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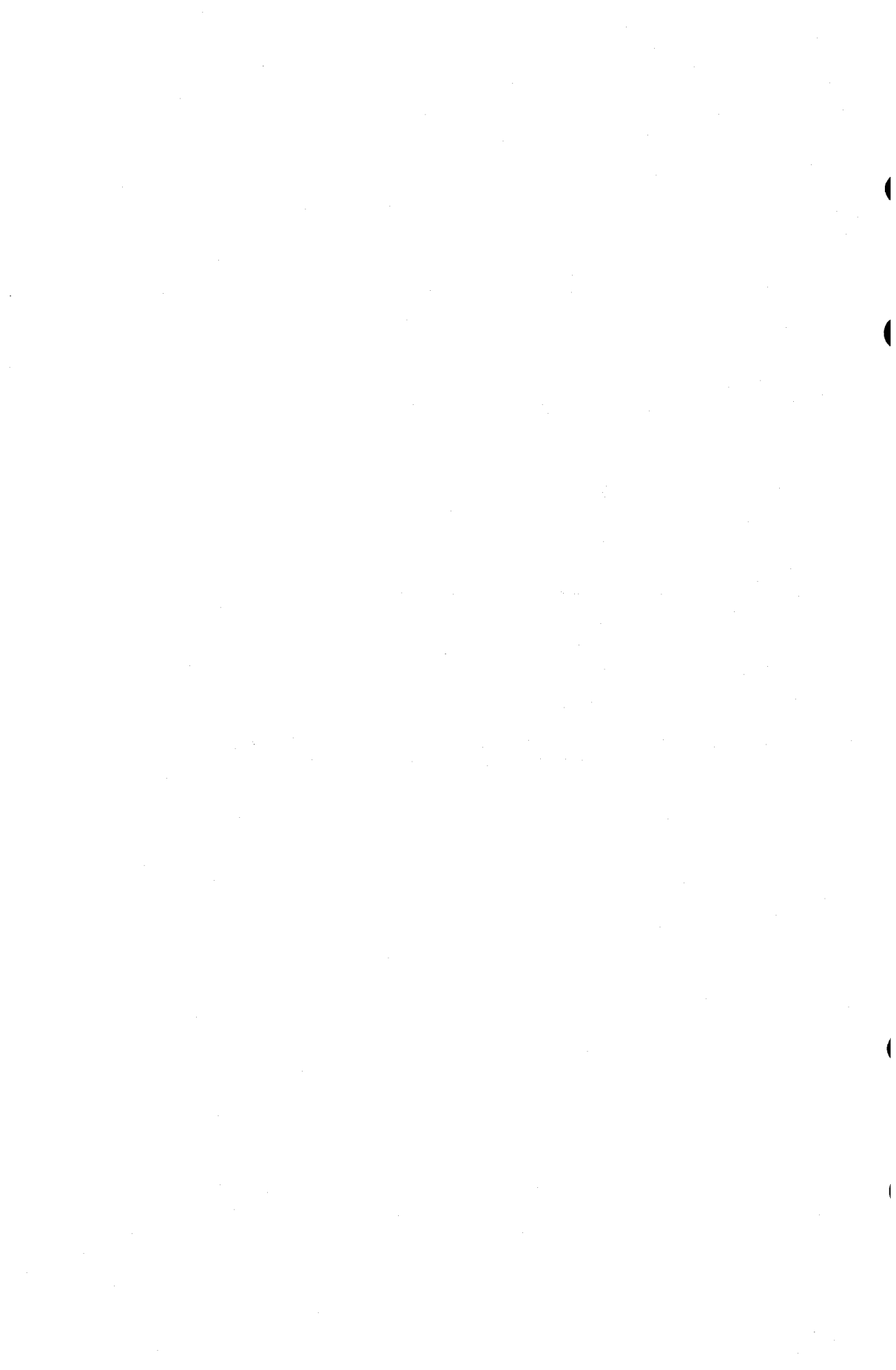
THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SENATE (QUORUM) BILL 1991

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

(Circulated by authority of the Leader of the House,
the Honourable Kim C Beazley MP)



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.

