



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

HOW LAWS ARE MADE

The primary role of any national legislature is to make laws for the country. Laws are introduced and pass through the legislative process in the legislative body, which in Fiji is the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji.

The Constitution of the Republic of Fiji vests the authority and power to make laws for the State in Parliament consisting of the Members of Parliament and the President, and is exercised through the enactment of Bills passed by Parliament and assented to by the President.

No other person or body has the power to make laws unless stated in the Constitution or any other law.

A proposed law is called a **Bill**. Any Member of Parliament can table a Bill in Parliament for consideration. Most Bills are introduced by Government Ministers.

When a Member of Parliament introduces a Bill, they are required to give it a name and the Bill is formally introduced by the name being read out for the first time (**'First Reading'**). Parliament then sets a future date for the Bill to be considered further, known as the **'Second Reading'**.

During the Second Reading of the Bill, Members of Parliament debate and then vote based on the principles and merits of the proposed law. If Members have voted to consider the Bill further, the Bill is referred to one of the Standing Committees of Parliament for further detailed scrutiny. The Standing Committee can seek the views of the community on the contents of the Bill and may suggest amendments to the Bill. The Standing Committee is required to report on its consideration of the Bill to Parliament within 30 days after referral, unless Parliament, by resolution, directs otherwise or extends the 30-days period.

Parliament then resolves into Committee of the Whole Parliament and goes through the Bill and considers each clause individually. When this process is completed, Parliament formally agrees to the Bill by adopting a motion that the Bill be read a third time (**'Third Reading'**).

When a Bill has been passed by Parliament, the Speaker will send it to the President for assent. Pursuant to the Constitution, the President must assent to the Bill within 7 days. If the President fails to do so, the Bill will be deemed to have been assented to.

Once a Bill receives the President's Assent (or is deemed to have been assented to), it becomes an Act of Parliament and joins the body of laws governing the country.

