

2010

The Parliament of the
Commonwealth of Australia

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Presented and read a first time

**Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny)
Bill 2010**

No. , 2010

(Attorney-General)

**A Bill for an Act to establish a Parliamentary Joint
Committee on Human Rights, and for related
purposes**

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1 **A Bill for an Act to establish a Parliamentary Joint**
2 **Committee on Human Rights, and for related**
3 **purposes**

4 The Parliament of Australia enacts:

5 **Part 1—Preliminary**
6

7 **1 Short title**

8 This Act may be cited as the *Human Rights (Parliamentary*
9 *Scrutiny) Act 2010*.

Section 2

1 **2 Commencement**

2 (1) Each provision of this Act specified in column 1 of the table
3 commences, or is taken to have commenced, in accordance with
4 column 2 of the table. Any other statement in column 2 has effect
5 according to its terms.
6

Commencement information

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Provision(s)	Commencement	Date/Details
1. Sections 1 to 3 and anything in this Act not elsewhere covered by this table	The day this Act receives the Royal Assent.	
2. Parts 2, 3 and 4	The later of: (a) 1 January 2011; and (b) the 28th day after this Act receives the Royal Assent.	

7 Note: This table relates only to the provisions of this Act as originally
8 enacted. It will not be amended to deal with any later amendments of
9 this Act.

10 (2) Any information in Column 3 of the table is not part of this Act.
11 Information may be inserted in this column, or information in it
12 may be edited, in any published version of this Act.

13 **3 Definitions**

14 (1) In this Act:

15 **human rights** means the rights and freedoms recognised or
16 declared by the following international instruments:

- 17 (a) the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms
18 of Racial Discrimination done at New York on 21 December
19 1965 ([1975] ATS 40);
20 (b) the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural
21 Rights done at New York on 16 December 1966 ([1976] ATS
22 5);

Section 3

- 1 (c) the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights done
2 at New York on 16 December 1966 ([1980] ATS 23);
3 (d) the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of
4 Discrimination Against Women done at New York on
5 18 December 1979 ([1983] ATS 9);
6 (e) the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or
7 Degrading Treatment or Punishment done at New York on
8 10 December 1984 ([1989] ATS 21);
9 (f) the Convention on the Rights of the Child done at New York
10 on 20 November 1989 ([1991] ATS 4);
11 (g) the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
12 done at New York on 13 December 2006 ([2008] ATS 12).

13 Note: In 2010, the text of an international agreement in the Australian Treaty
14 Series was accessible through the Australian Treaties Library on the
15 AustLII website (www.austlii.edu.au).

16 ***member*** means a member of the Committee.

17 ***rule-maker*** has the same meaning as in the *Legislative Instruments*
18 *Act 2003*.

19 ***the Committee*** means the Parliamentary Joint Committee on
20 Human Rights for the time being constituted under this Act.

- 21 (2) In the definition of ***human rights*** in subsection (1), the reference to
22 the rights and freedoms recognised or declared by an international
23 instrument is to be read as a reference to the rights and freedoms
24 recognised or declared by the instrument as it applies to Australia.

Section 4

1

2 **Part 2—Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human**
3 **Rights**

4

5 **4 Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights**

6 As soon as practicable after the commencement of the first session
7 of each Parliament, a joint committee of members of the
8 Parliament, to be known as the Parliamentary Joint Committee on
9 Human Rights, is to be appointed according to the practice of the
10 Parliament.

11 **5 Membership of the Committee**

- 12 (1) The Committee is to consist of 10 members:
13 (a) 5 members of the Senate appointed by the Senate; and
14 (b) 5 members of the House of Representatives appointed by that
15 House.
- 16 (2) A member of the Parliament is not eligible for appointment as a
17 member of the Committee if he or she is:
18 (a) a Minister; or
19 (b) the President of the Senate; or
20 (c) the Speaker of the House of Representatives; or
21 (d) the Deputy-President and Chair of Committees of the Senate;
22 or
23 (e) the Chair of Committees of the House of Representatives.
- 24 (3) A member ceases to hold office:
25 (a) when the House of Representatives expires by effluxion of
26 time or is dissolved; or
27 (b) if he or she becomes the holder of an office specified in any
28 of the paragraphs of subsection (2); or
29 (c) if he or she ceases to be a member of the House of the
30 Parliament by which he or she was appointed; or

- 1 (d) if he or she resigns his or her office as provided by
2 subsection (4) or (5).
- 3 (4) A member appointed by the Senate may resign his or her office by
4 writing signed by him or her and delivered to the President of the
5 Senate.
- 6 (5) A member appointed by the House of Representatives may resign
7 his or her office by writing signed by him or her and delivered to
8 the Speaker of that House.
- 9 (6) Either House of the Parliament may appoint one of its members to
10 fill a vacancy amongst the members of the Committee appointed
11 by that House.

12 **6 Powers and proceedings of the Committee**

13 All matters relating to the powers and proceedings of the
14 Committee are to be determined by resolution of both Houses of
15 the Parliament.

16 **7 Functions of the Committee**

- 17 The Committee has the following functions:
- 18 (a) to examine Bills for Acts, and legislative instruments, that
19 come before either House of the Parliament for compatibility
20 with human rights, and to report to both Houses of the
21 Parliament on that issue;
- 22 (b) to examine Acts for compatibility with human rights, and to
23 report to both Houses of the Parliament on that issue;
- 24 (c) to inquire into any matter relating to human rights which is
25 referred to it by the Attorney-General, and to report to both
26 Houses of the Parliament on that matter.

Section 8

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2 **Part 3—Statements of compatibility**

3

4 **8 Statements of compatibility in relation to Bills**

5 (1) A member of Parliament who proposes to introduce a Bill for an
6 Act into a House of the Parliament must cause a statement of
7 compatibility to be prepared in respect of that Bill.

8 (2) A member of Parliament who introduces a Bill for an Act into a
9 House of the Parliament, or another member acting on his or her
10 behalf, must cause the statement of compatibility prepared under
11 subsection (1) to be presented to the House.

12 (3) A statement of compatibility must include an assessment of
13 whether the Bill is compatible with human rights.

14 (4) A statement of compatibility prepared under subsection (1) is not
15 binding on any court or tribunal.

16 (5) A failure to comply with this section in relation to a Bill that
17 becomes an Act does not affect the validity, operation or
18 enforcement of the Act or any other provision of a law of the
19 Commonwealth.

20 **9 Statements of compatibility in relation to certain legislative**
21 **instruments**

22 (1) The rule-maker in relation to a legislative instrument to which
23 section 42 (disallowance) of the *Legislative Instruments Act 2003*
24 applies must cause a statement of compatibility to be prepared in
25 respect of that legislative instrument.

26 Note: The statement of compatibility must be included in the explanatory
27 statement relating to the legislative instrument (see the definition of
28 *explanatory statement* in section 4 of the *Legislative Instruments Act*
29 *2003*).

30 (2) A statement of compatibility must include an assessment of
31 whether the legislative instrument is compatible with human rights.

Section 9

- 1 (3) A statement of compatibility prepared under subsection (1) is not
2 binding on any court or tribunal.
- 3 (4) A failure to comply with this section in relation to a legislative
4 instrument does not affect the validity, operation or enforcement of
5 the instrument or any other provision of a law of the
6 Commonwealth.

Part 4 Regulations

Section 10

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2 **Part 4—Regulations**

3

4 **10 Regulations**

5 The Governor-General may make regulations prescribing matters:

6 (a) required or permitted to be prescribed by this Act; or

7 (b) necessary or convenient to be prescribed for carrying out or
8 giving effect to this Act.