**Timeframes for the development of Bills**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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 to 7 weeks | * small size (up to 10 pages long) * low complexity ‑ for example: * 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 or often used drafting precedents or practices * only 1 to 5 drafts required to finalise the Bill | **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 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 thesize and complexity of a Bill, see Judging size and complexity of Bills.  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   **NOTE**  **If a Bill has characteristics from more than one of the estimated timeframe categories, the category with the longest timeframe will apply.**  **For example, if a Bill is 11 to 100 pages long (8 weeks to 6 months timeframe) but raises significant legal issues (6 to 24 months timeframe) the longer 6 to 24 months timeframe will apply.** |
| 8 weeks to  6 months | * medium size (from 11 to 100 pages long) * moderate complexity ‑ for example: * requires a reasonable number of provisions to be drafted/amended or a smaller number of complex provisions to be drafted/amended * requires a reasonable amount of analysis or research to identify what provisions/amendments are needed * 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 * a reasonable amount of work may be required to clarify the policy objectives * may require up to 30 drafts to finalise the Bill |
| 6 to 24 months | * large size (more than 100 pages long) * high complexity ‑ for example: * requires a large number of provisions to be drafted/amended or a smaller number of highly complex provisions to be drafted/amended * requires a significant amount of analysis or research to identify appropriate legislative solution * 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 * a significant amount of work may be required to clarify the policy objectives * may require 30 or more drafts to finalise the Bill |