut from the amending Act or instrument and pasted into the appropriate location in the title being amended or relevant text is removed from the title being amended, as applicable.

16 If any of the points in paragraph 14 are not accurate, the amendment is misdescribed.

17 If the specified text, location or instruction of the amendment is not accurately followed when preparing the compilation, a rectification is required. See paragraphs 59–63 for more information on rectifications.

18 Accuracy when incorporating amendments requires all changes to be accounted for in the amending legislation. For common errors made during the compilation process, see paragraph 125.

19 To illustrate, follow the worked example below.

20 Here is a provision in legislation:

Example provision

20 Pet owner requirements

A cat owner must register their pet.

21 If this was a provision to be amended, the table below outlines amendments that would be misdescribed and the reason for their misdescription.

Misdescribed amendment	Reason for misdescription
Section 20 Omit “Cat”, substitute “dog”.	Capitalisation of ‘Cat’ doesn’t match provision text
Section 20 Omit “cat”, “dog”.	‘Substitute’ instruction is missing
Section 20 Omit “cats”, substitute “dog”.	Omitted text doesn’t exactly match provision text
Section 02 Omit “cat”, substitute “dog”.	Wrong location is cited in amendment

22 Whereas, the example of an amendment below would be correctly described and able to be incorporated.

Example of a correctly described amendment

1 Section 20

Omit “cat”, substitute “dog”.

Timeliness

23 Although [LA](#) s 15R(3) requires compilations to be accessible within 28 days of their compilation date, it is considered best practice for them to be available on the Register as soon as possible after the compilation date, ensuring the public has access to the current version of the law.

24 Compilations are never registered prior to their compilation date.

25 Care should be taken if preparing compilations in advance of their compilation date in case there are intervening amendments. This ensures that the compilation works off the most current version. Known future amendments can be viewed in the All versions tab on the Register.

Consistency

26 Consistency both within a document and across the statute book is important for readers to understand the law. Compilations, where possible, should be internally consistent to help readers understand the legislation as a whole.

27 If compilations of different laws are set up in the same way, readers are able to predict structure and more readily navigate the content. An OPC compilation template is available to align compilations prepared by different agencies. Using the template will ensure consistency across the statute book and help set up a compilation in line with its requirements.

Technical considerations

Word format

28 To ensure that documents are searchable and can be read by a wide range of devices, all documents must be supplied to OPC in RTF, DOC or DOCX format, unless the First Parliamentary Counsel has agreed otherwise (LR s 6(3)). This ensures documents can be indexed and offered to users in a choice of file formats. OPC's preference is for documents to be supplied in DOCX format.

Dynamic content

29 To ensure the accuracy of the Register (see LA s 15B), documents must be lodged without content that is both dynamic and interferes with the accuracy of the document (LR s 6(5)). Content that is dynamic, but does not interfere with accuracy, can be included in documents.

30 An example of content that can be dynamic but could be included, if it functions as intended in the compilation, is a table of contents. Examples of dynamic content that interfere with the accuracy of a document include:

- (a) when a document is converted and dynamic content updates to no longer match the document as made; and
- (b) where usability elements do not function as intended, such as dynamic page numbers not reflecting the actual page numbers.

31 A common instance of dynamic content interfering with accuracy is where a field code is unable to pull relevant data and results in an error message.

Security

32 In line with the Protective Security Policy Framework (PSPF), and the Information Security Manual, all information on the Federal Register of Legislation should be unclassified, as it sits in the public domain. To ensure all documents lodged for registration meet this requirement, security classification markings of 'OFFICIAL: Sensitive' or higher must be removed, whether on the face of the document, appearing as background text, or included in the document properties.

Privacy

33 The Register is a public facing website and any documents published are publicly available on the internet. Author information is personal information under the *Privacy Act 1988*. The metadata of a Word document records the names of users who created and last modified the document and these details can be seen in the document's properties. Any documents lodged for registration must have these properties removed.

Chapter 2—Key concepts

Main points

- The commencement of amendments to legislation requires a compilation of that legislation ([LA s 15Q](#)).
- To ensure that the Register reflects the status of the law at every point in time, a compilation of the legislation is required for every distinct commencement date of relevant amendments.
- Direct amendment is not the only reason the text of a law can be changed. Automatic repeals, self-repeals, and disallowance of amendments can also change the text of a law.
- If an error is identified in an amendment or as part of a previous compilation process, OPC can be contacted about editorial changes or rectifications.

Amending legislation

34 The amending legislation is a title that makes changes to other legislation. The changes may affect a few words, repeal entire sections or add new text. It is generally easy to recognise amending legislation from the title, which will usually include the word Amendment or Amending, though this is not always the case. Amendments are taken from the amending legislation, following their precise instruction, to be included in the affected title.

Commencement

35 The commencement of a law describes when a law comes into operation ([AIA s 3](#)). This is different to when the law is made or published on the Register. This is important for compilations because the commencement date of the relevant amendments determines the compilation date.

36 The commencement of amendments to legislation requires a compilation of that legislation ([LA s 15Q](#)).

37 A commencement date is often included in the amending legislation, noting that amendments within an amending title can commence on different dates or at different times. When there is no commencement date included in an instrument, it commences on the day after it is registered on the Register ([LA s 12](#)). For more information on words that indicate commencement, see paragraph 71 of the Instruments Handbook.

Points in time

38 To ensure that the Register reflects the status of the law at every point in time, a compilation of the legislation is required for every distinct commencement date of relevant amendments.

39 For example, if a piece of amending legislation has amendments that commence on three sequential days, three consecutive compilations would be required to reflect the changed law on each of those days. If the amending legislation had two amendments that commenced on the same day, but at different times, two compilations would be required to reflect the difference in the law between those times.

40 The Register sets out all the known expected versions of a title at all the various points in time (see the All versions tab of any given title). The All versions tab on the Register can help you understand how many compilations are outstanding and what compilation dates are expected for the title.

Illustration A—example of the All versions tab

Compilation date	Comp no.	ID	DL	Notes	Includes amendments
01 Jul 2026	C199	C2026C00275			Veterans' Entitlements Treatment and Support (Simplification and Harmonisation) Act 2025 (Act No. 17, 2025 C2025A00017) sch 1 (item 38-44, 108, 176-197), sch 2 (items 14-18, 35-45, 51-62, 76-85, 109-115, 125-127, 162-166), sch 3 (items 120-125), sch 4 (items 47-69), sch 5 (items 28-45), sch 6 (items 1, 2) Veterans' Affairs Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous Measures No. 2) Act 2026 (Act No. 31, 2026 C2026A00031) sch 1 (items 31, 32)
19 Mar 2026 - 30 Jun 2026	C198	C2026C00099			Regulatory Reform Omnibus Act 2025 (Act No. 73, 2025 C2025A00073) sch 4 (items 66-78)
05 Dec 2025 - 18 Mar 2026	C197	C2026C00009			Regulatory Reform Omnibus Act 2025 (Act No. 73, 2025 C2025A00073) sch 1 (item 116, 117), sch 4 (items 58-65), sch 5 (items 51-90)

41 In Illustration A, amendments made by the *Regulatory Reform Omnibus Act 2025* commence at two different times. The All versions tab shows that a compilation was required on both 5 December 2025 and 19 March 2026 to incorporate these amendments when they commenced. The All versions tab in Illustration A also shows that the compilation for 1 July 2026 incorporated amendments from two different amending titles as both sets of amendments commenced on the same date.

42 Once an amendment has commenced, the current version is superseded and no longer the latest version of the law. This is the case even if the updated compilation has not been published.

Illustration B—example of an unpublished compilation in the All versions tab

Chapter 2 Key concepts

Compilation date	Comp no.	ID	DL	Notes	Includes amendments
11 Aug 2026					Treasury Laws Amendment (Professional Standards Schemes) Regulations 2026 (F2026L01038) >
21 Apr 2026 - 10 Aug 2026	C212	F2026C00400			Treasury Laws Amendment (Minor and Technical Amendments No. 1) Regulations 2026 (F2026L00443) >
19 Dec 2025 - 20 Apr 2026	C211	F2026C00024			Payment Systems Legislation Amendment (2025 Measures No. 1) Regulations 2025 (F2025L01547) >

43 In Illustration B, the orange row in the All versions tab indicates that amendments to the legislation commenced on 11 August 2026, but at the time of the screenshot the subsequent compilation was not yet available. In this case, compilation 212 would need to be read in conjunction with the *Treasury Laws Amendment (Professional Standards Schemes) Regulations 2026* to understand the latest version of the law.

Automatic and self-repeals

44 Direct amendment is not the only reason the text of a law can be changed. Compilations are triggered by direct amendments but the text of a law can also be changed by automatic and self-repeals. These repeals must be included in the compilation the next time that legislation is amended and must be captured against the affected provision in the amendment history.

Automatic repeal under the LA

45 All solely commencing, amending, repealing and activating provisions in instruments are automatically repealed under sections 48C and 48D of the LA immediately after the latest of the following events:

- (a) the end of the last day on which the instrument may be disallowed in a House of the Parliament;
Note: See the Parliament of Australia website for more information about disallowance: [No. 19 - Disallowance – Parliament of Australia](#).
- (b) the commencement of the provisions;
- (c) the registration of the instrument on the Register.

46 These provisions are automatically repealed in the first compilation prepared after all of the above events have occurred. If the automatically-repealing provisions have not yet commenced, they should be marked in the amendment history as commencing in the future, in the same way as any other future commencing amendments.

Self-repeals

47 Legislation can include provisions that affect itself or another part of the same title. One of the most common effects is to repeal. Specific terms mean different actions for the compilation. Only the terms “repeal”, “revoke” or “rescind” mean that the text of the

provision should be removed from the compilation. These self-repeal provisions are removed in the first compilation prepared after the date of repeal.

48 All self-repealing and self-ceasing provisions should be recorded in the amendment history of the compilation, reflecting the different terms as distinct from one another. If the provision has not yet commenced, it should be marked in the amendment history as commencing in the future, in the same way as any other future commencing amendments.

Disallowed amendments

49 To ensure that there is a version of the law accurate for every point in time, amendments that have been disallowed require the following:

- (a) a compilation showing the effect of the amendment before it was disallowed; and
- (b) another compilation showing the effect of disallowance on the text of the instrument.

50 An instrument or provision is repealed immediately after its disallowance (see [LA](#) s 42 for more information).

51 Please contact OPC (lodge@legislation.gov.au or (02) 6120 1350) if you require assistance with preparing compilations to reflect disallowed amendments.

Editorial changes

52 Editorial change is defined in section 15X of the [LA](#) and includes changes to spelling, punctuation, grammar, numbering, and gender-related language, as well as giving effect to misdescribed amendments as intended (for more information on misdescribed amendments, see paragraphs 13–22). The changes must not change the effect of the law.

53 Making these changes in this way, rather than through legislation:

- (a) is more expedient;
- (b) conserves limited parliamentary time and other resources; and
- (c) ensures readers of legislation can clearly see the law as in effect.

54 Section 15V of the [LA](#) authorises the First Parliamentary Counsel to make editorial and presentational changes when preparing a compilation for registration, including giving effect to misdescribed amendments, as intended.

55 As a result, editorial changes can only be made when OPC prepares the compilation.

56 If an editorial change is required to give effect to a misdescribed amendment as intended, or desirable to make changes such as those set out in section 15X of the [LA](#), please contact OPC (lodge@legislation.gov.au or (02) 6120 1350) to discuss OPC's compilation services.

57 Where the First Parliamentary Counsel decides that an editorial change can be made, the change is incorporated into the compiled Act or instrument. The abbreviation “ed” and the compilation number is added to the affected provision in the Amendment history, and Endnote 5—Editorial changes is added.

58 If preparing the next compilation after a compilation in which the editorial change power has been used, please note the following:

- (a) Endnote 5 should remain only in the affected compilation, and should be removed in that next compilation;
- (b) the note against the affected provision in the Amendment history should remain.

Rectifications

59 To maintain the accuracy and completeness of the Register, section 15D of the [LA](#) authorises the First Parliamentary Counsel to rectify a document that contains an error.

60 A rectification corrects errors made during the compilation process.

61 Examples of issues where a rectification is required include:

- (a) an amendment has been incorrectly incorporated;
- (b) a conversion error has resulted in images or symbols displaying incorrectly; and
- (c) text has not been removed as required, such as failing to action an automatic repeal.

62 To help users navigate documents more easily, OPC may replace a document if there is a presentation error or if information in the document that assists users is incorrect.

63 If an error is identified in a registered compilation, contact OPC at lodge@legislation.gov.au notifying of the error. OPC will offer potential avenues to fix the error and advise of any associated fees.

Chapter 3—Components of compilations

Main points

- The components of a compilation are there to help readers understand both the current version of the law and how it has changed over time. They also improve accessibility, navigation and consistency across the statute book.
- The cover page should clearly identify the compilation and include key information about the compilation. A table of contents should be included in the front matter as a navigation aid, even where the legislation does not contain one.
- The body of a compilation is the text of the legislation as in force on the compilation date, based on the previous Register version with commenced amendments included. Headers and footers should help readers understand where they are in the document and identify the compilation even when the cover page is not visible.
- An abbreviation key is required where abbreviations are used, so that readers can understand them and the document remains internally consistent. The legislation history and amendment history should clearly show how the law and individual provisions have changed over time, including future and disallowed changes where relevant.
- OPC recommends using the compilation template available on the lodgement facility and OPC website. The template is designed to support accessibility, consistency and predictability, and to ensure the compilation includes required information.

What should be included in a compilation

64 The components set out in this chapter exist to assist readers of legislation in understanding the version of the law they have before them as well as its history. These components seek to improve the accessibility of a document, ensuring readers can readily navigate the content of compilations and providing consistency and predictability across the statute book.

Cover page

65 The compilation cover page should signpost key features of the compilation so readers can easily identify the document at a glance. A cover page should include the following features:

- (a) appropriate Australian Government branding (e.g. the Commonwealth Coat of Arms or Australian Government logo) to ensure that the compilation is easily identifiable as an official document;

Note: The branding chosen should be consistent with relevant whole-of-government guidelines¹.

¹ See <https://www.pmc.gov.au/resources/legislation-handbook>.

- (b) the name (or title) that the instrument gives to itself (LR s 8(a)), followed by any series number that may apply;
- (c) the enabling legislation (and relevant provision, where appropriate) for the legislation (LR s 8(e));
- (d) the compilation number (LR s 8(b));
- (e) the compilation date (LA s 15P(1)(a));
- (f) a summary of any other significant event that may have triggered the compilation e.g. the disallowance of an amendment;
- (g) volume details (if applicable);
- (h) the name of the agency that prepared the compilation e.g. “Prepared by the Office of Parliamentary Counsel, Canberra” (LR s 8(c)).

66 OPC reserves the reverse of the cover page for a short user guide to explain additional features of compilations, including information on:

- (a) the compilation structure;
- (b) where to find uncommenced amendments;
- (c) application, saving and transitional provisions;
- (d) modifications; and
- (e) self-repealing provisions.

Table of contents

67 A table of contents is a useful navigation tool that gives readers a clear overview of the contents of a document. A table of contents should be included in the front matter of a compilation as reference information, even if there is no such table in the legislation as made. By including a table of contents, readers can better situate themselves and move through the content. This is especially important for making long documents more user-friendly.

68 The ‘styles’ feature in Word can be used to automatically generate (and update) the table of contents. Setting up a table of contents correctly in the document increases the likelihood that the equivalent Register feature functions effectively. Further guidance on how to use a table of contents in Word documents can be found on the lodgement facility.

Body

69 The body of a compilation is the text of the legislation as in force on the compilation date. Each compilation in a title series builds on the last compilation. Each time a compilation is prepared, the latest version of the text should be used to ensure all previous amendments

are included. The text of the legislation to be amended and the amending legislation should be taken from the Register to ensure its accuracy.

Headers

70 Headers that signpost where each page fits within the content of the legislation are a helpful navigation tool in compilations. If headers are used, they should include relevant information that can situate a reader, for example the first provision of a page and its location within the relevant schedule, chapter, part or division structure.

Footers

71 Footers are a useful tool for identifying compilations. They help a reader understand the context of the compilation content when the cover page is not visible. The following information may be useful to include:

- (a) the name of the legislation;
- (b) the compilation number;
- (c) the compilation date; and
- (d) sequential page numbers.

72 Information in the headers and footers should be updated when each new compilation is prepared.

73 When this information is included in the headers and footers, users of the legislation can view or print a single page without losing context.

74 Agencies should also ensure that at least 1cm is left blank at the bottom of each page. This is so that no content is obscured when the document is stamped with its unique identifier and, if applicable, the words that indicate that it is an authorised version (see [LR](#) s 13 and 18(2)).

Abbreviation key

75 An abbreviation key is a legislative requirement to ensure that readers can understand any abbreviations used in the compilation (see [LR](#) s 8(d)). For accessibility purposes, all abbreviations used must be covered by the abbreviation key.

76 Understanding of the legislation is improved if abbreviations are consistent across the different compilations of one title as well as across the broader statute book. A document, at a minimum, must be internally consistent in its abbreviations.

77 OPC's abbreviation key is set out in Endnote 2 of the compilation template. Additional abbreviations can be added for matters not covered by the standard OPC abbreviations.

Legislation history

78 A legislation history is a clear way to set out the details of all amendments and to capture the interactions of different titles with the legislation.

79 The legislation history must include commencement, and any other, details of any Act or instrument that amends the legislation (LA s 15P(1)(c)). For readers to be able to identify, situate and locate the changes to a compilation, the following information should be included for each amending title:

- (a) its full name, and any series number and year that may apply;
- (b) for instruments—the instrument’s date of registration and Register ID (or, if it was made before 2005, the date of gazettal and Gazette number);
- (c) for Acts—the Act number and year and Register ID;
- (d) details of when it commenced—if provisions commence at separate times, they should be recorded separately in the history (including provisions commencing in the future);
- (e) the location of any application, saving or transitional provisions that are relevant to, but not included in, the legislation;
- (f) details of any events that have affected the text of the legislation—for example, in the case of disallowance of a provision or amendment, the House, date and time of disallowance should be noted.

80 To ensure that the legislation history is a complete picture of the changes to the legislation over time, the as made version of the legislation should always be recorded as the first entry in the legislation history. Details of future amending titles can also be recorded to help readers if they are known at the time of the compilation.

81 OPC’s legislation history is set out in Endnote 3 of the compilation template.

Amendment history

82 An amendment history is a clear way to set out the details of how each provision of the legislation has changed over time (see LA s 15P(1)(d)).

83 The legislation history must note the nature of, and authority for, any change to a provision. Changes to provisions can be done by direct amendments, automatic and self-repeals and the disallowance of provisions or amendments. The amendment history should include the following:

- (a) an identifier pointing to the authority for the change—for example, the name, Register ID or series number and year of the amending title;

Note: If the full name is not used, the alternative identifier must have been identified against the full name in the legislation history.

- (b) underlining to indicate changes that have not yet commenced, such as:
 - (i) amendments commencing in the future; and
 - (ii) automatic and self-repealing provisions that have not yet operated;
- (c) an annotation if a provision of the instrument as made or an amendment to the instrument has been disallowed in part or in full.

84 OPC's amendment history is set out in Endnote 4 of the compilation template.

Recommended approach

85 In order to maintain accessibility, consistency and predictability across the statute book, OPC recommends using the compilation template available on the lodgement facility and OPC website (accessible at <https://www.opc.gov.au/>).

86 The template is intended to set up a compilation in a way that meets its requirements and provides for all necessary information. The template brings legislation in line with OPC standards for compilations of Acts and regulations, providing familiarity and predictability to readers.

87 A guide to using the compilation template is also available on the lodgement facility and OPC website to provide further help in preparing both first and subsequent compilations.

Part 2—Preparing a compilation

Chapter 4—Getting started

Main points

- The registration of an amending title triggers an automatic email notification that a compilation is required. That notification should prompt early planning so the compilation can be prepared and lodged on time.
- A compilation must reflect the law at a particular point in time, so only amendments that have commenced at the compilation date can be included. Where amendments commence at different times, separate compilations will be needed.
- All legislation should be sourced from the Register to ensure the compilation is prepared from the authoritative versions of the relevant documents.
- A first compilation involves placing the as made legislation into the compilation template and removing making information that is no longer needed. Subsequent compilations require fewer steps to update relevant compilation and navigational features.
- A checklist for preparing compilations is available on the lodgement facility and OPC website that provides a step-by-step guide to follow.

Notification of compilation due

88 When an amending title is published on the Register an email notification is sent to the email address of the person who lodged the amending title and the alternate contact on the lodgement form. They will receive two notifications within the same email:

- (a) that the amending legislation has been registered; and
- (b) that a compilation of the legislation being amended is required.

89 The message is automatically generated and does not identify the commencement date of amendments nor the legislation amended. This should be the trigger for planning to prepare a compilation in a timely manner as soon as possible following the commencement of the amendments ([LA](#) s 15R(3)).

Planning to prepare a compilation

90 To ensure accuracy, care should be taken before preparing a compilation to identify the relevant amendments for that particular point in time. Only the amendments that have commenced at the compilation date can be incorporated into the text. Amendments that commence at the same time on the same date, whether from one or multiple amending titles, are incorporated into the same compilation. If amendments commence at different times on

the same day, or on different days, separate compilations will be required for each distinct time.

91 To identify the different points in time for which compilations are necessary, view the All versions tab of the title on the Register. Future amendments with both known and unknown commencement dates should be noted as they will need to be recorded in the legislation and amendment histories. All uncommenced amendments display in the Interactions tab and known future amendments can be found in the All versions tab.

Downloading documents

92 The content of documents used in preparing new compilations should always be sourced from the Register as the authoritative version of both the legislation to be compiled and the amendments to be incorporated.

Setting documents up

First compilation

93 Setting up a first compilation requires the as made legislation to be updated into a compilation template. If using the OPC template, this involves copying the text of the legislation into the Body/text of compilation section. The text of the legislation begins at the first section and finishes at the last section or Schedule, as applicable (AIA s 13).

94 The making information at the start of the as made version is removed in the first compilation, including the rule maker's name and making date. This prevents duplication of information where the compilation cover page provides the name of the instrument and its authorising legislation.

95 At a minimum, the process of setting up a first compilation involves the following:

- (a) removing making information (not including the name of the instrument and its enabling legislation);
- (b) clearly displaying that the legislation is a compilation through the following information:
 - (i) the compilation date;
 - (ii) the compilation number;
 - (iii) details of the amending legislation;
 - (iv) the name of the department or agency that prepared the compilation;
- (c) including legislation and amendment histories (and an associated abbreviation key);
- (d) including accessibility aids to the document to ensure navigability.

96 See paragraphs 64–84 for more information on what to include in a compilation.

97 These components, alongside any other information that aids users to understand the compilation and its history, should be included outside of the legislative material (AIA s 13). The text of the legislation should not be interrupted. The OPC template provides a guide of how to use these features appropriately.

Subsequent compilation

98 Subsequent compilations involve fewer steps than a first compilation, as the document should already be set up with a cover page and relevant legislation and amendment histories.

99 The following elements of a compilation will need to be updated each time a compilation is prepared:

- (a) the compilation number;
- (b) the compilation date;
- (c) details of the amending legislation;
- (d) the table of contents;
- (e) header and footer information.

100 The name of the agency that prepared the compilation may also need updating. If the legislation is multi-volume, the relevant information should be updated in each volume including volume details.

Chapter 5—Including amendments

Main points

- Every compilation must include all direct textual amendments that commence on the compilation date.
- A compilation must also action any automatic and self-repeals triggered since the last version. Searching for specific terms and checking the amendment history can help identify these changes.
- The legislation history must be current in every compilation so readers can see how the law has changed over time. First compilations require the details of the legislation being compiled, while later compilations add any amending titles that have become known before the compilation date, including future changes.
- The amendment history must accurately show how individual provisions have changed, including changes from direct amendment, disallowance, and automatic or self-repeal. Known future changes should also be recorded, and abbreviations may be used if they are supported by an abbreviation key.
- Reviewing the completed compilation is an essential step in ensuring accuracy. It is best practice to have the document checked by a colleague or reviewed afresh.

Incorporate textual amendments

101 Every compilation must incorporate all direct textual amendments that commence on the compilation date. When preparing a compilation, care should be taken to ensure the accuracy of the amendments and their incorporation, as discussed in paragraphs 13–22.

102 One strategy to incorporate amendments accurately is to copy and paste when possible. This includes when searching for referenced text in the legislation, and when adding text from the amending legislation. Using copy and paste prevents typos from being introduced and ensures amendments are correctly described.

103 Another strategy to ensure that the text of the legislation is not incorrectly altered during the compilation process is to use the track changes feature in Word. This makes all changes visible to catch, for example, if any text is accidentally deleted. Please note that compilations cannot be lodged for registration with track changes in the document. Paragraph marks and other formatting symbols can also be turned on in Word to assist with managing changes.

104 If an amending item does not specify the position of the amendment in a list or table within a provision, the amendment should be inserted in the appropriate alphabetical position, determined on a letter-by-letter basis (AIA s 11A).

105 Amendments that are inaccurate, imprecise or unclear should not be incorporated. Please contact OPC (lodge@legislation.gov.au or (02) 6120 1350) to discuss how to proceed.

Action relevant repeals

106 To accurately reflect the law, each time a compilation is prepared any automatic and self-repeals triggered since the previous compilation date need to be actioned in the compilation being prepared. See paragraphs 44–48 for more information.

107 One strategy to locate self-repeals is to run a search on the terms “repeal”, “revoke” (or “revocation”) and “rescind”. If the context and timing is appropriate, the relevant text should be removed from the compilation. It can also help to search on “ceas”, “expir” and “sunset” (including partial words to capture multiple suffixes) at this stage to identify if there are any self-ceasing provisions that should remain in the compilation, but be captured in the amendment history.

108 The amendment history can be a useful tool in identifying automatic and self-repeals that were previously identified as commencing in the future. The checks for automatic and self-repeal should be undertaken each time a compilation is prepared to capture instances where there have been amendments to the self-repeals, or new ones inserted.

109 The calculation of the timing for automatic repeals is complex. Familiarity with sections 48C and 48D of the LA provides the basis for accurately calculating and actioning relevant repeals. Incorrect timing of automatic repeals—either repealing provisions before they have automatically repealed or not repealing provisions once they have automatically repealed—is a common cause for rectification.

Create or update the legislation history

110 The legislation history must be up to date in every compilation, reflecting the details of any Act or instrument that amends the legislation, so readers can understand how the law has changed over time (LA s 15P(1)(c)).

111 First compilations must include a legislation history that captures the details of the as made version of the law as well as of any amending titles. Subsequent compilations will require updating to capture additional amending titles that have become known since the previous compilation and before the compilation date, including information about titles that have not yet commenced, distinguished by underlining as described in OPC’s standard abbreviation key.

112 Using a table to display the legislation history makes the information clearer and more visually accessible. Table rows should be in the order of when amending titles were known—that is, when the instrument was registered or the Act was assented to—to display the history in chronological order.

Create or update the amendment history

113 The amendment history helps readers track changes to a provision of legislation over time, and so must be accurate and up to date in every compilation (LA s 15P(1)(d)).

114 The amendment history must reflect all changes to the provision, for example by direct amendment, disallowance or automatic or self-repeal. It is helpful to include any

changes that commence in the future but are known at the compilation date, which should be distinguished by underlining.

115 A table helps to clearly set out the provisions affected and how they were affected. It is important to ensure that the provision level used in the amendment history is consistent throughout the document to make the history clearer. OPC captures this information at the section level and higher. Changes to subsections, subclauses or subrules are then recorded as a change to the broader section, clause or rule. Unaffected provisions do not need to be captured in the amendment history.

116 Abbreviations can help make the amendment history more concise and easier to manage. The OPC compilations template has a key of common abbreviations used by OPC. Note that any abbreviations included in the compilation need to be included in an abbreviation key.

Reviewing changes

117 Accuracy is essential to preparing compilations, and reviewing changes made in preparing a compilation is an important step in ensuring accuracy is achieved.

118 Many changes are made in preparing a compilation when updating the cover page and navigation aids, incorporating the amendments and actioning relevant repeals, and updating the legislation and amendment histories. Since this is very technical work that requires a high level of attention to detail, it is best practice to prepare the compilation and either have a colleague review it or review it with fresh eyes on a separate day or after a break.

119 Track changes in Word is a helpful tool to ensure that each change is noticed and actively reviewed. The compare feature in Word can also be used to identify differences between the compilation on the Register and the new prepared compilation to ensure that only the expected changes are present.

120 A checklist for preparing compilations, available on the lodgement facility and OPC website, sets out mechanisms for effective checking that should be undertaken prior to lodging a compilation.

Part 3—Lodging compilations for registration

Chapter 6—Assessment of lodged compilations

Main points

- Compilations should be lodged for registration promptly after they are prepared and the relevant amendments have commenced. Lodgement is made through the lodgement facility.
- OPC checks each lodged compilation for minimum legislative and accessibility requirements, but does not check that the amendments have been incorporated correctly.
- Agencies should take steps to check the compilation for common issues before lodging. This includes checking numbering, compilation details, field codes, alt text, security markings, hyperlinks and any change to the title of the instrument.
- Once a compilation is registered, an email notification is sent to the person who lodged it and the alternate contact on the lodgement form. This should trigger a check that the compilation displays correctly on the Register.

Lodgement process

121 Compilations must be lodged for registration in a timely manner following their preparation and their amendments commencing (LA s 15R). This can be done through the lodgement facility at <https://lodge.legislation.gov.au> (LR s 6(2)(a)).

What is being assessed?

122 OPC performs basic checks of each lodged compilation as part of the registration process to ensure it meets minimum legislative and accessibility requirements. OPC does not check the substantive content of the compilation and does not verify that the amendments have been incorporated correctly.

123 OPC will be in contact if edits are required to ensure that minimum standards are met. If any errors are noticed before registration, please contact OPC (lodge@legislation.gov.au or (02) 6120 1350).

Preventative actions

124 Since OPC does not check the substantive content of a compilation, it is best practice to take preventative actions to ensure the quality of the compilation.

125 There are several common issues that may arise when preparing a compilation:

- (a) Compilation errors can result from automatic numbering in the compilation or in the amending legislation. This can cause provisions to be automatically renumbered when they are inserted or omitted. Remove automatic numbering.
- (b) The compilation date and compilation number must be updated in every location they appear, including the cover page, the reverse of the cover page if compilation information is present and the footer on each page. Check that all compilation details are up to date.
- (c) Field codes often create errors when converted to PDF. Search on “error” in the PDF to confirm that all fields have converted successfully.
- (d) Meaningful alt text must be applied to all images.

Note: See paragraphs 10–12 for discussion of alt text
- (e) Compilations should not be lodged for registration with security markings, author information or watermarks.
- (f) Hyperlinks should be removed, as the system blocks links to external addresses for security reasons. Hyperlinks to government addresses are permitted.
- (g) If there has been an amendment that has changed the name of the instrument, this change should be reflected on the footer on each page, the cover page and the reverse of the cover page with compilation information.

126 A checklist for preparing compilations that methodically steps through the process is also available on the lodgement facility and OPC website.

Notification of registration

127 When a lodged compilation is published on the Register an email notification is sent to the email address of the person who lodged the compilation and the alternate contact on the lodgement form.

Post-registration checking

128 After receiving a notification that a compilation was registered, it is best practice to check the compilation on the Register to ensure that everything displays as expected.

129 It can be useful to check:

- (a) the All versions tab to ensure that the compilation displays against the correct row and there are no further outstanding compilations;
- (b) the PDF and EPUB formats to confirm they match the Word document lodged;
- (c) the compilation number in the document matches the number on the Register; and

- (d) the accessibility features of the Word document have translated across the formats—for example, there is a table of contents in the EPUB and helpful headers and footers in the PDF.

130 If an error in the text of the compilation, presentational information or accessibility features is identified after registration, contact OPC at lodge@legislation.gov.au notifying of the error. OPC will offer potential avenues to fix the error and advise of any associated fees.

131 OPC appreciates your help to keep the Register accurate and up to date.

132 Remember that the following resources exist to support you as we work to provide clear, effective and accessible Commonwealth law for all Australians:

- (a) the Compilation template;
- (b) the Guide to reading the Compilation template;
- (c) the Compilation checklist;
- (d) the Lodgement – Table of Contents guide;
- (e) the Preparing Compilations for Lodgement Course.

Abbreviation key

Abbreviation	Meaning
AIA	the Acts Interpretation Act 1901
LA	the Legislation Act 2003
LR	the Legislation Rules 2026
OPC	Office of Parliamentary Counsel, an independent statutory authority accountable to the Attorney-General
Register	the Federal Register of Legislation
s	Section or subsection (or equivalent)

Document history

Document History		
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