

**Senate Standing Committee
for the
Scrutiny of Bills**



Alert Digest

No. 6 of 2003

18 June 2003

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Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills

Members of the Committee

Senator T Crossin (Chair)
Senator B Mason (Deputy Chairman)
Senator G Barnett
Senator D Johnston
Senator J McLucas
Senator A Murray

Terms of Reference

Extract from **Standing Order 24**

- (1) (a) At the commencement of each parliament, a Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills shall be appointed to report, in respect of the clauses of bills introduced into the Senate, and in respect of Acts of the Parliament, whether such bills or Acts, by express words or otherwise:
- (i) trespass unduly on personal rights and liberties;
 - (ii) make rights, liberties or obligations unduly dependent upon insufficiently defined administrative powers;
 - (iii) make rights, liberties or obligations unduly dependent upon non-reviewable decisions;
 - (iv) inappropriately delegate legislative powers; or
 - (v) insufficiently subject the exercise of legislative power to parliamentary scrutiny.
- (b) The committee, for the purpose of reporting upon the clauses of a bill when the bill has been introduced into the Senate, may consider any proposed law or other document or information available to it, notwithstanding that such proposed law, document or information has not been presented to the Senate.

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- **The Committee has commented on these bills**

This Digest is circulated to all Honourable Senators.
Any Senator who wishes to draw matters to the attention of the
Committee under its terms of reference is invited to do so.

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- **The Committee has commented on these bills**

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Any Senator who wishes to draw matters to the attention of the Committee under its terms of reference is invited to do so.

A Better Future for Our Kids Bill 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 26 May 2003 by Ms Roxon as a Private Member's bill.

The bill proposes to establish an Office of the National Commissioner for Children and Young People. The bill also proposes a national code for the protection of children; checks on all persons undertaking child-related employment or volunteer work; reporting requirements; and contains a regulation-making power.

Commencement

Subclauses 2(1) to (3)

By virtue of subclauses 2(1) to (3) of this bill, it is not to commence until six months after the Parliament has appropriated funds for the operation of the Office of National Commissioner for Children and Young People. However, no time limit is specified within which such an appropriation must be made, and the commencement of this bill is therefore wholly at the discretion of the government of the day. Although subclause 2(4) provides that if the Parliament does not appropriate funds the measure is not to commence at all, no time limit is specified within that subclause for it to come into operation. The Committee **seeks the advice of the Member sponsoring the bill** as to whether it would be more appropriate to have the bill commence at a different time.

Pending the Member's advice, the Committee draws Senators' attention to the provision, as it may be considered to trespass unduly on personal rights and liberties, in breach of principle 1(a)(i) of the Committee's terms of reference.

Acts Interpretation Amendment (Court Procedures) Bill 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 5 June 2003 by the Attorney-General. [Portfolio responsibility: Attorney-General]

The bill proposes to amend the *Acts Interpretation Act 1901* to insert a provision that makes it clear that references in Commonwealth legislation to the commencement of proceedings by State or Territory procedures are taken to include all documents through which proceedings may be instituted in a court, even where the States or Territories amend their procedures or terminology. The proposed amendments will maintain the status quo by ensuring that the enforcement of Commonwealth law is not disrupted by changes to State or Territory procedures.

Retrospective commencement Schedule 1, item 2

By virtue of clause 2, this bill is to commence on 7 July 2003, and by virtue of item 2 of Schedule 1 to the bill, the amendment made by the Schedule is to apply from 7 July 2003, even if the bill has not commenced by then. While the legislation will not necessarily be retrospective in commencement or application, the Committee notes that it will have to be debated by both Houses of the Parliament in no more than two sitting weeks in order to be passed and assented to by 7 July 2003. However, the purpose of the bill, as is made clear in the Explanatory Memorandum, is to make a relatively minor and technical amendment to the *Acts Interpretation Act 1901* which has been rendered necessary by changes in New South Wales legislation.

In the circumstances, the Committee makes no further comment on this bill.

Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2003-2004

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 13 May 2003 by the Treasurer. [Portfolio responsibility: Finance and Administration]

The bill proposes to appropriate money totalling \$40,504 million out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund to meet payments for the ordinary annual services of the government for the year ending on 30 June 2004.

The Committee has no comment on this bill.

Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2003-2004

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 13 May 2003 by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration. [Portfolio responsibility: Finance and Administration]

The bill proposes to appropriate money totalling \$5,529 million out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund to meet payments to or for the States and Territories, and payments for administered items, administered capital items and departmental capital items for the year ending on 30 June 2004.

The Committee has no comment on this bill.

Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1) 2003-2004

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 13 May 2003 by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration. [Portfolio responsibility: Finance and Administration]

The bill proposes to appropriate money totalling \$167.3 million out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund to meet the expenses of the parliamentary departments for the year ending on 30 June 2004.

The Committee has no comment on this bill.

Australian Film Commission Amendment Bill 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 29 May 2003 by the Minister representing the Minister for the Arts and Sport. [Portfolio responsibility: Communications, Information Technology and the Arts]

The bill proposes to amend the *Australian Film Commission Act 1975* to facilitate the integration of ScreenSound Australia and the Australian Film Commission (AFC) by:

- giving relevant functions and powers to the agency to enable it to properly manage, maintain and exhibit the national film and sound collection;
- providing the AFC with the power to employ staff under the *Public Service Act 1999*;
- making consequential changes to the administrative structure of the AFC; and
- facilitating the transfer of relevant Commonwealth assets to the AFC.

The bill also contains transitional provisions.

The Committee has no comment on this bill.

Australian Prudential Regulation Authority Amendment Bill 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 5 June 2003 by the Treasurer. [Portfolio responsibility: Treasury]

The bill proposes to amend the *Australian Prudential Regulation Authority Act 1998* to:

- replace the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) board, including its Chief Executive Officer and ex officio members, with a full-time executive group comprising at least three and no more than five members;
- retain APRA's status as an independent statutory authority;
- refine APRA's statement of purpose and objectives, clarify APRA's role, and apply the same framework for independence from Ministerial direction as exists for office holders in other similar bodies;
- apply an enhanced disclosure and conflict of interest framework to APRA and apply similar requirements as exist for other office holders of regulatory bodies; and
- clarify the operation of provisions which apply to APRA's release of protected information and protected documents to other agencies in support of their functions and powers.

The bill also makes consequential amendments to eight other Acts following the replacement of the APRA Board and CEO with a full-time executive governing body, and contains transitional provisions.

The Committee has no comment on this bill.

Criminal Code Amendment (Hezbollah External Terrorist Organisation) Bill 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 2 June 2003 by Mr Crean as a Private Member's bill.

The bill proposes to amend the *Criminal Code Act 1995* to identify the Hezbollah External Terrorist Organisation as a terrorist organisation directly or indirectly engaged in, preparing, planning, assisting in or fostering the doing of a terrorist act.

The bill also contains a sunset provision and provisions for the making and repeal of regulations.

Retrospectivity of bill Subclause 2(1), item 2

By virtue of item 2 in the table to subclause 2(1) of this bill, Schedule 1 is to commence on 29 May 2003. It is difficult to see the reason for this retrospectivity. The purpose of the bill is to allow regulations to be made declaring the Hezbollah External Terrorist Organisation to be a terrorist organisation for the purposes of the *Criminal Code*. But it is presumed that such regulations could not be made until this bill has been assented to. The Committee **seeks the advice of the Member sponsoring the bill** the reason for this provision.

Pending the Member's advice, the Committee draws Senators' attention to the provision, as it may be considered to trespass unduly on personal rights and liberties, in breach of principle 1(a)(i) of the Committee's terms of reference.

Retrospectivity of regulations
Proposed new subsection 102.1(11)

Proposed new subsection 102.1(11) of the *Criminal Code*, to be inserted by item 3 of the Schedule to this bill, would permit the making of regulations having effect retrospectively to the day on which the Attorney-General or another Minister makes an announcement to the effect that such regulations will be made. It appears that the regulations will have the effect of imposing criminal liability on members of the Hezbollah organisation, and the bill will therefore create criminal liability by public announcement. It is suggested that these provisions may be regarded as trespassing on personal rights and liberties, but that whether such a trespass would be undue is a matter to be left for decision by the Senate as a whole.

The Committee draws Senators' attention to the provision, as it may be considered to trespass unduly on personal rights and liberties, in breach of principle 1(a)(i) of the Committee's terms of reference.

Criminal Code Amendment (Hizballah) Bill 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 29 May 2003 by the Attorney-General. [Portfolio responsibility: Attorney-General]

Introduced with the Criminal Code Amendment (Terrorist Organisations) Bill 2003, the bill proposes to amend the *Criminal Code Act 1995* to create a basis for the identification and listing of the Hizballah External Security Organisation as a terrorist organisation under Australian law, if the Minister is satisfied that the organisation is engaged in terrorist activity. This measure would avoid the existing requirement that the organisation be first identified in, or pursuant to, a decision of the United Nations Security Council as a terrorist organisation.

The bill also inserts a provision to enable a listing in a regulation of the Hizballah External Security Organisation to operate retrospectively from the time at which a public announcement is made by a Minister stating the Government's intention to specify the organisation in regulations.

This bill was received by the Senate on 16 June 2003 and agreed to, without amendment, on the same day.

Retrospectivity of bill Subclause 2(1), item 2

By virtue of item 2 in the table to subclause 2(1) of this bill, Schedule 1 is to commence on 29 May 2003, "immediately after the commencement of Schedule 1 to the *Criminal Code Amendment (Terrorism) Act 2003*." It is difficult to see the reason for this retrospectivity. The purpose of the bill is to allow regulations to be made declaring the Hizballah organisation to be a terrorist organisation for the purposes of the *Criminal Code*. But it is presumed that such regulations could not be made until this bill has been assented to. The Committee **seeks the Attorney-General's advice** as to the reason for this provision.

Pending the Attorney-General's advice, the Committee draws Senators' attention to the provision, as it may be considered to

trespass unduly on personal rights and liberties, in breach of principle 1(a)(i) of the Committee's terms of reference.

Retrospectivity of regulations

Proposed new subsection 102.1(11)

Proposed new subsection 102.1(11) of the *Criminal Code*, to be inserted by item 3 of the Schedule to this bill, would permit the making of regulations having effect retrospectively to the day on which the Attorney-General or another Minister makes an announcement to the effect that such regulations will be made. It appears that the regulations will have the effect of imposing criminal liability on members of the Hizballah organisation, and the bill will therefore create criminal liability by public announcement. These provisions may be regarded as trespassing on personal rights and liberties, but that whether such a trespass would be *undue* is a matter to be left for decision by the Senate as a whole.

The Committee draws Senators' attention to the provision, as it may be considered to trespass unduly on personal rights and liberties, in breach of principle 1(a)(i) of the Committee's terms of reference.

Criminal Code Amendment (Terrorist Organisations) Bill 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 29 May 2003 by the Attorney-General. [Portfolio responsibility: Attorney-General]

Introduced with the Criminal Code Amendment (Hizballah) Bill 2003, the bill proposes to amend the *Criminal Code Act 1995* to remove the requirement that an organisation be first identified in, or pursuant to, a decision of the United Nations Security Council relating wholly or partly to terrorism, or using a mechanism established under the decision, as a precondition to specifying the organisation in regulations as a terrorist organisation. The Minister will still be required to be satisfied that the organisation is engaged in terrorist activity.

The bill also inserts a provision which provides, in the event that the Minister ceases to be satisfied that an organisation is directly or indirectly engaged in terrorist activity, for a declaration to be made to that effect with the result that the listing of the organisation will cease to have effect.

The Committee has no comment on this bill.

Customs Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 15 May 2003 by the Attorney-General. [Portfolio responsibility: Justice and Customs]

Introduced with the Customs Tariff Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2003, the bill proposes to amend the *Customs Act 1901* to:

- introduce rules of origin for goods that are the produce or manufacture of a Least Developed Country (LDC) or East Timor, which will enable such goods to have duty-free access to Australia; and
- introduce new rules of origin for goods that are the produce or manufacture of Singapore, to give effect to the Singapore-Australia Free Trade Agreement, and enable such goods to have duty-free access to Australia.

Uncertainty of commencement

Subclause 2(1)

By virtue of item 3 in the table to subclause 2(1) of this bill, the amendments proposed by Schedule 2 are to commence on the day on which the Singapore-Australia Free Trade Agreement enters into force. Although the bill itself does not (and indeed cannot) provide any indication of when this event may occur, subclause 2(3) requires the Minister to announce in the *Gazette* the day on which those amendments commenced. Furthermore, when that Schedule commences, it is assumed that the relevant date will be included in any subsequently published versions of column 3 of the table to subclause 2(1).

In the circumstances, the Committee makes no further comment on this provision.

Merits review

Schedule 2, item 3

Proposed new subsections 153VC(1) and (2) of the *Customs Act 1901*, to be inserted by item 3 of Schedule 2 to this bill, grant to the Chief Executive Officer of Customs what appears to be an administrative discretion to vary the application of proposed new subsections 153VB(2) and (5) of the same Act. However, there does not appear to be any provision subjecting the exercise of this discretion to merits review under the *Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975*. The Committee therefore **seeks the Minister's advice** as to the reasons for this omission.

Pending the Minister's advice, the Committee draws Senators' attention to the provisions, as they may be considered to make rights, liberties or obligations unduly dependent upon non-reviewable decisions, in breach of principle 1(a)(iii) of the Committee's terms of reference.

Delegation of legislative power

Parliamentary scrutiny

Schedule 2, item 3

Proposed new subsection 153VD(1) of the *Customs Act 1901*, to be inserted by item 3 of Schedule 2 to this bill, would permit the Chief Executive Officer of Customs to make a determination which would amend the percentage figures specified in proposed new subsections 153VB(2) and (5) of the same Act. However, the exercise of this legislative function is not subject to any form of Parliamentary scrutiny, its only form of publicity being a *Gazette* notice. Proposed new subsection 153VD(3) would permit the Chief Executive Officer to revoke such a determination, the revocation also being simply by *Gazette* notice. The Committee therefore **seeks the Minister's advice** as to the reasons for this legislative power being entrusted to an officer of the Australian Public Service, and for its exercise not being subject to Parliamentary scrutiny.

Pending the Minister's advice, the Committee draws Senators' attention to the provisions, as they may be considered to delegate legislative powers inappropriately, in breach of principle 1(a)(iv) of the Committee's terms of reference and may be considered to insufficiently subject the exercise of legislative power to parliamentary scrutiny, in breach of principle 1(a)(v) of the Committee's terms of reference.

Customs Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 15 May 2003 by the Attorney-General. [Portfolio responsibility: Justice and Customs]

The bill proposes to amend the *Customs Act 1901* to:

- amend certain report requirements;
- update electronic communication provisions; and
- update offence provisions where false or misleading statements are made.

The bill also:

- corrects a technical error in the *Customs Legislation Amendment Act (No. 1) 2002*, which if left uncorrected, would mean that an amendment will never commence; and
- amends the *Customs Legislation Amendment and Repeal (International Trade Modernisation) Act 2001* to reinstate a right to seek a review of certain decisions by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal; and to repeal and replace the transitional arrangements that will apply in respect of exports once the new Customs electronic system commences.

Retrospective commencement

Schedule 1, Parts 1 to 3

By virtue of items 2 to 5 in the table to subclause 2(1) of this bill, the amendments proposed by Parts 1 to 3 of Schedule 1 are to commence immediately after the commencement of various provisions of the *Customs Legislation Amendment and Repeal (International Trade Modernisation) Act 2001*. In view of the year in which that Act was assented to, it might appear that the amendments proposed in this bill would commence retrospectively. However, the Explanatory Memorandum explains in detail that the Act of 2001 has not commenced yet, and may not commence until 20 July 2004.

In the circumstances, the Committee makes no further comment on these provisions.

Retrospectivity Schedule 1, Part 5

By virtue of item 7 in the table to subclause 2(1) of this bill, the amendment proposed by Part 5 of Schedule 1 is to commence immediately after the commencement of item 5 of Schedule 6 to the *Border Security Legislation Amendment Act 2002*. However, the Explanatory Memorandum explains fully and clearly that this amendment will not take effect until mid 2004, and there is therefore no retrospectivity involved.

In the circumstances, the Committee makes no further comment on these provisions.

Explanatory Memorandum

The Committee often comments adversely on the quality of explanatory material which accompanies bills. See, for instance, the tabling statements by Senator McLucas in the Hansards of 19 March 2003 and 14 May 2003.

In the case of the present bill, however, the Explanatory Memorandum is a model of clarity and completeness and the **Committee congratulates the Minister** for this.

Customs Tariff Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 15 May 2003 by the Attorney-General. [Portfolio responsibility: Justice and Customs]

Introduced with the Customs Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2003, the bill proposes to amend the *Customs Tariff Act 1995* to:

- add East Timor to the list of Developing Countries;
- define Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and provide for the duty-free entry of goods originating in LDCs and East Timor;
- provide for the duty-free entry of goods originating from Singapore in accordance with the Singapore-Australia Free Trade Agreement;
- list Palau as a Developing Country rather than as a Place treated as a Developing Country;
- include Papua New Guinea in the list of Forum Island Countries; and
- introduce new International Standards Organization Country Codes.

Retrospectivity Schedule 1

By virtue of item 2 in the table to subclause 2(1) of this bill, the amendment proposed by Schedule 1 is to commence on 1 April 2003. However, the amendment is beneficial to East Timor, as it includes that country in the list of Developing Countries, and therefore grants a tariff preference to goods coming from East Timor.

In the circumstances, the Committee makes no further comment on these provisions.

Customs Tariff Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 29 May 2003 by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration. [Portfolio responsibility: Justice and Customs]

Introduced with the Excise Tariff Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2003, the bill proposes to amend the *Customs Tariff Act 1995* (the Tariff) to impose additional customs duty on denatured ethyl alcohol (ethanol) for use as fuel in internal combustion engines; and make minor related amendments to the Tariff. The rate of duty proposed is the same as the rate currently applying to petrol.

Retrospective operation

Clause 2

By virtue of clause 2, this bill is taken to have commenced on 18 September 2002. However, the bill gives effect to a Customs Tariff Proposal which was tabled in the House of Representatives on 16 September 2002, and the Committee has always been prepared to accept the retrospective operation of bills of this sort, in these circumstances.

In the circumstances, the Committee makes no further comment on this provision.

Excise Tariff Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 29 May 2003 by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration. [Portfolio responsibility: Treasury]

Introduced with the Customs Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2003, the bill proposes to amend the *Excise Tariff Act 1921* to remove the excise exemption for fuel ethanol and impose an excise duty rate equivalent to that applying to petroleum. The amendments alter the Excise Tariff Schedule classification and duty rate for fuel ethanol and the formula in the *Excise Tariff Act 1921* for determining the excise duty on fuel/ethanol blends.

Retrospectivity Clause 2

By virtue of clause 2, this bill is taken to have commenced on 18 September 2002. However, the bill gives effect to an Excise Tariff Proposal which was tabled in the House of Representatives on 16 September 2002, and the Committee has always been prepared to accept the retrospective operation of bills of this sort, in these circumstances.

In the circumstances, the Committee makes no further comment on this provision.

Export Market Development Grants Amendment Bill 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 29 May 2003 by the Minister for Trade. [Portfolio responsibility: Trade]

The bill proposes to amend the *Export Market Development Grants Act 1997* to:

- reduce the income ceiling for applicants to \$30 million in order to be eligible to receive a grant;
- remove the \$25 million export earnings ceiling on grant applications;
- reduce the \$200,000 maximum grant limit to \$150,000;
- reduce the maximum number of grants generally payable to applicants from eight to seven; and
- remove the Act's new markets provision which enabled additional grants based on expenses incurred in promoting to "new markets" to be made.

The bill also contains application provisions.

The Committee has no comment on this bill.

Health Care (Appropriation) Amendment Bill 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 14 May 2003 by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing. [Portfolio responsibility: Health and Ageing]

The bill proposes to amend the *Health Care (Appropriation) Act 1998* to extend the period of operation of the Act for a second five year period commencing on 1 July 2003 and to:

- enable the Commonwealth to enter into new Australian Health Care Agreements;
- refine the definition of an ‘eligible person’ so that it reflects the current definition in the *Health Insurance Act 1975*;
- appropriate funding for hospital services provided, and projects and programs conducted during the new five year period;
- amend subsection 5(2) to provide for additional conditions to apply to grants of financial assistance under section 4; and
- insert a new section 7 which will give the Minister for Health and Ageing the power to delegate certain powers insofar as they relate to financial assistance granted under paragraph 4(1)(b).

The Committee has no comment on this bill.

Health Legislation Amendment (Medicare and Private Health Insurance) Bill 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 28 May 2003 by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing. [Portfolio responsibility: Health and Ageing]

Schedule 1 to the bill proposes to amend the *Health Insurance Act 1973*, the *National Health Act 1953*, and the *Private Health Insurance Incentives Act 1998* to permit private health insurers to cover all out-of-pocket costs for out-of-hospital Medicare services once a threshold of \$1000 per family has been accrued in a calendar year and a six month waiting period has been served.

Schedule 2 to the bill proposes to amend the *Health Insurance Act 1973* to establish a new concessional safety-net for concessional patients to cover 80% of the out-of pocket costs for out-of-hospital Medicare services once a threshold of \$500 per family has been accrued in a calendar year.

Schedule 3 to the bill proposes to amend the *Health Insurance Act 1973* to provide for a new direct billing option to be offered by general practitioners participating in the General Practice Access Scheme. The scheme will permit patients who are charged above the Medicare rebate to assign their Medicare benefit directly to the general practitioner and then pay only the gap amount charged by the general practitioner. The general practitioner will claim the Medicare rebate directly from the Health Insurance Commission.

The bill also contains application provisions.

The Committee has no comment on this bill.

Industrial Chemicals (Notification and Assessment) Amendment Bill 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 28 May 2003 by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing. [Portfolio responsibility: Health and Ageing]

The bill proposes to amend the *Industrial Chemicals (Notification and Assessment) Act 1989* to:

- increase the maximum quantity of new industrial chemicals that a manufacturer or importer can introduce under the Commercial Evaluation Permit system from 2000 kilograms to 4000 kilograms;
- align the deadline for the renewal of company registration with the registration expiry date, i.e. 31 August each year, and specify the same date as the date by which a registered company must notify the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme (NICNAS) if it does not intend to renew its registration for the following year;
- remove the urgent handling fee for late renewals, establish a late renewal penalty regime for renewals received after the renewal deadline, and make consequential amendments to ensure that the provision for late renewal penalties is viable; and
- remove provisions relating to company registration fees and charges from the Act. It is proposed that these fees and charges will be specified in the regulations. Late renewal penalties, or the method of their calculation, will also be specified in the regulations.

The bill also contains application, saving and transitional provisions.

The Committee has no comment on this bill.

Kyoto Protocol Ratification Bill 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 28 May 2003 by Mr K. J. Thomson as a Private Member's bill.

The bill proposes to ratify the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The Committee has no comment on this bill.

Migration Legislation Amendment (Sponsorship Measures) Bill 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 4 June 2003 by the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs. [Portfolio responsibility: Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs]

The bill proposes to amend the *Migration Act 1958* to establish a comprehensive and transparent framework for the sponsorship of migrants.

Schedule 1 to the bill proposes to amend the *Migration Act 1958* to:

- sponsorship to be a criterion for a valid visa application and for the grant of a visa;
- a process for the approval of sponsors;
- undertakings to be made by sponsors according to the kind of visa sought by the person to be sponsored; and
- allow the Minister to take certain actions against sponsors if undertakings are breached.

Schedule 2 to the bill proposes to amend the *Migration Act 1958* to limit and specify the circumstances in which a decision to refuse to grant certain temporary visas may be reviewed by the Migration Review Tribunal.

The Committee has no comment on this bill.

National Handgun Buyback Bill 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 15 May 2003 by the Attorney-General. [Portfolio responsibility: Justice and Customs]

The bill proposes to enable the Commonwealth to appropriate money to:

- reimburse the States, Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory for compensation payments made by them through the handgun buyback scheme that will run from 1 July to 31 December 2003; and
- make payments in relation to the implementation of the Council of Australian Governments' handgun reforms.

The bill also contains a regulation-making power.

The Committee has no comment on this bill.

National Transport Commission Bill 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 4 June 2003 by the Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government. [Portfolio responsibility: Transport and Regional Services]

Introduced with the National Transport Commission (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2003, the bill proposes to replace the current National Road Transport Commission (NRTC) with a new body, the National Transport Commission (NTC). The NTC will be an independent statutory body with responsibility for developing, monitoring and maintaining uniform or nationally consistent regulatory and operational reforms relating to road, rail and intermodal transport.

The bill also provides a mechanism for setting out model legislation and other instruments in the regulations which have been agreed to by the Australian Transport Commission Ministers. The provisions of the proposed Act are also to be supported by an inter-governmental agreement that is currently being finalised to formalise the cooperative arrangements between the Commonwealth, States and Territories and define the roles and responsibilities of the NTC, the ATC and the different jurisdictions.

The bill largely replicates the NRTC Act and reflects established practice concerning the appointment of Commissioners, remuneration and procedural and reporting requirements for an organisation of this kind.

The bill also includes a broad regulation-making power and a review and report clause.

Commencement

Subclause 2(3)

By virtue of subclause 2(3) of this bill, it is to commence on Proclamation, but may not commence until nine months after Assent. The Explanatory Memorandum gives no indication of the reason for this breach of legislative policy, which is spelt out in clause 18 of Drafting Direction 2002, No. 2, to the effect that any period of delayed commencement longer than six months “should be explained in the Explanatory Memorandum.” The Committee

seeks the **Minister's advice** as to the reason for this breach of legislative policy.

Pending the Minister's advice, the Committee draws Senators' attention to the provision, as it may be considered to trespass unduly on personal rights and liberties, in breach of principle 1(a)(i) of the Committee's terms of reference.

National Transport Commission (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 4 June 2003 by the Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government. [Portfolio responsibility: Transport and Regional Services]

Introduced with the National Transport Commission Bill 2003, the bill proposes to:

- repeal the *National Road Transport Commission Act 1991*;
- amend the *National Environment Protection Council Act 1994* and the *Road Transport Charges (Australian Capital Territory) Act 1993* consequent upon the enactment of the *National Transport Commission Act 2003*; and
- make transitional arrangements following the repeal of the *National Road Transport Commission Act 1991*.

The Committee has no comment on this bill.

New Business Tax System (Taxation of Financial Arrangements) Bill (No. 1) 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 29 May 2003 by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration. [Portfolio responsibility: Treasury]

Schedule 1 to the bill proposes to amend the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1936* and the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1977* to remove the taxing point occurring at the time an investor converts or exchanges traditional securities for ordinary shares.

Schedules 2 and 3 to the bill propose to amend the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997* to make technical corrections to the capital gains tax provisions to ensure that they operate as intended for convertible interests and rights, respectively.

Schedule 4 to the bill proposes to amend the *Financial Corporations (Transfer of Assets and Liabilities) Act 1993*, the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1936*, the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997* and the *Taxation Administration Act 1953* to introduce a general translation rule into the income tax law, which will translate foreign currency denominated amounts in Australian dollars.

The Schedule also:

- proposes to implement functional currency rules;
- introduces a core realisation principle into the income tax law which, together with the translation rule, ensures that foreign currency gains and losses are brought to account when realized; and
- introduces a simplified treatment for certain currency denominated bank accounts, and optional roll-over relief for the issuer of certain securities under finance arrangements.

The bill also contains transitional provisions.

**Retrospective application
Schedule 1, item 17**

By virtue of item 17 of Schedule 1 to this bill, some of the amendments proposed in that Schedule would apply from 7.30pm on 14 May 2002, and the remainder of the amendments would apply from 1 July 2001. The amendments proposed in Schedules 2 and 3 are consequential on those proposed in Schedule 1 and, by virtue of item 9 of Schedule 2 and item 2 of Schedule 3, would also apply from 1 July 2001. However, the Explanatory Memorandum states that these amendments “will have no impact on the revenue over the forward estimates period.”

In the circumstances, the Committee makes no further comment on this provision.

Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Legislation Amendment Bill 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 5 June 2003 by the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment and Heritage. [Portfolio responsibility: Environment and Heritage]

Part of a package of three bills, this bill proposes to amend the *Ozone Protection Act 1989* to:

- extend the existing licensing system for the import, export and manufacture of ozone depleting substances to also include synthetic greenhouse gas replacements;
- simplify current regulatory arrangements for end-use control of ozone depleting substances and synthetic greenhouse gas alternatives by replacing existing State and Territory legislation with a national framework;
- reform the current financial arrangements for the ozone protection program to establish the Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Account which requires a ban on trade in and manufacture of bromochloromethane, and a ban on hydrochlorofluorocarbons in certain countries;
- implement the Beijing Amendment to the *Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer*;
- change the short and long titles of the Act; and
- make minor technical amendments.

The bill also makes consequential amendments to the *Evidence Act 1995* and the *Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997*; and contains application and transitional provisions.

Application of provisions

Subclause 4(1)

Subclause 4(1) of this bill would delay the application of any amendment to be made thereby which would have the effect of creating, or expanding the scope of, an offence. However, the delay is merely until “a date fixed by Proclamation for the purposes of” that subclause, with no specification of a time within which the offence provisions must apply in any event. Although the subclause deals with the application of provisions, and not their commencement, it is clearly contrary to the legislative policy referred to in clause 17 of Drafting Direction 2002, No. 2, that, as a general rule, “a restriction should be placed on the period within which ... a provision of an Act may be proclaimed.” The Committee **seeks the Minister’s advice** as to the reason for this breach of legislative policy.

Pending the Minister’s advice, the Committee draws Senators’ attention to the provision, as it may be considered to trespass unduly on personal rights and liberties, in breach of principle 1(a)(i) of the Committee’s terms of reference.

Strict liability

Proposed new subsection 45B(1)

Proposed new subsection 45B(1) of the Principal Act, to be inserted by item 59 of Schedule 1 to this bill, would create a strict liability offence. Not only does the Explanatory Memorandum fail to explain the nature of a strict liability offence, it also fails to explain the need, in these circumstances, for the imposition of criminal liability in the absence of fault on the part of the accused. Furthermore, the Explanatory Memorandum makes no reference to the Committee’s *Sixth Report of 2002, Application of Absolute and Strict Liability Offences in Commonwealth Legislation*. The Committee **seeks the Minister’s advice** as to why strict liability was regarded as necessary in these circumstances, and whether the terms of the Committee’s Report were considered in coming to a conclusion on that question.

Pending the Minister's advice, the Committee draws Senators' attention to the provision, as it may be considered to trespass unduly on personal rights and liberties, in breach of principle 1(a)(i) of the Committee's terms of reference.

Ozone Protection (Licence Fees—Imports) Amendment Bill 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 5 June 2003 by the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment and Heritage. [Portfolio responsibility: Environment and Heritage]

Part of a package of three bills, the bill proposes to amend the *Ozone Protection (Licence Fees—Imports) Act 1995* to allow regulations to be made to introduce a levy on imports of ozone-depleting substances, including synthetic greenhouse gas replacements for ozone-depleting substances; to set the amount of levy payable; and change the short and long titles of the Act.

The Committee has no comment on this bill.

Ozone Protection (Licence Fees—Manufacture) Amendment Bill 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 5 June 2003 by the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment and Heritage. [Portfolio responsibility: Environment and Heritage]

Part of a package of three bills, the bill proposes to amend the *Ozone Protection (Licence Fees—Manufacture) Act 1995* to extend the regulation making power for existing levies on the manufacture of ozone-depleting substances to include synthetic greenhouse gas replacements for ozone-depleting substances; to set maximum limits on the rate of levies for certain substances; and change the short and long titles of the Act.

The Committee has no comment on this bill.

Superannuation (Government Co-contribution for Low Income Earners) Bill 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 29 May 2003 by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration. [Portfolio responsibility: Treasury]

Introduced with the Superannuation (Government Co-contribution for Low Income Earners) (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2003, the bill proposes to replace the existing taxation rebate for personal superannuation contributions made by low income earners with a co-contribution payment.

The proposed maximum co-contribution payment of up to \$1,000 is to be made on or after 1 July 2002 to qualifying people on incomes of \$20,000 or less. The maximum will then be reduced for each \$1 of income over \$20,000 up to an income limit of \$32,500.

The bill also contains provisions relating to information gathering by the Commissioner and between superannuation providers and members; and the powers of the Commissioner and other general administrative arrangements, including the review of decisions.

The bill also contains a regulation-making power.

Strict liability

Subclauses 26(4), 27(3) and 28(4)

Subclauses 26(4), 27(3) and 28(4) of this bill would create offences of strict liability. However, this bill is, at least in these respects, identical with one of the same name which was introduced into the House of Representatives on 27 June 2002, and on which the Committee commented in *Alert Digest No. 7 of 2002*. In relation to this bill, the Committee repeats the comments it made in relation to the previous bill.

Subclauses 26(4), 27(3) and 28(4) create criminal offences of strict liability. The Explanatory Memorandum, in paragraph 1.77, seeks to justify these provisions on the basis that “the Commissioner’s reliance on [the] information [required to be provided by these clauses] in the administration of this

measure should override the need to prove fault.” In the light of the Committee’s view on strict liability offences generally, as contained in its *Sixth Report of 2002*, that justification may be acceptable.

In the circumstances, the Committee makes no further comment on these provisions.

Superannuation (Government Co-contribution for Low Income Earners) (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 29 May 2003 by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration. [Portfolio responsibility: Treasury]

Introduced with the Superannuation (Government Co-contribution for Low Income Earners) Bill 2002 (the main bill), this bill proposes to amend nine Acts to make amendments consequential to the main bill.

The amendments relate to the:

- eligibility for and taxation treatment of Government co-contributions;
- Government co-contribution arrangements for certain Defence personnel and Commonwealth employees;
- review of certain decisions about Government co-contributions administration;
- use of the Superannuation Holding Account Reserve for Government co-contributions in some circumstances;
- interest that may be levied on late repayments of Government co-contribution overpayments; and
- repeal of the existing personal superannuation contribution taxation rebate.

The bill also contains an application provision.

The Committee has no comment on this bill.

Superannuation (Surcharge Rate Reduction) Amendment Bill 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 29 May 2003 by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration. [Portfolio responsibility: Treasury]

Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the bill proposes to amend the *Superannuation Contributions Tax Imposition Act 1997*, the *Superannuation Contributions Tax (Members of Constitutionally Protected Superannuation Funds) Imposition Act 1997* and the *Termination Payments Tax Imposition Act 1997* to reduce the superannuation contributions and the termination payments surcharge rates from 15% to 10.5% over three years from 1 July 2002.

Part 2 of Schedule 1 to the bill proposes to amend five Acts to amend the limit which applies in relation to the surcharge liability of members of constitutionally protected funds and the reduction of benefits of members of certain unfunded defined benefits superannuation schemes to reflect the reducing maximum surcharge rates.

Part 3 of Schedule 1 to the bill contains application provisions relating to the amendments contained in Parts 1 and 2.

Retrospectivity

Subclause 2(1), items 2 and 4

By virtue of items 2 and 4 in the table to subclause 2(1) of this bill, almost all of the amendments proposed thereby would commence on 1 July 2002. However, as the title of the bill suggests, those amendments are beneficial to taxpayers.

In the circumstances, the Committee makes no further comment on this provision.

Taxation Laws Amendment Bill (No. 6) 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 29 May 2003 by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration. [Portfolio responsibility: Treasury]

Schedule 1 to the bill proposes to amend the *Medicare Levy Act 1986* and the *A New Tax System (Medicare Levy Surcharge—Fringe Benefits) Act 1999* to increase the Medicare levy low-income thresholds for individuals, married couples and sole parents and pensioners below age pension age.

Schedule 2 to the bill proposes to amend the *Income Tax (Transitional Provisions) Act 1997* to modify the general value shifting regime.

Schedules 3 to 8 to the bill propose to amend the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*, the *Income Tax Assessment (Transitional Provisions) Act 1997* and the *New Business Tax System (Consolidation, Value Shifting, Demergers and Other Measurers) Act 2002* to refine the consolidation regime in respect of the treatment of linked assets and liabilities; partnerships; transitional foreign-held membership structures; application of rules to multiple entry consolidated groups; general application provisions and to make technical corrections.

Schedule 9 to the bill proposes to amend the *Taxation Administration Act 1953* to streamline the procedures under which an individual taxpayer can be released from a tax liability where payment of the liability would entail serious hardship and introduce new administrative review provisions.

Schedule 10 to the bill proposes to amend the imputation rules contained in the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997* to allow New Zealand companies to choose to enter the Australian imputation system.

Schedule 11 to the bill proposes to amend the *A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999* and the *A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax Transition) Act 1999* to apply the GST insurance provisions to payments and supplies made in settlement of claims arising under a compulsory third-party scheme; and extend the provisions to apply to transactions undertaken by insurers, pursuant to an agreement to share the cost of settlements made under a compulsory third-party scheme.

Schedule 12 to the bill proposes to amend the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997* to provide for the establishment of a new category of deductible gift recipient, namely, a register of harm prevention charities.

The bill also contains application and transitional provisions, and makes consequential amendments to related legislation.

Retrospectivity Schedules 3 to 7

By virtue of item 3 in the table to subclause 2(1) of this bill, the amendments proposed by Schedules 3 to 7 would commence immediately after the commencement of Schedule 1 to the *New Business Tax System (Consolidation and Other Measures) Act 2003*, on 1 July 2002. However, the Explanatory Memorandum observes that there is no financial impact from these amendments.

In the circumstances, the Committee makes no further comment on this provision.

Retrospectivity Subclause 2(1), item 8

By virtue of item 8 in the table to subclause 2(1) of this bill, the amendments proposed by Division 2 of Part 2 of Schedule 10 might commence at the start of the day on which the *Taxation Laws Amendment Act (No. 3) 2003* receives the Royal Assent. However, the Explanatory Memorandum notes that all of the amendments proposed by Schedule 10 are beneficial to taxpayers.

In the circumstances, the Committee makes no further comment on this provision.

**Retrospective application
Schedule 11, item 43**

By virtue of item 43 of Schedule 11, the amendments proposed by that Schedule would apply from 1 July 2000. However, the Explanatory Memorandum points out that those amendments are beneficial to taxpayers.

In the circumstances, the Committee makes no further comment on this provision.

Taxation Laws Amendment (Personal Income Tax Reduction) Bill 2003

This bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 29 May 2003 by the Treasurer. [Portfolio responsibility: Treasury]

The bill proposes to amend the:

- *Income Tax Assessment Act 1936* to increase the low income tax offset and the income threshold at which the low income tax offset begins to be withdrawn;
- *Income Tax Rates Act 1986* to increase the personal income tax thresholds for resident and non-resident taxpayers and make consequential amendments; and the
- *Medicare Levy Act 1986* to increase the income threshold that applies to taxpayers who are eligible for a tax rebate under the Senior Australians Tax Offset.

The bill also contains an application provision.

This bill was received by the Senate on 16 June 2003 and agreed to, without amendment, on the same day.

The Committee has no comment on this bill.

PROVISIONS OF BILLS WHICH IMPOSE CRIMINAL SANCTIONS FOR A FAILURE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

The Committee's *Eighth Report of 1998* dealt with the appropriate basis for penalty provisions for offences involving the giving or withholding of information. In that Report, the Committee recommended that the Attorney-General develop more detailed criteria to ensure that the penalties imposed for such offences were 'more consistent, more appropriate, and make greater use of a wider range of non-custodial penalties'. The Committee also recommended that such criteria be made available to Ministers, drafters and to the Parliament.

The Government responded to that Report on 14 December 1998. In that response, the Minister for Justice referred to the ongoing development of the Commonwealth *Criminal Code*, which would include rationalising penalty provisions for 'administration of justice offences'. The Minister undertook to provide further information when the review of penalty levels and applicable principles had taken place.

For information, the following Table sets out penalties for 'information-related' offences in the legislation covered in this *Digest*. The Committee notes that imprisonment is still prescribed as a penalty for some such offences.

TABLE

Bill/Act	Section/Subsection	Offence	Penalty
Superannuation (Government Co-contribution for Low Income Earners) Bill 2003	Subclauses 26(2) and (3), 30(2)	Fail to provide statements to Commissioner	50 penalty units
	Subclause 31(2)	Failure to comply with notice	60 penalty units

PARLIAMENTARY AMENDMENTS AND THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

AMENDMENTS IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

(13-15 May)

Therapeutic Goods Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2002: On 14 May 2003, the House of Representatives agreed to amend this bill. The amendments raise no issues within the Committee's terms of reference.

(26-29 May)

Migration Legislation Amendment (Protected Information) Bill 2002: On 28 May 2003, the House of Representatives agreed to amend this bill. The amendments raise no issues within the Committee's terms of reference.

AMENDMENTS IN THE SENATE

(13-15 May)

Terrorism Insurance Bill 2003: On 15 May 2003, the Senate agreed to amend this bill. The amendments raise no issues within the Committee's terms of reference.

STANDING COMMITTEE FOR THE SCRUTINY OF BILLS

INDEX OF BILLS COMMENTED ON AND MINISTERIAL RESPONSES SOUGHT/RECEIVED - 2003

NAME OF BILL	ALERT DIGEST	INTRODUCED		MINISTER	RESPONSE SOUGHT RECEIVED		REPORT NUMBER
		HOUSE	SENATE		SOUGHT	RECEIVED	
Bills dealt with in 2002							
Charter of the United Nations Amendment Bill 2002	15(4.12.02)	14.11.02	5.12.02	Foreign Affairs	5.12.02	20.5.03	5(18.6.03)
Communications Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2002	7(21.8.02)	27.6.02	13.5.03	Communications, Information Technology and the Arts	22.8.02	16.9.02	4(14.5.03)
<i>Crimes Legislation Amendment (People Smuggling, Firearms Trafficking and Other Measures) Act 2002</i>	16(11.12.02)	4.12.02	12.12.02	Justice and Customs	17.12.02	11.2.03	2(5.3.03)
<i>Criminal Code Amendment (Offences Against Australians) Act 2002</i>	15(4.12.02)	12.11.02	13.11.02	Attorney-General	5.12.02	3.2.03	1(5.2.03)
Electoral and Referendum Amendment (Roll Integrity and Other Measures) Bill 2002	3(20.3.02)	14.3.02		Special Minister of State	21.3.02	30.4.02	
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Invasive Species) Bill 2002	15(4.12.02)		19.11.02	Senator Bartlett	5.12.02	4.2.03	1(5.2.03)
Fuel Quality Standards (Renewable Content of Motor Vehicle Fuel) Amendment Bill 2002	13(13.11.02)	21.10.02		Mr Katter	14.11.02		

NAME OF BILL	ALERT DIGEST	INTRODUCED		MINISTER	RESPONSE		REPORT NUMBER
		HOUSE	SENATE		SOUGHT	RECEIVED	
Health Insurance Amendment (Professional Services Review and Other Matters) Bill 2002	15(4.12.02)	27.6.02	11.11.02	Health and Ageing re Amendments	5.12.02	31.1.03	1(5.2.03)
Intellectual Property Laws Amendment Bill 2002	7(21.8.02)	27.6.02	16.6.03	Industry, Tourism and Resources	22.8.02	17.9.02	5(18.6.03)
<i>International Criminal Court Act 2002</i>	7(21.8.02)	25.6.02	26.6.02	Attorney-General	22.8.02	13.1.03	1(5.2.03)
<i>International Criminal Court (Consequential Amendments) Act 2002</i>	7(21.8.02)	25.6.02	26.6.02	Attorney-General	22.8.02	13.1.03	1(5.2.03)
Migration Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2002	3(20.3.02)	13.3.02	5.2.03	Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs	21.3.02	27.5.02	2(5.3.03)
<i>Quarantine Amendment Act 2002</i>	3(20.3.02)	14.3.02	21.3.02	Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	21.3.02	24.1.03	1(5.2.03)
Superannuation Legislation (Commonwealth Employment) Repeal and Amendment Bill 2002	2(13.3.02)	21.2.02	19.6.02	Finance and Administration	14.3.02 20.6.02	16.5.02 20.12.02	5(19.6.02) 1(5.2.03)
Taxation Laws Amendment Bill (No. 8) 2002	16(11.12.02)	5.12.02		Treasury	12.12.02	30.1.03	
<i>Taxation Laws Amendment (Medicare Levy and Medicare Levy Surcharge) Act 2002</i>	5(19.6.02)	14.5.02	19.6.02	Treasurer	20.6.02	24.12.02	1(5.2.03)

NAME OF BILL	ALERT DIGEST	INTRODUCED		MINISTER	RESPONSE SOUGHT	RESPONSE RECEIVED	REPORT NUMBER
		HOUSE	SENATE				
Bills introduced 2003							
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2002	1(5.2.03)	12.12.02	3.3.03	Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	6.2.03	24.2.03	2(5.3.03)
Aviation Transport Security Bill 2003	5(14.5.03)	27.3.03		Transport and Regional Services	15.5.03		
Civil Aviation Legislation Amendment Bill 2003	5(14.5.03)	27.3.03		Transport and Regional Services	15.5.03	6.6.03	
Criminal Code Amendment (Terrorism) Bill 2002	1(5.2.03)	12.12.03	13.5.03	Attorney-General	6.2.03	7.5.03	4(14.5.03)
Dairy Industry Service Reform Bill 2003	2(5.3.03)	12.2.03	19.3.03	Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	6.3.03	9.4.03	4(14.5.03)
Electoral Amendment (Political Honesty) Bill 2003	5(14.5.03)		27.3.03	Senator Murray		28.4.03	4(14.5.03)
Energy Grants (Credits) Scheme Bill 2003	2(5.3.03)	13.2.03	26.3.03	Treasurer	6.3.03	24.3.03	3(26.3.03)
Family Law Amendment Bill 2003	2(5.3.03)	12.2.03		Attorney-General	6.3.03		
Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Bill 2003	3(19.3.03)		6.3.03	Senator Conroy	27.3.03		
Petroleum (Timor Sea Treaty) Bill 2003	3(19.3.03)	5.3.03	6.3.03	Industry, Tourism and Resources	27.3.03	16.4.03	4(14.5.03)
Petroleum (Timor Sea Treaty) (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2003	3(19.3.03)	5.3.03	6.3.03	Industry, Tourism and Resources	27.3.03	16.4.03	4(14.5.03)
Private Health Insurance (Reinsurance Trust Fund Levy) Bill 2003	5(14.5.03)	26.3.03		Health and Ageing	15.5.03		

NAME OF BILL	ALERT DIGEST	INTRODUCED HOUSE SENATE	MINISTER	RESPONSE SOUGHT RECEIVED	REPORT NUMBER
Taxation Laws Amendment Bill (No. 4) 2003	2(5.3.03)	13.2.03 19.3.03	Treasurer	6.3.03 18.3.03	3(26.3.03)

