**Timeframes for the development of Bills**

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| Estimated timeframe | Characteristics | What the estimated timeframe does and does not allow for | Other factors that will result in a longer timeframe being needed | Urgent Bills |
| 2-6 weeks | * requires a small number of provisions to be drafted/amended
* easy to identify what provisions/amendments are needed
* some analysis or research may be required
* involves applying well‑established drafting precedents or practices
* only 1 to 5 drafts required to finalise the Bill and may be up to 10 pages long
 | **The estimated timeframe for the development of a Bill starts when drafting instructions are received by OPC.** It allows for:* drafting of the Bill (for more information, see [OPC’s drafting services: a guide for clients](https://www.opc.gov.au/drafting-resources/drafting-manuals))
* clarification and refinement of the policy objectives by the instructing agency
* the instructing agency’s capacity to respond to drafts and to issue additional instructions as required
* referral of provisions to other agencies for consideration (allow at least 7 business days) (for more information about the referral requirements, see [Drafting Direction 4.2](https://www.opc.gov.au/drafting-resources/drafting-directions))
* editorial checking (allow 1 business day for small Bills, 3-5 business days for medium Bills and 5-10 business days for large or very large Bills)
* additional policy approval to be sought from the Prime Minister
* the Legislation Approval Process to be completed for the Bill
* the printing of the Bill for introduction

The estimated timeframe does **not** allow for the time needed:* for an exposure draft process or other consultation requirements (whether internal or external)
* to obtain policy authority from the Cabinet
* to obtain agency or Ministerial clearances
* the time needed for any other factors mentioned in the next column

For more information about the requirements of the legislation process, see the [PM&C Legislation Handbook](https://www.pmc.gov.au/resources/legislation-handbook) | **There are many other factors that can affect the estimated timeframe for the development of a Bill. In many cases, these factors will result in a longer timeframe being needed.**These factors include:* an exposure draft process
* consultation requirements for the Bill (whether internal or external)
* obtaining policy authority from the Cabinet
* requiring legal advice
* competing legislative priorities for OPC and the instructing agency
* how clear and well-developed the drafting instructions are (for more information about instructions, see [OPC’s drafting services: a guide for clients](https://www.opc.gov.au/drafting-resources/drafting-manuals))
* how clear and well developed the policy objectives are
* changes in the policy objectives or approach once drafting has started
* the instructing agency’s timeliness in responding to drafts and issuing additional instructions as required
* the need for substantial consequential amendments
* the need for substantial transitional, application and saving provisions

For more information about the processes ad practices of the Cabinet, see the [PM&C Cabinet Handbook](https://www.pmc.gov.au/government/administration/cabinet-handbook-15th-edition) | **If a Bill is urgent, OPC can work with you to ensure it is developed within the required timeframe.**However, the overall quality of the Bill may be impacted by a compressed timeframe because of the following:* reduced capacity to identify the best legislative solution and to identify and solve problems, gaps or other issues
* reduced capacity to identify policy, legal or implementation issues, to seek legal advice and to consult others
* reduced capacity to complete drafting and editorial checks

The following are some of the risks that come with developing a Bill in a compressed timeframe:* increased likelihood of unintended consequences or ineffective provisions
* increased likelihood of amendments being needed during the Parliamentary process and/or in the future
* increased likelihood of adverse comments from the Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills, other Parliamentary Committees, stakeholders and others
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| 2-6 months | * requires a reasonable number of provisions to be drafted/amended or a smaller number of complex provisions to be drafted/amended
* reasonable amount of analysis or research is required to identify what provisions/amendments are needed
* reasonable amount of work may be required to clarify the policy objectives
* involves a degree of original or novel drafting or the careful application of drafting precedents and practices
* raises some constitutional or legal issues and/or some political or other sensitivities
* may require up to 30 drafts to finalise the Bill and may be up to 100 pages long
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| 6 to 24 months | * requires a large number of provisions to be drafted/amended or a smaller number of highly complex provisions to be drafted/amended
* significant amount of analysis or research is required to identify appropriate legislative solution
* significant amount of work may be required to clarify the policy objectives
* involves a high degree of original or novel drafting or the careful application of drafting precedents and practices
* raises significant constitutional or legal issues and/or significant political or other sensitivities
* may require 30 or more drafts to finalise the Bill and may be hundreds of pages long
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