DIPLOMATIC PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES AMENDMENT BILL 1980

Date Introduced: 16 April 1980
House: House of Representatives
Presented by: Hon. Andrew Peacock, M.P., Minister for Foreign Affairs

Short Digest of Bill

Purpose
To amend the Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities Act 1967 to grant the permanent mission of regional international organizations which might be established in Canberra, the same privileges and immunities as are accorded to a diplomatic mission of a foreign country.

Background
The Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities Act 1967 gave effect in Australian law to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. That Act (the "Principal Act") does not at present cover such regional geographic organizations as the European Communities, which wants to set up a permanent mission in Canberra. Such a mission would correspond closely to a diplomatic mission from a foreign country.

The International Organizations Privileges and Immunities Act 1963 only covers organizations which do not perform diplomatic representational functions. It does not apply, therefore, to organizations such as the European Communities, where a number of countries in a region have empowered a central organization to carry out certain functions on their behalf.

Main Provisions
A new section, 5A, is inserted in the Principal Act (clause 3). In the section a regional "international organization" may be declared by the regulations to be an international organization for the purposes of the section, in which case the Principal Act applies generally to it as if it were a foreign country.