



Australian Government

Australian Law Reform Commission

Explanatory Note for core legislative data sets

The Appendix to this note describes each column of data in the data sets listed below and which have been published on the ALRC DataHub. These data sets were created by webscraping the Federal Register of Legislation. A description of how this data was webscraped is available as pages 1–3 of the Data Methodology to Interim Report B of the Review of the Legislative Framework for Corporations and Financial Services Regulation.¹

- **As made Commonwealth legislation:** This data set covers all as made Acts and legislative instruments made since 1901. This data set does not include tariff-related legislative instruments, which are no longer made as legislative instruments.
 - **As made Commonwealth Acts:** This data set covers a subset of as made Commonwealth legislation, covering all as made Commonwealth Acts of Parliament.
 - **As made Commonwealth legislative instruments:** This data set covers a subset of as made Commonwealth legislation, covering all as made Commonwealth legislative instruments.
 - **As made tariff-related legislative instruments:** This data set covers as made Tariff Concession Orders and Tariff Concession Revocation Orders, which are no longer made as legislative instruments

- **In force Commonwealth legislation:** This data set covers all in force Acts and legislative instruments as at the date specified at the top of this webpage. This data set does not include tariff-related legislative instruments, which are no longer made as legislative instruments though some remain in force.
 - **In force Commonwealth Acts:** This data set covers a subset of in force Commonwealth legislation, covering all in force Commonwealth Acts of Parliament.

¹ <https://www.alrc.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/ALRC-FSL-B-Data-methodologies.pdf>.

- **In force Commonwealth legislative instruments:** This data set covers a subset of in force Commonwealth legislation, covering all in force Commonwealth legislative instruments.
- **In force tariff-related legislative instruments:** This data set covers in force Tariff Concession Orders and Tariff Concession Revocation Orders, which are no longer made as legislative instruments. However, several thousand of these instruments were previously registered as legislative instruments and remain in force.

Most columns of the data sets were obtained by webscraping the Federal Register of Legislation. However, several columns have been created either partially or entirely by the ALRC to enhance the possibilities for analysis. ALRC columns include those related to subject-matter, whether legislation is an Act, regulation, or other legislative instrument, and the Parliamentary term in which the legislation was made. The ALRC has also included an experimental column on the maker of the legislation. For Acts the maker is the Parliament and for regulations it is the Governor-General. However, other legislative instruments are made by many different lawmakers, and the ALRC has sought to computationally and manually identify the maker. This column is still in development and feedback is welcome.

Appendix: Data dictionary

Field	Source	Description	Data type
modernName	Federal Register of Legislation	Name of the legislation at the time the legislation data was scraped from the Federal Register of Legislation. This name may be different to the name of the legislation at the time it was made. For example, the <i>Competition and Consumer Act 2010</i> is the modernName of the <i>Trade Practices Act 1974</i> , which is the name of the legislation at the time it was made.	Text
name	Federal Register of Legislation	This is the name of the legislation at the time the legislation was made. For example, the name of the <i>Competition and Consumer Act 2010</i> is the <i>Trade Practices Act 1974</i> , which is the name of the legislation at the time it was made.	Text
id	Federal Register of Legislation	This is the unique identification number given to the piece of legislation by the Federal Register of Legislation. The Register ID can be used to quickly find legislation through searches on legislation.gov.au.	Text
seriesId	Federal Register of Legislation	This is the Register ID for the legislation as originally made. Legislation compilations always form part of a 'Series', which begins with the original piece of legislation as made and is followed by compilations that reflect the legislation as amended. For example, the latest version of the Corporations Act on 30 June 2022 was Register ID C2022C00149, but the as made Register ID for the Corporations Act is C2004A00818. This as made Register ID is used for the Corporations Act Series. LegData links each piece of legislation to its Series, which enables data matching between as made versions and later compilations.	Text
forceStatus	Federal Register of Legislation	This is the force of the legislation at the time the legislation data was scraped from the Federal Register of Legislation. The forceStatus will either be 'No longer in force' or 'In force'.	Text
legVersion	Federal Register of Legislation	This is the version of the legislation at the legislation data was scraped from the Federal Register of Legislation. Only applicable to 'In force' legislation. In force legislation will either be 'Latest Version' or 'Superseded Version', the latter being versions of the legislation that have been superseded by later compilations.	Text
amendingPrincipal	Federal Register of Legislation	This describes whether the legislation is classified as 'Amending' or 'Principal' on the Federal Register of Legislation. All legislation is either 'Amending' or 'Principal'. As described by the Glossary for the Federal Register of Legislation:	Text

Field	Source	Description	Data type
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amending legislation is legislation that primarily amends or makes changes to other legislation. The changes may affect a few words, replace entire sections or repeal a complete piece of legislation. Principal legislation, as opposed to amending legislation, is the legislation that deals with a particular topic or area of the law. Whilst principal legislation may amend other legislation, its primary job is to set out new law rather than amend other laws. 	
compilationAsmade	Federal Register of Legislation	<p>This describes whether the legislation is classified as a 'Compilation' or 'As made' on the Federal Register of Legislation. All legislation is classified as either a 'Compilation' or 'As made'. As described by the Glossary for the Federal Register of Legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As made legislation is legislation in the form in which it was originally made. The text may not reflect in force as it will not include any later amendments that may have been made. A compilation is a version of a law that shows the text of the law as amended at a particular point in time. 	Text
legType	Federal Register of Legislation	<p>This is the type of legislation, as classified on the Federal Register of Legislation. The type will be either an Act or a legislative instrument.</p>	Text
regsLis	Created by ALRC	<p>The data in this column is created by the ALRC, and reflects whether the legislation is an Act, regulation, or other legislative instrument. The Federal Register of Legislation does not identify whether a legislative instrument is a regulation and the ALRC has assigned this classification through manual review of legislative instruments.</p>	Text
subject	Created by ALRC	<p>This is the general subject matter of the legislation. Legislation may have multiple subject matters. Where legislation has multiple subject-matters, each subject-matter is separated by a colon (;).</p> <p>The ALRC created the data in this column by first manually classifying the subject matter of all as made principal Acts. The ALRC then ran a script in the R programming language that classified the subject matter of all other legislation based on the following rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As made amending Acts were classified as having the subject matter of the Acts they amend. For example, if an amending Act amends two Acts classified as being "Crime 	Text

Field	Source	Description	Data type
		<p>and Security” and “Civil Aviation” then the subject matter of the amending Act would be “Crime and Security; Civil Aviation”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As made legislative instruments that were authorised by an Act were assigned the subject matter of the authorising Act. - As made legislative instruments that were authorised by another legislative instrument were assigned the subject matter of the authorising legislative instrument. - Compilations were assigned the subject matter of their as made version. 	
maker	Created by ALRC	This is the name of the person that made the legislation. The ALRC created the data in this column by running a script in the R programming language that analysed the text of legislative instruments to identify their maker. The ALRC also manually classified the maker of some legislative instruments by reviewing the text of the instruments. All Acts are made by the Parliament and all regulations are made by the Governor-General.	Text
numberYear	Federal Register of Legislation	The first non-italicised paragraph description that appears under the ‘Details’ tab of the legislation page. All Acts will have a numberYear, but not all legislative instruments will have a numberYear.	Text
originatingBillName	Federal Register of Legislation	The ‘Originating Bill’ that appears under the ‘Details’ tab of the legislation’s Federal Register of Legislation webpage. Only applicable to as made Acts.	Text
originatingBillId	Federal Register of Legislation	The Register ID of the ‘Originating Bill’ that appears under the ‘Details’ tab of the legislation’s Federal Register of Legislation webpage. Only applicable to as made Acts.	Text
description	Federal Register of Legislation	The second italicised paragraph description that appears under the ‘Details’ tab of the legislation’s Federal Register of Legislation webpage.	Text
administrator	Federal Register of Legislation	The administrator of the legislation as listed under the ‘Details’ tab of the legislation’s Federal Register of Legislation webpage – see ‘Administered by’ under this tab. Legislation can have more than one administrator. Where legislation has multiple administrators, each administrator is separated by a colon (;).	Text
legDate	Created by ALRC	The date the legislation was made. Only applicable to as made legislation (see ‘startDate’ for compilations). This column was created by the ALRC by running a script in the R programming language that applied the following rules in determining the legDate:	Date (yyyy-mm-dd)

Field	Source	Description	Data type
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The legDate of an as made Act is the date of Royal Assent. - The legDate of an as made legislative instrument that has a Gazette date is the Gazette date. - The legDate of an as made legislative instrument that does not have a Gazette date is the date of registration on the Federal Register of Legislation. <p>A total of 393 older legislative instruments have neither a Gazette date nor a date of registration on the Federal Register of Legislation. These are currently excluded from data set. The ALRC can identify these as older instruments based on their Register ID, which gives an indication of the year of their making.</p>	
registrationDate	Federal Register of Legislation	Date of registration for the legislation as listed under the 'Details' tab of the legislation's Federal Register of Legislation webpage – see 'Registered' under this tab.	Date or NA (dd MONTH yyyy). E.g. 1 July 2021.
assent	Federal Register of Legislation	Date of Royal Assent for the legislation as listed under the 'Details' tab of the legislation's Federal Register of Legislation webpage – see 'Date of Assent' under this tab. Only applicable to Acts of Parliament as made. Compilations have a 'Start Date'.	Date or NA (dd MONTH yyyy). E.g. 1 July 2021.
gazettal	Federal Register of Legislation	Date of Gazettal for the legislation as listed under the 'Details' tab of the legislation's Federal Register of Legislation webpage – see 'Gazetted' under this tab. Only applicable to some as made legislative instruments. See registrationDate where gazettal is not available.	Date or NA (dd MONTH yyyy). E.g. 1 July 2021.
startDate	Federal Register of Legislation	Date from which a legislation compilation takes effect as listed under the 'Details' tab of the legislation's Federal Register of Legislation webpage – see 'Start Date' under this tab. Only applicable to compilations.	Date or NA (dd MONTH yyyy). E.g. 1 July 2021.
endDate	Federal Register of Legislation	Date on which a legislation compilation ceases to have effect as listed under the 'Details' tab of the legislation's Federal Register of Legislation webpage – see 'End Date' under this tab. Only applicable to compilations.	Date or NA (dd MONTH yyyy). E.g. 1 July 2021.

Field	Source	Description	Data type
repealDate	Federal Register of Legislation	Date on which an as made piece of legislation was repealed as listed under the 'Details' tab of the legislation's Federal Register of Legislation webpage. Only applicable to legislation as made. Compilations have an 'End Date'.	Date or NA (dd MONTH yyyy). E.g. 1 July 2021.
sunsettingExemptions	Federal Register of Legislation	Indicates whether a legislative instrument is exempt from sunsetting under <i>Legislation Act 2003</i> , and provides the basis of any exemption. This data is scraped from the 'Details' tab of the legislation's Federal Register of Legislation webpage. Only applies to as made legislative instruments.	
originalSunsetDate	Federal Register of Legislation	Where an as made legislative instrument is to sunset, this provides the date on which the instrument was first due to sunset. This date may have become superseded. This data is scraped from the 'Details' tab of the legislation's Federal Register of Legislation webpage. Only applies to as made legislative instruments.	Date or NA (dd MONTH yyyy). E.g. 1 July 2021.
firstNewSunsetDate	Federal Register of Legislation	Where an as made legislative instrument is to sunset, this provides the first amended sunsetting date (if applicable). This data is scraped from the 'Details' tab of the legislation's Federal Register of Legislation webpage. Only applies to as made legislative instruments.	Date or NA (dd MONTH yyyy). E.g. 1 July 2021.
secondNewSunsetDate	Federal Register of Legislation	Where an as made legislative instrument is to sunset, this provides the second amended sunsetting date (if applicable). This data is scraped from the 'Details' tab of the legislation's Federal Register of Legislation webpage. Only applies to as made legislative instruments.	Date or NA (dd MONTH yyyy). E.g. 1 July 2021.
thirdNewSunsetDate	Federal Register of Legislation	Where an as made legislative instrument is to sunset, this provides the third amended sunsetting date (if applicable). This data is scraped from the 'Details' tab of the legislation's Federal Register of Legislation webpage. Only applies to as made legislative instruments.	Date or NA (dd MONTH yyyy). E.g. 1 July 2021.
fourthNewSunsetDate	Federal Register of Legislation	Where an as made legislative instrument is to sunset, this provides the fourth amended sunsetting date (if applicable). This data is scraped from the 'Details' tab of the legislation's Federal Register of Legislation webpage. Only applies to as made legislative instruments.	Date or NA (dd MONTH yyyy). E.g. 1 July 2021.
repealedBy	Federal Register of Legislation	The legislation that repealed the relevant Act or legislative instrument. This data is scraped from the 'Details' tab of the legislation's Federal Register of Legislation webpage. Only applies to repealed legislation.	Text

Field	Source	Description	Data type
tablingOneHouse	Federal Register of Legislation	The House of Parliament in which a legislative instrument was first tabled. Not all legislative instruments have been tabled. Only applies to as made legislative instruments.	Text
tablingOneDate	Federal Register of Legislation	The date on which the legislative instrument was first tabled. Not all legislative instruments have been tabled. Only applies to as made legislative instruments.	Text
tablingTwoHouse	Federal Register of Legislation	The second House of Parliament in which a legislative instrument was tabled. Not all legislative instruments have been tabled. Only applies to as made legislative instruments.	Text
tablingTwoDate	Federal Register of Legislation	The second date on which the legislative instrument was tabled in the second house of Parliament. Not all legislative instruments have been tabled. Only applies to as made legislative instruments.	Text
legPages	Federal Register of Legislation and ALRC analysis	<p>The number of legislation pages as appears on the legislation's 'Download' Federal Register of Legislation webpage.</p> <p>Some older legislative instruments published on the Federal Register of Legislation do not include a page count on the 'Download' webpage for the instrument. Where possible, the ALRC analysed the PDF version of the legislative instrument to obtain a page count. Where the instrument was only available in HTML, the ALRC calculated the total word count of the instrument and divided this by 300 to give a page count. In other words, the ALRC assumed an average word count of 300 words per page. Given the significant amount of white space in legislation, this figure was considered appropriate. A sampling of legislation published on the Federal Register of Legislation showed that 300 was conservative, with most pages containing fewer than 300 words</p>	Integer
volumes	Federal Register of Legislation	The number of legislation volumes as appears on the legislation's 'Download' Federal Register of Legislation webpage.	Integer
explainPages	Federal Register of Legislation	The number of explanatory pages for the legislation as appears on the legislation's 'Download' Federal Register of Legislation webpage. Only applies to as made legislation.	Integer
supportingPages	Federal Register of Legislation	The number of supporting documentation pages for the legislation as appears on the legislation's 'Download' Federal Register of Legislation webpage. Only applies to as made legislative instruments.	Integer

Field	Source	Description	Data type
parliament	Created by ALRC	The term of Parliament in which the Act received Royal Assent or the legislative instrument was made.	Integer
parliamentDate	Created by ALRC	The date on which the term of Parliament began. This is the day after the election that preceded the new Parliament and is not the date on which the new Parliament formally opened, which can be months after the election.	Date (yyyy-mm-dd)