

1989

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

THE SENATE

SENATE (QUORUM) BILL 1989

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

(Circulated by authority of the Manager of Government
Business in the Senate, Senator the Hon. Robert Ray)

SENATE (QUORUM) BILL 1989

OUTLINE

The Bill provides for the quorum of the Senate to be one-quarter of the whole number of the senators.

Section 22 of the Constitution provides that -

Until the Parliament otherwise provides, the presence of at least one-third of the whole number of the senators shall be necessary to constitute a meeting of the Senate for the exercise of its powers.

On 1 December 1988 the Senate Select Committee on Legislation Procedures recommended that legislative action be taken to reduce the quorum of the Senate from one-third to one-quarter of the senators.

The effect of the bill is to reduce the number of senators required to constitute a meeting of the Senate for the Senate to exercise its powers from 26 senators (one-third of the total number of 76) to 19 senators (one-quarter of the total number).

Financial Impact Statement

The Bill has no financial impact on the operations of the Senate.

NOTES ON CLAUSES

Clause 1 - Short Title

The clause provides for the citation of the Act.

Clause 2 - Commencement

Clause 2 provides for the Act to commence on the day after the day on which it receives the Royal Assent.

Clause 3 - Quorum

Clause 3 provides that the quorum for the Senate shall be one-quarter of the whole number of the senators.

Section 22 of the Constitution provides that until Parliament otherwise provides, one-third of the whole number of the senators shall be necessary to constitute a meeting of the Senate for the exercise of its powers. The effect of the Clause is to reduce the quorum to one-quarter thus requiring the presence of 19 senators, rather than 26 senators for a meeting of the Senate to exercise its powers.