CONSTITUTIONAL ALTERATION (PARLIAMENTARY TERMS) BILL 1983

Date Introduced: 21 September 1983
House: Senate
Presented by: The Attorney-General, Senator the Hon. Gareth Evans

Short Digest of Bill

Purpose

Subject to approval by referendum to amend the Constitution to extend from 3 to 4 years the term of the House of Representatives and, in the event of the Constitutional (Simultaneous Elections) Bill 1983 - (see Bills Digest 94 of 1983) - not being approved to lengthen the fixed term for Senators from 6 to 8 years.

Background


Main Provisions

Clause 4 amends Section 28 of the Constitution and provides that the duration of the House of Representatives shall be 4 years instead of 3. However, a proviso is added which would restrict to 3 years the term of the House of Representatives of the Parliament in existence as at the commencement of the Act.

Clauses 2 and 3(a) and (b) would amend Sections 7 and 13 of the Constitution to provide that the duration of Senators terms would in the normal course of events be 8 years, or in the event of a double dissolution of Parliament the duration of 'short term' Senators terms would be 4 years.

Transitional provisions contained in Clause 3(c) would extend the term of present Senators to 30 June 1986 in respect of short term Senators and 30 June 1990 in respect of long term Senators thus allowing for synchronisation of the next election even if the Simultaneous Elections referendum were not successful.
Clause 3(c) also adds to Section 13 transitional provisions applicable to casual vacancies which may exist at the time these provisions come into effect.

However, should the Constitutional Alteration (Simultaneous Elections) Bill 1983 be endorsed at referendum and come into operation Clause 6 provides that Clauses 2 and 3 shall not take effect, i.e. the Bill will be truncated to a simple amendment of Section 28 to provide for a 4 year term for the House of Representatives.

For further information, if required, contact:

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