

**A CHRONOLOGY OF THE SENATE 1901–2008**

| <b>Date</b>         | <b>Event</b>  |
|---------------------|---|
| 1 January 1901      | Australian Constitution came into force, vesting legislative power in a federal Parliament consisting of the Queen, a Senate, and a House of Representatives  |
| February–March 1901 | Writs issued for the election of 36 senators  |
| 29-30 March 1901    | Senators elected at elections throughout Australia  |
| 9 May 1901          | Opening of Parliament at the Melbourne Exhibition Building and swearing in of senators<br><br>First meetings of the Senate held in the chamber of the Legislative Council of Victoria<br><br>Election of the first President of the Senate, Senator Richard Baker |
| 5 June 1901         | Appointment of the first Senate committee: the Standing Orders Committee  |
| June 1901           | Senate had first supply bill amended to show items of expenditure<br><br>Senate changed second supply bill to reflect Australian rather than British constitutional arrangements  |
| 26 July 1901        | First Senate select committee appointed: steamship communication with Tasmania  |
| August 1901         | First senior officials called to give evidence before a Senate committee, including the Clerk of the Senate and the Secretary of Defence<br><br>Private citizens also called to give evidence   |

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| 1902                | Senate first insisted on requests for amendments to a bill it could not amend  |
| 1902                | Commonwealth Electoral Act passed, including the right of women to vote and stand for election   |
| 1 September 1903    | Adoption of Senate Standing Orders   |
| 16 March 1904       | Senate amended Acts Interpretation Bill to insert provision for disallowance of regulations  |
| April 1904          | First case of privilege investigated by a Senate Committee   |
| 11 October 1906     | Senate rejected Customs Tariff (British Preference) Amendment Bill 1906 and disagreed to Governor-General's amendment to Customs Tariff (British Preference) Bill 1906 |
| 1907                | Committee of Disputed Returns and Qualifications inquired into election of Senator Vardon  |
| 1909                | Senators' terms ceased on 30 June, rather than 31 December as previously, under constitutional amendment of 1907   |
| 13 December 1909    | Private senator's bill, the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Bill 1908, extending employees' protection against dismissal, passed into law                    |
| 30 July 1914        | For the first time, the Senate and the House of Representatives dissolved simultaneously under section 57 of the Constitution  |
| February–March 1917 | Senate forced government to abandon proposal to extend the life of the House of Representatives by an act of the British Parliament                                    |

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| 12–13 November 1918 | Senator Gardiner presented a 12 hour address in the Senate on the Commonwealth Electoral Bill          |
| 1919                | Preferential voting introduced for the Senate  |
| 15 August 1919      | Time limits imposed on speeches in the Senate  |
| December 1921       | First conference held between the Senate and the House of Representatives                              |
| 31 July 1924        | Private senator's bill, the Commonwealth Electoral Bill, to provide compulsory voting, passed into law |
| 9 May 1927          | Senate met in Canberra for the first time  |
| 1929                | Senate established a select committee to consider a system of standing committees                      |
| 10 July 1930        | First reference of a bill, the Central Reserve Bank Bill, to a select committee                        |
| 6 May 1931          | Chairman of Commonwealth Bank called before the Senate to give evidence on economic crisis             |
| 11 March 1932       | Regulations and Ordinances Committee established to scrutinise delegated legislation                   |
| 1 July 1941         | Voting between two candidates for Presidency of the Senate tied, and decided by lot                    |
| 21 August 1943      | Senator Dorothy Tangney first woman elected to the Senate  |
| 10 July 1946        | Parliamentary proceedings first broadcast on ABC Radio   |

| Date              | Event   |
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| 1949              | Introduction of proportional representation for Senate elections  |
| 1950              | From 30 June, the states represented by 10 senators each  |
| 19 March 1951     | Second simultaneous dissolution under section 57 of the Constitution  |
| 9 May 1953        | For the first time, a Senate election was held separately from that of the House of Representatives               |
| 27 September 1961 | Senate adopted procedures to examine estimates before appropriation bills had passed the House of Representatives |
| 1965              | Compact of 1965 between the Senate and the government, on the content of appropriation bills                      |
| 1966              | Senator Annabelle Rankin first woman to administer a government department  |
| 5 April 1967      | Select committees on container cargo and metric system appointed  |
| 19 May 1967       | Senate first adopted procedures for recall of Senate at request of majority of senators                           |
| October 1967      | Senate forced government to disclose documents relating to Air Force VIP squadron                                 |
| 1968              | Senator Ivy Wedgwood first woman senator to chair a committee   |
| 11 June 1970      | Standing committee system established   |
|                   | Estimates committees established  |

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| 13 May 1971           | Senate first found persons guilty of contempt, for unauthorised release of draft committee report                                  |
| 11 June 1971          | First Aboriginal Senator, Neville Bonner, sworn in   |
| 9 December 1971       | Senate declared that statutory authorities are accountable for all expenditures of public funds                                    |
| 14 March 1973         | Senate required government to respond to Senate committee reports within three months  |
| 11 April 1974         | Third simultaneous dissolution under section 57 of the Constitution  |
| 6 and 7 August 1974   | Joint sitting convened to resolve a deadlock following simultaneous dissolution election   |
| 16 July 1975          | Senior officials called before the Senate to investigate overseas loans affair; government claimed crown privilege                 |
| October–November 1975 | Senate declined to pass appropriation bills, resulting in fourth simultaneous dissolution under section 57 of the Constitution     |
| 1975                  | Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory elected senators for the first time  |
| 1977                  | Section 15 of the Constitution, governing casual vacancies in the Senate, amended by referendum                                    |
| 1981                  | Select Committee on Parliament's Appropriations and Staffing recommended separation of parliamentary and government appropriations |
| 19 November 1981      | Establishment of the Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills  |

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|-----------------|--|
| 25 March 1982   | Establishment of the Appropriations and Staffing Committee   |
| 4 February 1983 | Fifth simultaneous dissolution under section 57 of the Constitution  |
| 22 October 1984 | Senate first authorised publication of tabled documents out of sittings<br><br>Senate asserted its right to meet after dissolution of House of Representatives |
| 1984–86         | Senate conducted first inquiry under section 72 of the Constitution into allegations concerning a judge  |
| 1985            | Senators increased to 12 for each state  |
| 1985            | Group ticket (above the line) voting introduced for Senate elections   |
| 1985-86         | Senate amended loan bills to ensure annual approval of government authority to borrow  |
| 1986            | Senator Janine Haines the first woman to lead a parliamentary party  |
| 14 April 1986   | Deadline for the receipt of government bills first adopted   |
| 1987            | <i>Parliamentary Privileges Act 1987</i> initiated in the Senate by the President and passed into law, to codify parliamentary immunities                      |
| 5 June 1987     | Sixth simultaneous dissolution under section 57 of the Constitution  |
| October 1987    | Senate forced abandonment of Australia Card Bill, which was the subject of the simultaneous dissolution  |

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| 25 February 1988  | Privilege resolutions passed by the Senate, codified the rights of witnesses at committee hearings and granted right of reply to persons referred to in debate |
| 28 September 1988 | 30 day rule for questions on notice adopted  |
| 8 November 1988   | Senate declared principles under which it would consider retrospective tax legislation   |
| 29 November 1988  | Senate required government to explain any delay in proclaiming bills passed by Parliament  |
| December 1988     | Select Committee on Legislation Procedures recommends new procedures for referring bills to committees   |
| 21 November 1989  | New Standing Orders adopted  |
| 5 December 1989   | Selection of Bills Committee established to refer bills to committees  |
| 14 December 1989  | Annual reports of departments and agencies referred to standing committees   |
| 31 May 1990       | Televising Senate question time authorised   |
| 23 August 1990    | Senate committees authorised to televise their proceedings   |
| 1993              | Senate committees reported on constitutional and other problems with government's major tax legislation, resulting in its restructuring                        |

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| 24 August 1994   | <p>Standing committee system restructured to reflect composition of the Senate and share chairs</p> <p>Estimates and standing committees amalgamated</p> <p>Performance of government departments and agencies referred to standing committees</p> |
| 9 June 1995      | Senate first divided a bill into two bills   |
| 30 May 1996      | Senate required government departments to publish indexed lists of their files   |
| 20 August 1996   | First territory and woman President of the Senate, Senator Margaret Reid, elected  |
| 2 December 1998  | Reference of New Tax System bills simultaneously to a select committee and three standing committees   |
| 31 August 1999   | Senate authorised publication of its proceedings live on the Internet  |
| 22 November 1999 | <p>Senate declared all questions going to operations or finances of departments and agencies relevant to estimates hearings</p> <p>Procedures for urgent bills amended to ensure that non-government amendments are put</p>                        |
| 29 June 2000     | Senate declared that it would not pass tariff increases to validate certain tariff proposals   |
| 20 June 2001     | Senate required government departments and agencies to publish details of contracts on the Internet  |
| 2001-02          | Senate resolved cases of seizure of documents under search warrant, to determine immunity from seizure   |

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| 2002             | Action against a senator by his party considered as a matter of privilege   |
| 19 March 2002    | Senate censured a senator for an attack on a High Court justice   |
| 15 May 2003      | Resolution calling for removal of Governor-General  |
| 12 August 2003   | Customs and excise tariff bills deferred until documents produced   |
| 30 October 2003  | Resolution declaring basis on which Senate would consider claims of commercial confidentiality  |
| 11 February 2004 | Select committee established on a treaty, the free trade agreement between Australia and the United States  |
| 9 March 2005     | Agreement with the government over the execution of search warrants in senators' premises tabled  |
| 21 October 2005  | High Court judgment in <i>Combet v Commonwealth</i> placed responsibility of Parliament for ensuring that appropriations are properly expended              |
| 9 November 2005  | Senate adopted procedures allowing any senator to take action in the Senate in relation to unanswered estimates questions on notice or orders for documents |
| 14 August 2006   | Standing committee structure changed to return to pre-1994 structure  |
| 24 June 2008     | Senate made orders requiring information, in time for estimates hearings, on government grants and appointments   |

