

## **Partition (*pro forma*).**

The rules of the House specify that before the Governor's speech is reported to the House by the President some formal business shall be transacted. This tradition is a symbolic declaration by the House that it is master of its own program of business. Since the Governor's speech outlines the Government's proposed legislative program, the House asserts its independence from the Government by doing some business which is not part of that program and before the President has formally notified the House of the speech. Traditionally the formal business takes the form of the presentation and first reading of a bill. This bill is termed the 'pro forma' bill and is always non-contentious.

Adapted from a fact sheet 'A New Parliament No. 9 April 2002, House of Representatives'. <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/info/infosheets/is09.pdf>

“Guests reading today’s programme may be curious as to why the Bill *proforma* is introduced and read a first time. Before the Speech by His Excellency the Governor can be considered by the Parliament, it is the practice in both Houses to read some Bill a First time *proforma* in order to assert their right of deliberating without reference to the immediate cause of their summons; that is the Proclamation issued by the Governor, calling the two Houses together as required by the Constitution Act 1934. The Bill contains a title only, but nonetheless serves to demonstrate the Parliament’s independence.”

Extract from Opening day Background Note, R.J.S McKenzie, Clerk of the Council.