PARLIAMENT HOUSE CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY BILL 1979

Date Introduced: 8 March 1979
House: House of Representatives
Presented by: Rt. Hon. J.M. Fraser, M.P., Prime Minister

Purpose

To set up a Construction Authority for the New and Permanent Parliament House.

Background

On 22 November 1978, the Government announced its decision to go ahead with the construction of a new and permanent Parliament House, following many years of lively discussion on the need for a new House, and on the best site available. Since 1955, the building has been successively proposed for Capital Hill, the edge of Lake Burley Griffin, and Camp Hill. The present site on Capital Hill was eventually defined by the Parliament Act, which received assent in late 1974. The Joint Standing Committee on the New and Permanent Parliament House, formed in 1975, has so far produced three reports on the new building, while the National Capital Development Commission has carried out substantial preparations leading up to a competition for the best design.

Main Provisions

Clause 4 establishes the Parliament House Construction Authority.

Clause 5 lists the Authority's functions, which include the design and construction of the new House, together with a requirement to supply information to the Minister and the relevant Joint Committee.

Clause 6 enables the Authority to use the resources of the NCDC. The Authority must consider the advice of the Joint Standing Committee on the New and Permanent Parliament House, and must comply with resolutions passed by both Houses of the Parliament (Clause 7).

The Parliament is given the right to declare stages in the design or construction of the new Parliament House,
the commencement of each stage having to be authorised by Parliament (Clause 8).

The Minister may give directions to the Authority, but before compliance they are first laid before both Houses of Parliament for five sitting days to give opportunity for disallowance (Clause 9).

The Authority is given six members, consisting of a full-time or part-time Chairman who may be appointed for up to five years with eligibility for reappointment, the Commissioner of the NCDC, and four other part-time members appointed for periods of up to three years with the option of reappointment (Clauses 12, 13).

The Authority is provided with an Executive Officer, who may be appointed for up to five years in the first instance, and then is eligible for reappointment (Clauses 20, 21).

Clause 38 requires that, as soon as practicable after 30 June in each year, a report of the operations and finances of the Authority together with the report by the Auditor-General thereon be presented to the relevant Minister. The report must be tabled in Parliament within 15 sitting days of such presentation.