

1991

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NATIONAL MEASUREMENT (STANDARD TIME)
AMENDMENT BILL 1991

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

(Circulated by Ronald Edwards, Member for Stirling)



NATIONAL MEASUREMENT (STANDARD TIME) AMENDMENT BILL 1991

GENERAL OUTLINE

1. The Bill provides for the specification of standard time zones and the regulation of summer time in Australia and the external territories using the weights and measures power conferred by Section 51(XV) of the Constitution.
2. Following proposals arising out of an International Meridian Conference in Washington in October 1884 all States in Australia enacted in 1895 Time Acts which defined the three existing time zones in Australia. It is under these Acts that State Governments now provide for summer time.

FINANCIAL IMPACT STATEMENT

3. The amendments will have no financial impact.

NOTES ON INDIVIDUAL CLAUSES

CLAUSE 1: SHORT TITLE

4. Formal

CLAUSE 2: COMMENCEMENT

5. The Act will commence on the day on which it receives Royal Assent. As the Bill provides legislative support for the existing national time system no delay is seen as necessary.

CLAUSE 3: INTERPRETATION

6. Provides definitions for standard time, summer time and time zone.

PART II A STANDARD TIMES AND SUMMER TIMES

NEW SECTIONS 15A AND 15B: CO-ORDINATED UNIVERSAL TIME

7. In 1975 the 15th General Conference of Weights and Measures recommended to member countries that Co-ordinated Universal Time (UTC) based on atomic clocks should replace Greenwich Mean Time, based on solar time, as the basis of civil and legal time. New sections 15A and 15B implement that recommendation and recognise the role of CSIRO National Measurement Laboratory (The Organisation) in maintaining the physical standards of time.

NEW SECTION 15C: REFERENCES TO TIME IN LAWS, ETC.

8. The legislation establishes standard time or summer time as legal time in Australia and its external territories. This section allows either to be used in legal instruments.

NEW SECTION 15D: SUMMER TIMES

9. This clause allows for the provision of summer time details of which will be provided in the regulations. Provision is also made for consultation with Premiers and Chief Ministers on summer time regulation.

10. Provision is made for the use of standard time for scientific purposes e.g. the Australian Antarctic bases.

NEW SECTION 15E: REFERENCE TO "AM" AND "PM"

11. Provision is made for the continued specification of time using the expressions "am" and "pm".

CLAUSE 5: FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMISSION

12. This clause provides the National Standards Commission with the additional function of advising the Minister about disseminating accurate time information to the Community.

SCHEDULE

13. The seven time zones proposed are defined in terms of the existing arrangements in State and Territory Acts. Standard Time is defined in terms of the number of hours in advance of Co-ordinated Universal Time (UTC).