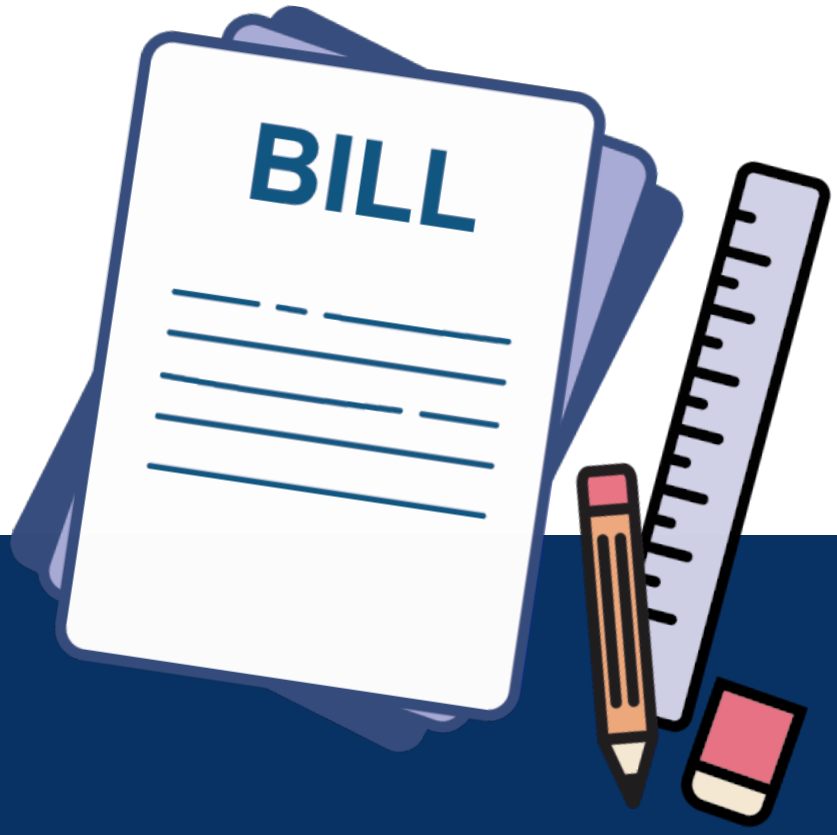
Parliament of Victoria

So you think you can pass a law?



Click here to start

Instructions

You are about to attempt to pass a bill into law.

It will need to pass the bill through both the **Legislative Assembly** and **Legislative Council** before it receives final sign-off, or Royal Assent, from the Governor of Victoria.

You'll start in the **Legislative Assembly**, the house where government is formed and where the government have the majority of members.

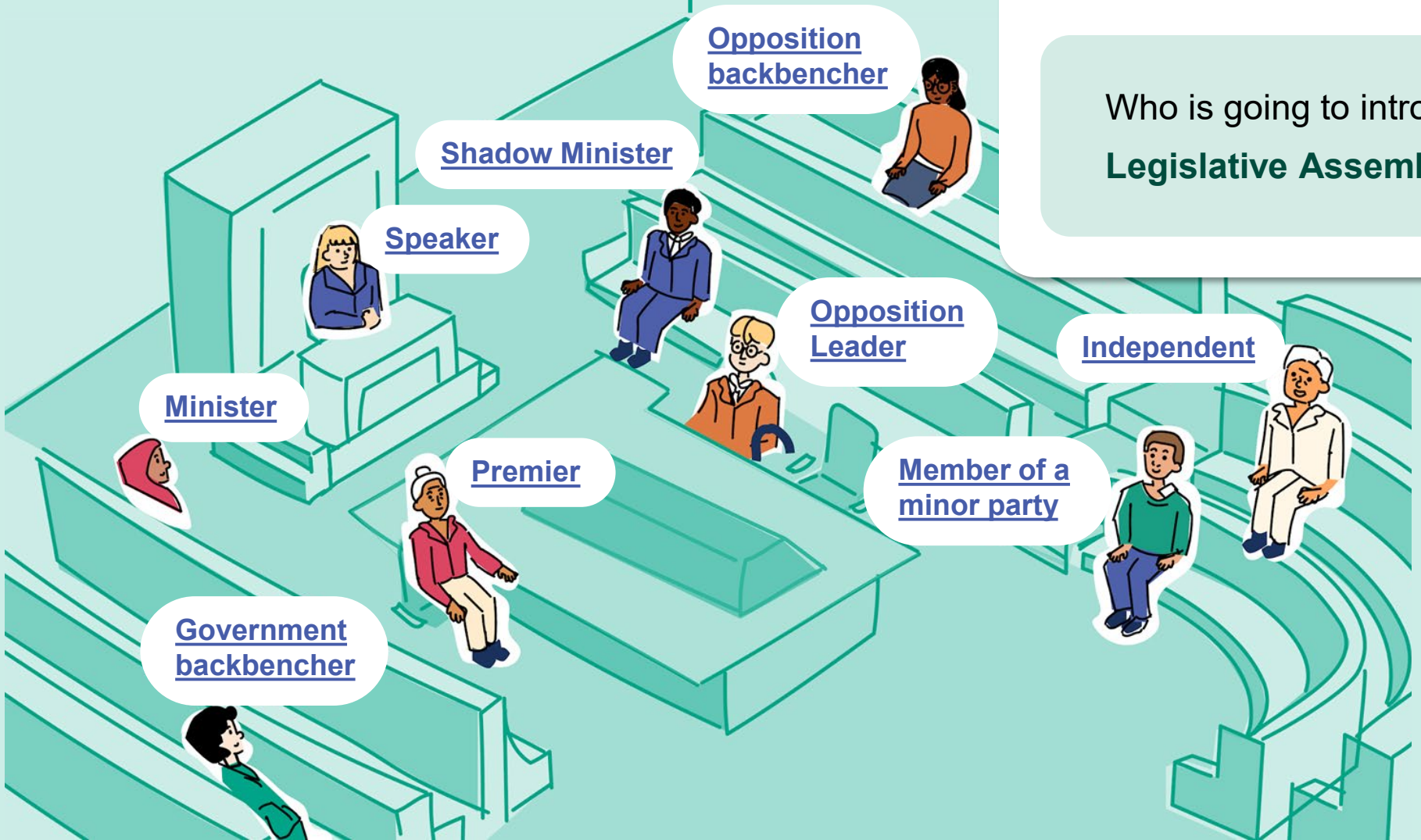
Good luck!

Start the game

Choose your role

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Who is going to introduce the bill into the **Legislative Assembly**?



A government backbencher

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

You don’t usually introduce bills. Introducing bills is usually the job of a minister or occasionally the Premier.

However, if you really want to introduce a bill, you can introduce a private member’s bill. These bills are usually introduced to highlight an important issue for yourself and/or your electorate.

Choose one option

- Introduce a private member’s bill
- Find another way to highlight important issues
- Have a minister introduce the bill

A member of a minor party

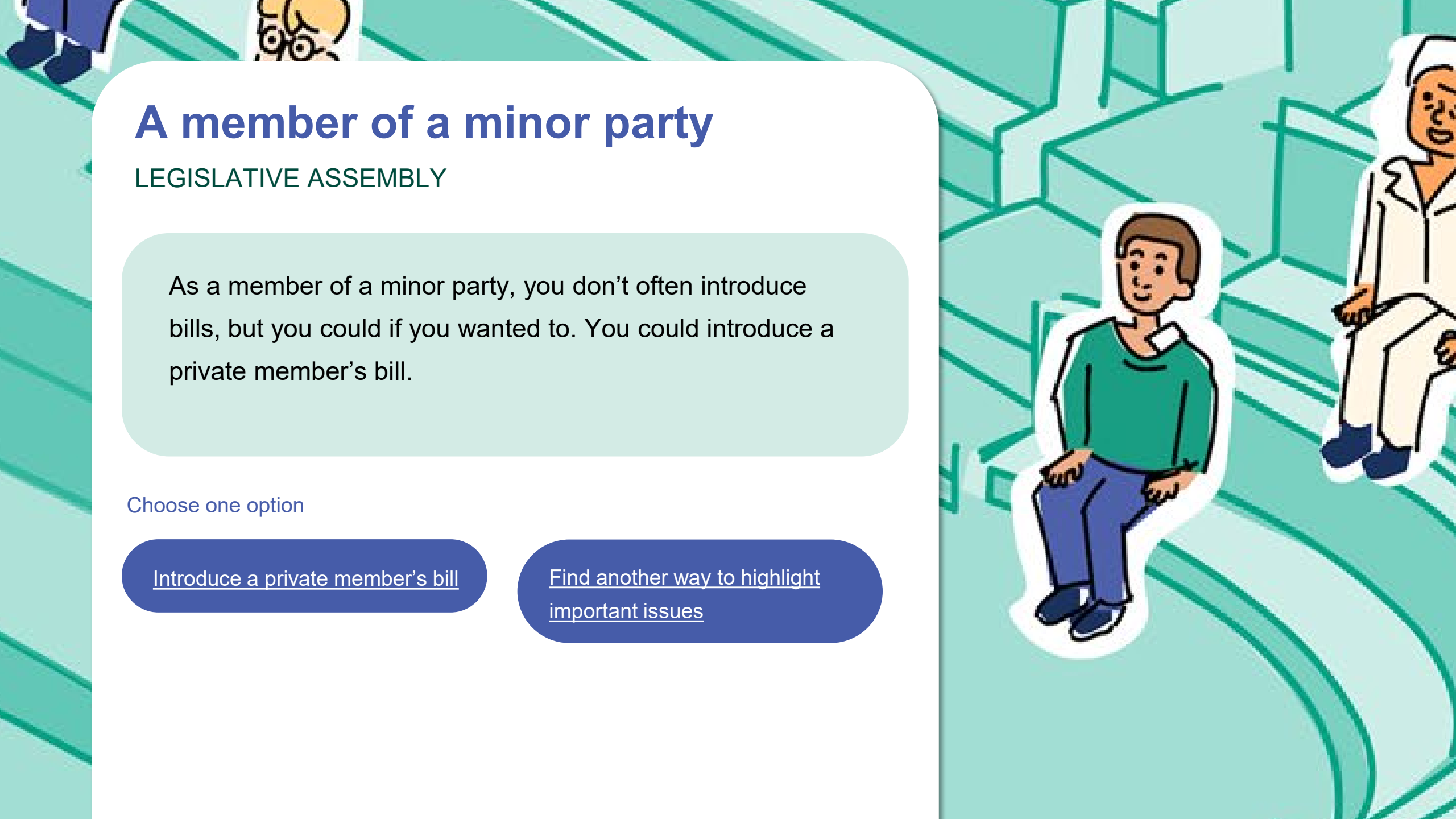
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

As a member of a minor party, you don’t often introduce bills, but you could if you wanted to. You could introduce a private member’s bill.

Choose one option

Introduce a private member’s bill

Find another way to highlight important issues



A minister

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

As a minister you have areas of responsibility such as education, health or transport. It’s your role to introduce any bills that might relate to your areas of responsibility.

After maybe talking to your colleagues, experts and the community, you’ve put all your ideas into a bill and you’re ready to introduce the bill into the **Legislative Assembly**.

Choose one option

Introduce a government bill

A shadow minister

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

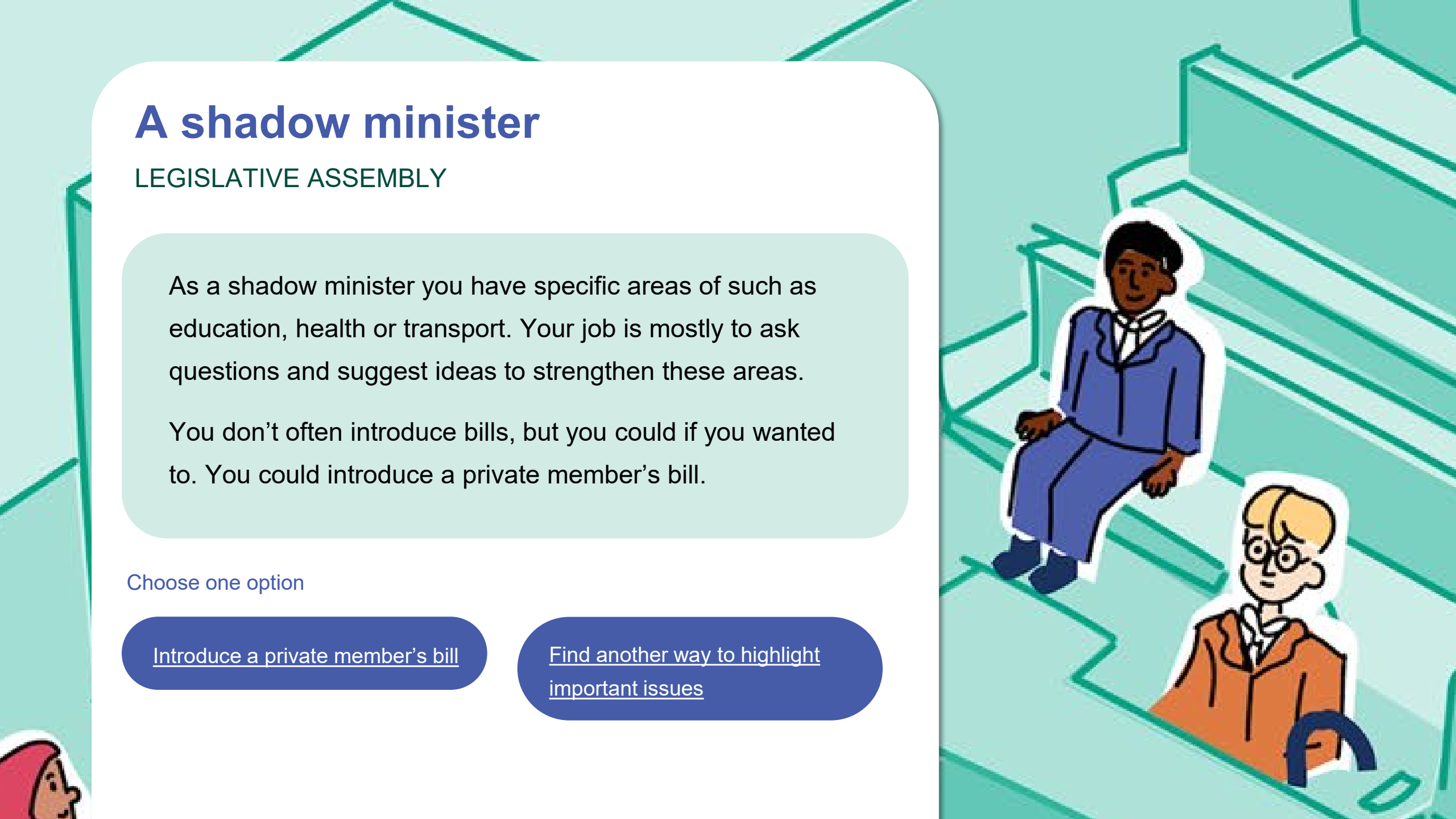
As a shadow minister you have specific areas of such as education, health or transport. Your job is mostly to ask questions and suggest ideas to strengthen these areas.

You don’t often introduce bills, but you could if you wanted to. You could introduce a private member’s bill.

Choose one option

Introduce a private member’s bill

Find another way to highlight important issues



An independent

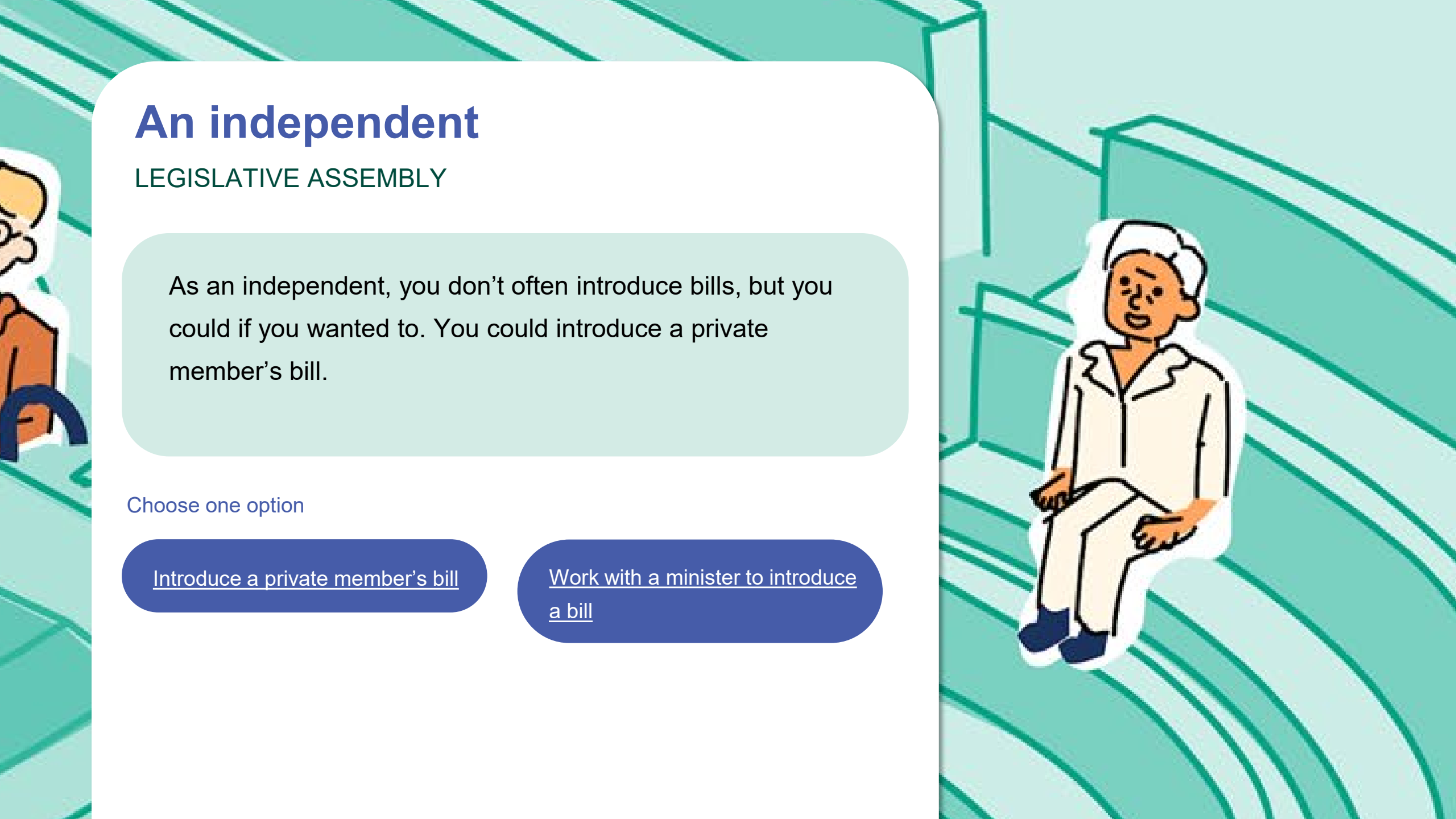
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

As an independent, you don’t often introduce bills, but you could if you wanted to. You could introduce a private member’s bill.

Choose one option

Introduce a private member’s bill

Work with a minister to introduce a bill



An opposition backbencher

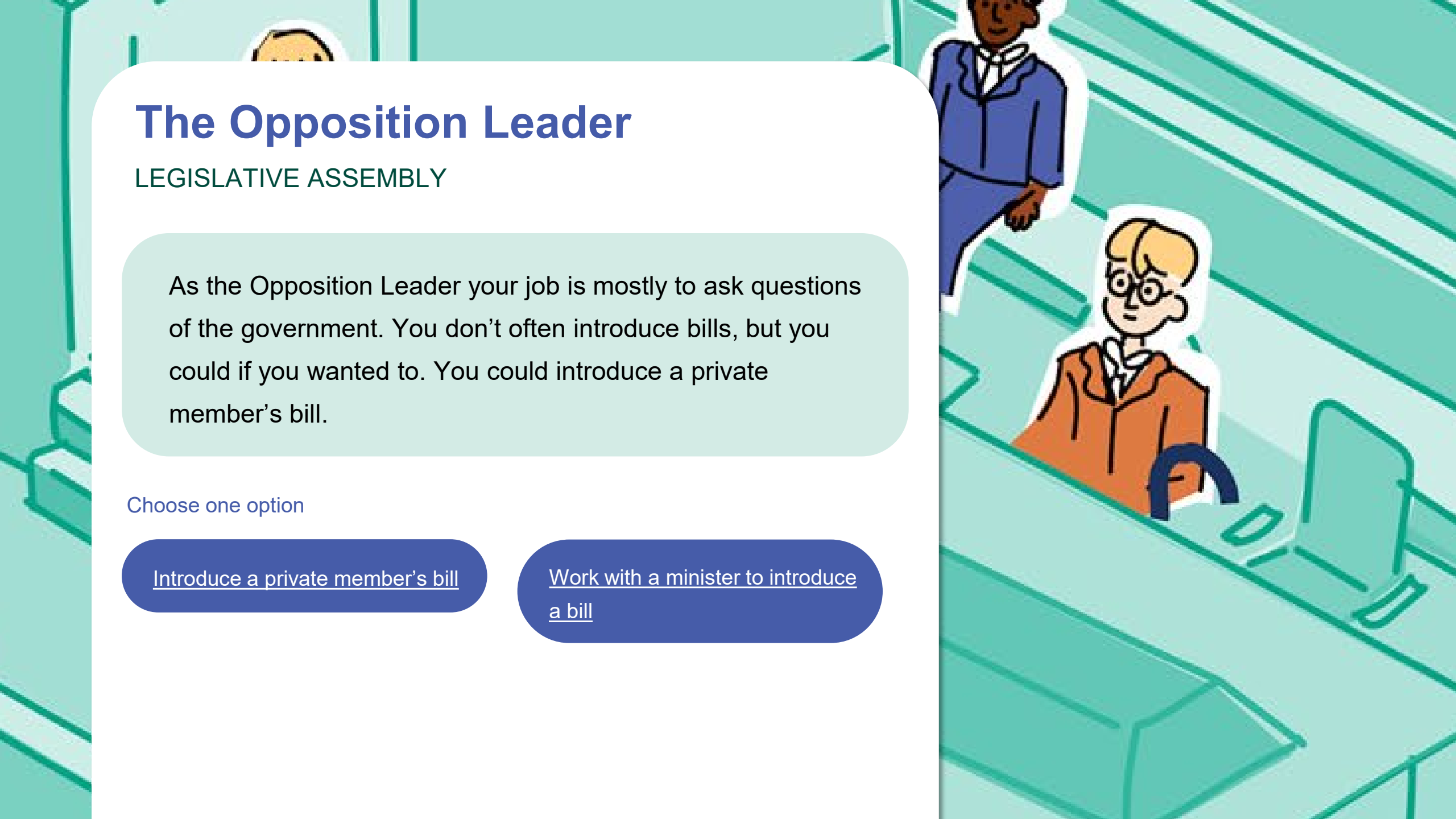
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

As an opposition backbencher, you don’t often introduce bills, but you could if you wanted to. You could introduce a private member’s bill.

Choose one option

Introduce a private member’s bill

Work with a minister to introduce the bill



The Opposition Leader

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

As the Opposition Leader your job is mostly to ask questions of the government. You don’t often introduce bills, but you could if you wanted to. You could introduce a private member’s bill.

Choose one option

Introduce a private member’s bill

Work with a minister to introduce a bill

The Premier

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

As leader of the state, one of your jobs is to oversee the work of the executive (the ministers). You don't often introduce bills, but if you do, it's usually a bill that is considered very important to the people of Victoria.

Choose one option

Introduce a government bill

Work with a minister to introduce a bill

The Speaker

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The Speaker’s role is to manage debate and make sure everyone is following the rules, also known as standing orders. The Speaker does not introduce bills.

Choose one option

- Introduce a private member's bill
- Work with a minister to introduce the bill
- Find another way to highlight important issues

Introduce a private member’s bill

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

You have introduced a private member’s bill as a government backbencher.

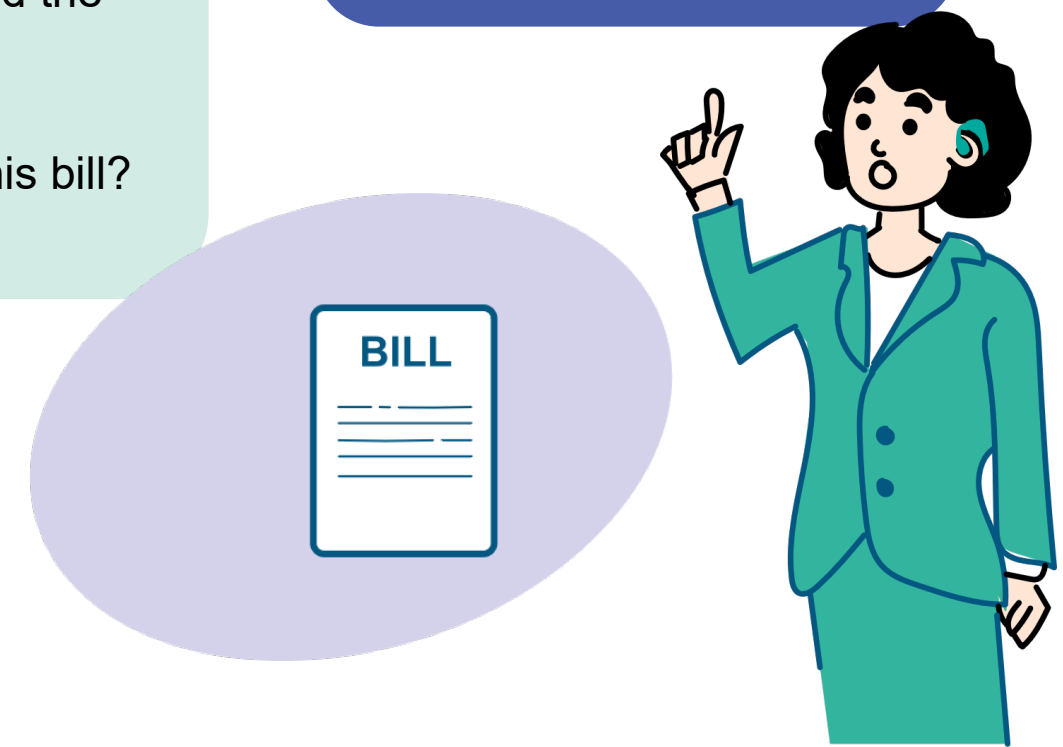
The bill is on an issue that is really important to you and the people you represent.

But does your party know that you want to introduce this bill?

Choose one option

Yes, the party does know

No, I did this all by myself



Return to beginning

Yay, you have your party's support

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Phew! It's good to let your government party colleagues know what you're up to and get their support.

Letting them know means the government has had the chance to read the bill, and they have all agreed you're the best person to introduce the bill.

Choose one option

Introduce the bill and find out what happens next

On second thought, let a minister introduce the bill

Return to beginning

Oh no…

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

While you can introduce a private member's bill, it's probably important to let your party know beforehand so they can read the bill and support you.

The government has the majority of members (50%+1) in the **Legislative Assembly**. So, if your party doesn't support the bill, there is no debate and the bill will not pass.

Choose one option

Try again (and maybe let your party know)

Let a minister introduce the bill

Find another way to highlight important issues

Return to beginning

Introduce a private member’s bill

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

If you decide to introduce a bill, it’s called a private member’s bill.

Private members’ bills are mostly used to highlight important issues for yourself and/or your electorate.

Choose one option

Introduce a private member’s bill

Find another way to highlight important issues

Return to beginning

Introduce a private member’s bill

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

You’ve worked on the bill and prepared your speech, and you’re ready to introduce your private member’s bill.

Does the bill have the support from the government?

Choose one option

Yes, and a few other MPs

No, but I think I have support from the opposition and crossbench

Not sure, so I'll find another way to highlight important issues

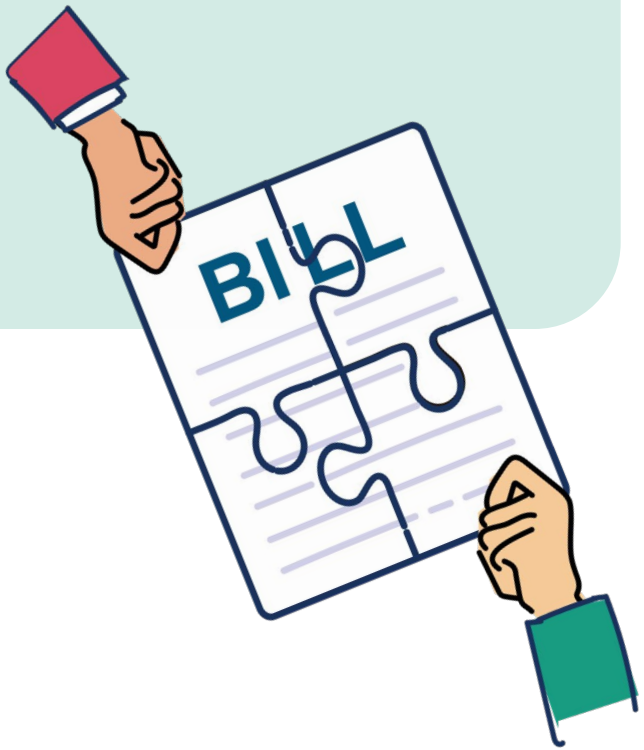
Return to beginning

Are you sure the government supports the bill?

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The government thinks the bill is a great idea and want to work with you to create a new bill that combines their ideas with yours.

What do you do?



Choose one option

- Don't introduce the bill, at least for now
- Try to introduce the bill, without the government's help
- Work with the government and let a minister introduce the bill
- Find another way to highlight important issues

Return to beginning

Don’t introduce the bill, at least not for now

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

All that hard work need not go to waste. You can always reintroduce the bill some other time, perhaps when you have more support.

Choose one option

Come back to it later

Find another way to highlight important issues

Return to beginning

Try again

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Maybe, in another parliament, if there was a minority government, you might be able to convince the opposition, crossbenchers (minor party and independent members) and the opposition to support you.

But unfortunately, in this parliament, you just don’t have the support of the majority of members to the pass the bill.

Choose one option

Work with the government and let a minister introduce the bill

Find another way to highlight important issues

Return to beginning

Work with the government

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Congratulations, the government liked the sound of your bill, and had some ideas of their own that they wanted to include.

You've met with some government MPs, and you now have a choice to make.

Choose one option

Accept the government's ideas and let a minister introduce the bill

Reject the government's ideas and introduce the bill yourself

Return to beginning

Oh no…

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Unfortunately, the government has the majority of members (50%+1) in the **Legislative Assembly**. So, if your bill doesn't have the support of the government, there is no debate and the bill will not pass the house.

Choose one option

Come back to it later

Find another way to highlight important issues

Try again

Return to beginning

It was worth a try…

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

No one can say you didn’t try.

The good news is by introducing the bill, you’ve let your electorate and the other members of parliament know you are passionate about issue.

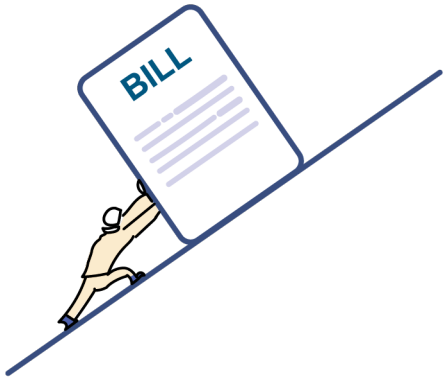
Return to beginning

Choose one option

Introduce another private member’s bill

Oh no…

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



You gave it shot, but unfortunately without the support of the government, there is no debate and the bill does not pass the house.

You can

Try again

Work with the government to include your ideas in another bill

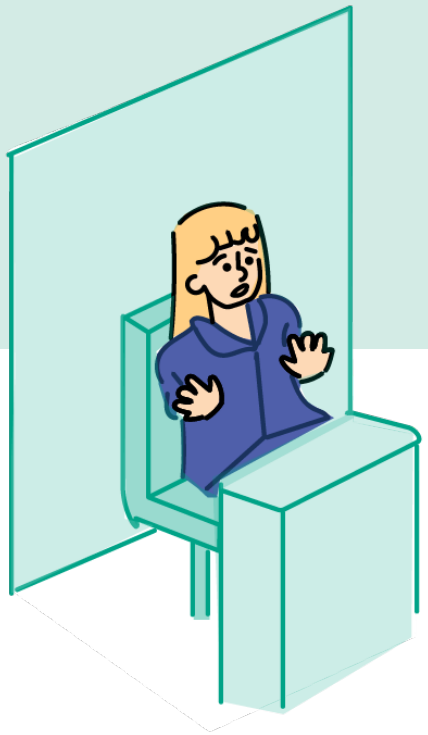
Find another way to highlight important issues

Return to beginning

Point of Order

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

It was worth a shot, but an MP has yelled *“Point of order!"* and has pointed out, as Speaker, you’re not allowed to introduce bills.



Do you

- Resign as Speaker and introduce the bill
- Work with the government party to introduce the bill through a minister
- Find another way to highlight important issues

Return to beginning

Speaker resigns

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Choose one option

Choose another role

This bill must be super important to you for you to resign.

The members in the **Legislative Assembly** vote for a new Speaker and you go back to your role as an MP who can introduce bills and participate in debate.

Return to beginning

Highlighting important issues as the Speaker

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Choose one option

The role of Speaker means that they can't introduce bills or make speeches in the chamber. But the Speaker can still highlight issues that are important to their electorate, to parliament and Victorians by:

- working with their party to highlight issues on their behalf
- inviting community organisations to attend events and briefings at parliament
- continuing their work as an MP out in their communities

Return to beginning

Try again

Introduce a government bill

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

As part of the Executive (a minister or the Premier) you've worked on the bill and prepared your speech.

You're ready to introduce the government bill.

You read the title of the bill. The members of your party shout *"Hear, hear!"* and the bill is one step closer to passing the **Legislative Assembly**.

Choose one option

Follow the rest of the process

Return to beginning

Come back to it another time

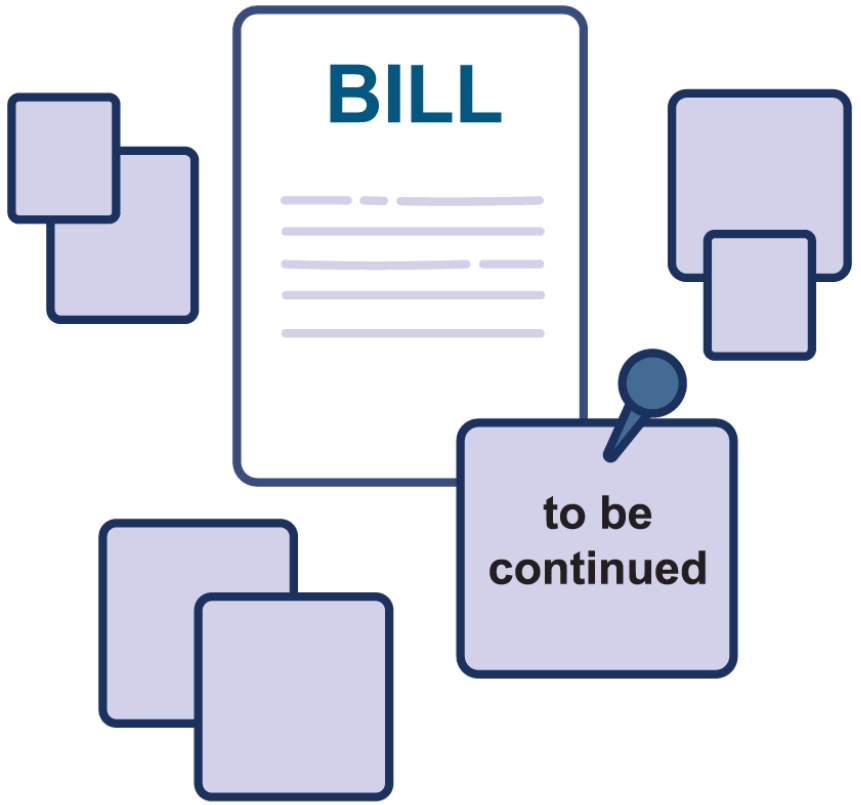
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Choose one option

Try again

Sometimes it is worth revisiting a bill at a different time. This gives you a chance to:

- work with the government to see if there are different parts of the bill they do support
- continue to highlight important issues in the community and in the chamber



Return to beginning

Other ways for MPs to highlight important matters

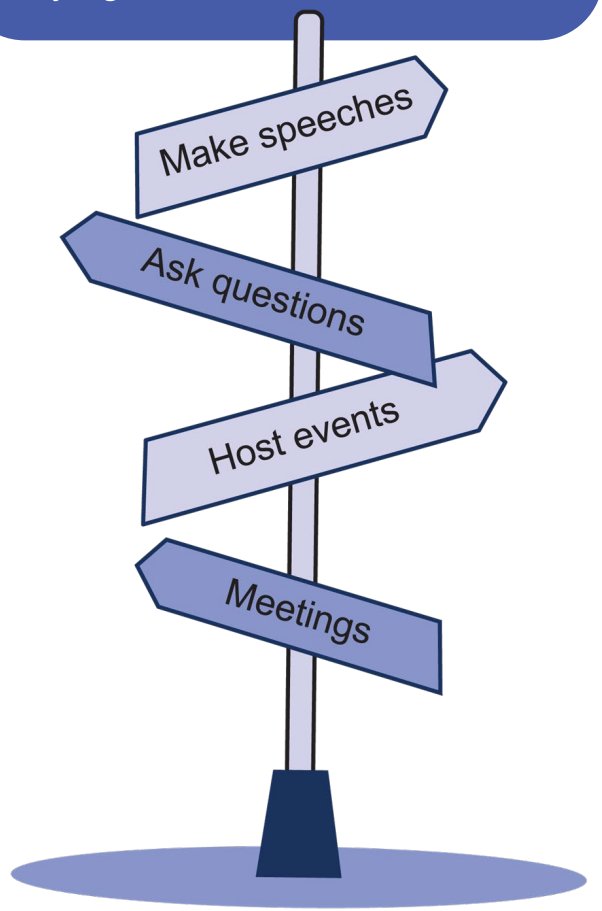
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Choose one option

Making laws is the main role of parliament and members of parliament, but there are many ways they can highlight issues in the chamber and in their community, such as:

- making speeches, such as a member's statement
- asking questions of the government if an opposition member or crossbencher (minor party member or independent)
- hosting or attending events in the community
- meeting with different communities and organisations

Try again



Return to beginning

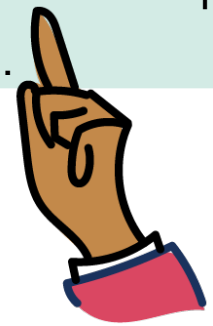
Passing the bill process

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Now that you've introduced the bill (the first reading) it's time to move on to the next two readings. You kick off the debate (second reading) by explaining why this bill is important. You can hear members from your party muttering their support.

Members are given a chance to share their opinions on the bill. Some of them you agree with, some of them are interesting and there are a few points you're not sure about.

The members vote (third reading) on whether to pass the bill and send it to the **Legislative Council**.



The opposition and crossbench

DO support passing the bill

DO NOT support passing the bill

Return to beginning

The bill passes the Legislative Assembly

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

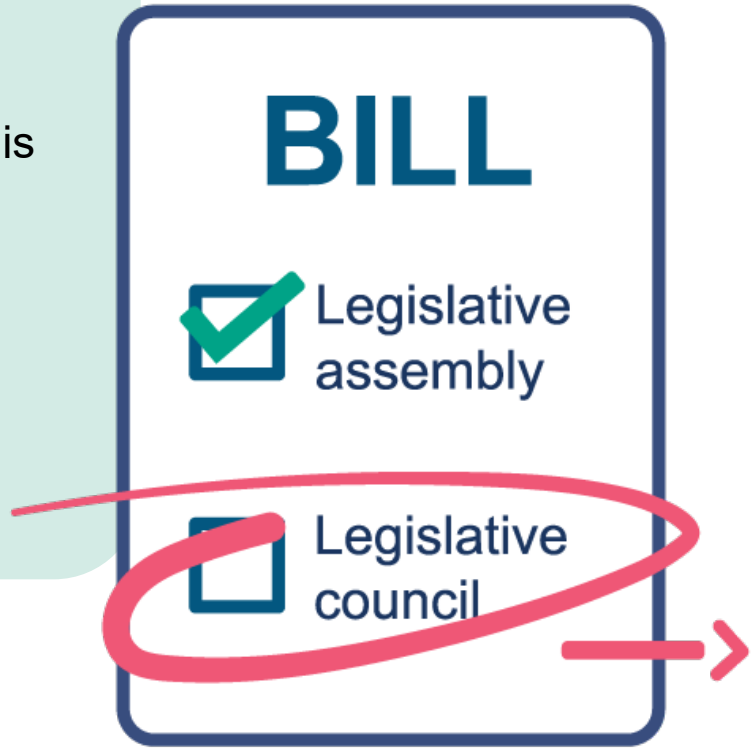
You've introduced the bill, participated in debate, answered questions and addressed concerns, mostly from opposition.

The great news is, that at the final vote, the majority of members in the **Legislative Assembly** agree that the bill is a good idea.

You're super excited and you're one step closer to the bill becoming a law. But what will happen in the **Legislative Council**?

Choose one option

Follow the bill to the **Legislative Council**

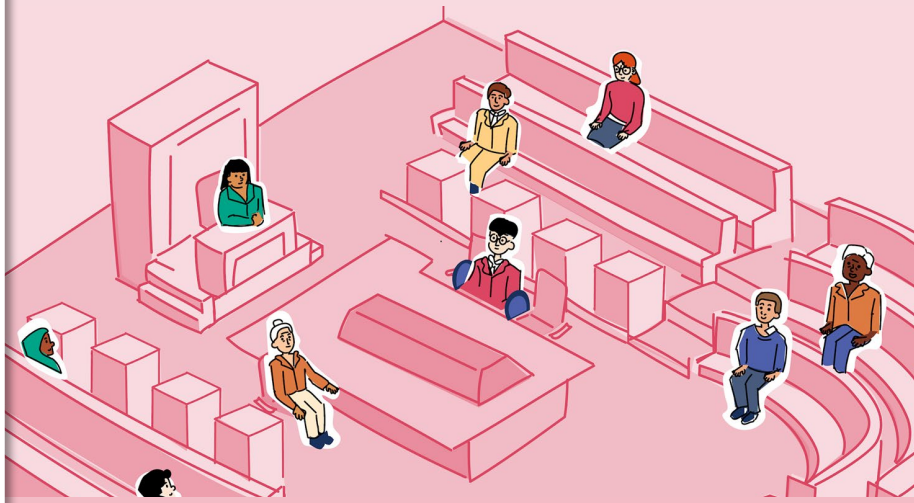


Return to beginning

Welcome to Legislative Council

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The **Legislative Council** is often referred to as the *'house of review'.* The government doesn't need a majority in this chamber. The **Legislative Council** is often where members are able to suggest amendments and make recommendations.



Let's go

Introduce the bill into the **Legislative Council**

What is the composition of the Legislative Council?

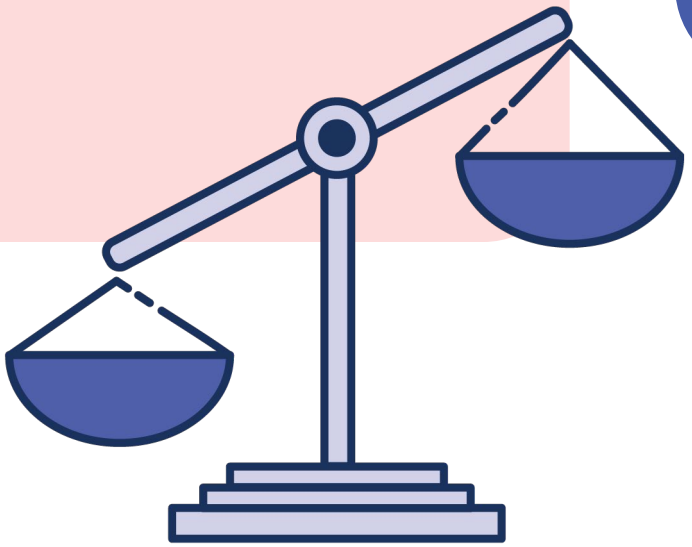
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The **Legislative Council** has

Before you introduce the bill, it is worth thinking about whether there is a majority of government members or not. This can help to determine, not just what path the bill will take, but what changes might be made.

More than half government members

Less than half government members



Return to beginning

Introduce the bill into the Legislative Council

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

You've been designated as the person to introduce the bill into the **Legislative Council** (first reading).

It's now time for debate (second reading).

Everyone has the opportunity to speak on the bill.

It's clear the bill has:

Lots of support from members across the chamber

Support from the government members and other members

Only support from government members

Return to beginning

The bill has lots of support

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

As the debate goes on, it is clear the bill has a lot of support.

Most of the members are happy with all aspects of the bill, so there are no changes. Come the vote (third reading), the majority of members in the chamber agree to pass the bill.

The bill has now passed both the **Legislative Assembly** and **Legislative Council**.

Choose one option

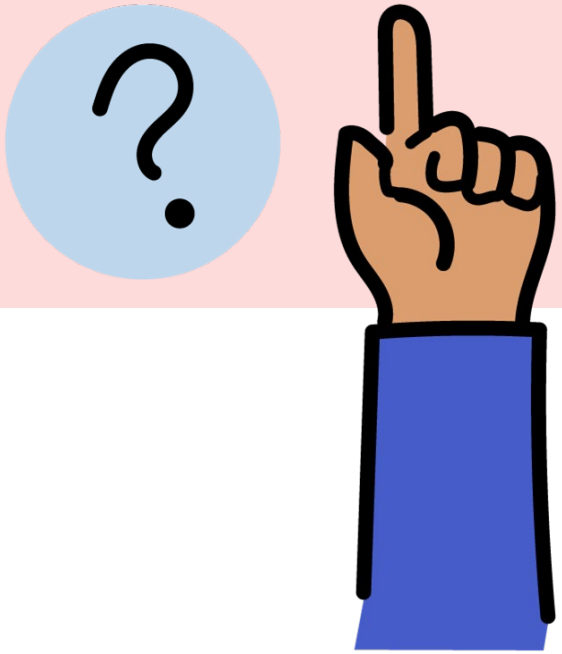
Find out what happens next

Return to beginning

The bill has some support

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The debate continues, and while there is lots of support, some members raise a few concerns and would like to review the bill further.



Which process does the chamber follow

Suggest amendments (changes) to the bill

Use the committee inquiry process to explore the bill in more detail

Continue debate regardless

Return to beginning

Amendments (changes) are suggested

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

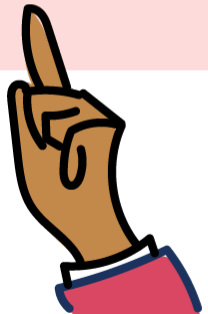
The majority of members agree that there is an opportunity to make some changes to the bill through a process called Committee of the Whole.

Each clause (dot point) of the bill is read. Members suggest changes, ask questions, debate the changes, and vote on whether each change should be made or not.

After lots of discussion the changes are

Agreed to and the changes are made

Defeated and no changes are made



Return to beginning

Amendments are made to the bill

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The majority of members have agreed to make some amendments and change parts of the bill. And in the third reading (the vote) the majority of members agree to pass the bill.

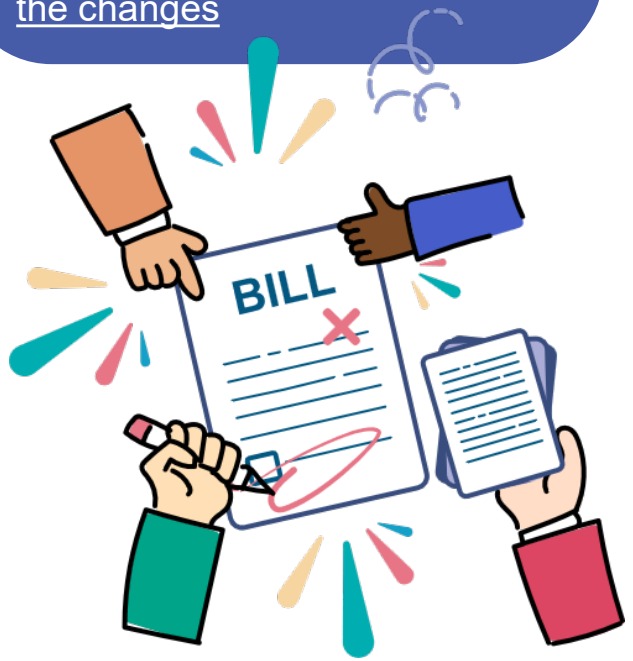
Problem is, the bill is now different to the bill that passed the **Legislative Assembly**.

A note is sent to the **Legislative Assembly** to ask if they agree to the changes.

The **Legislative Assembly**

Likes and agrees to the changes

Doesn't like or agree to the changes



Return to beginning

Parliamentary committee inquiries

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Parliamentary committees are a group of members who conduct research into issues or areas of interest.

Once they have finished their research, the committee puts together a report with their findings and recommendations. The report is presented to parliament.

Choose one option

Send the bill to committee

I've changed my mind, don't send the bill to committee

Return to beginning

The committee process

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The committee report is in and has been presented to parliament. There are lots of interesting findings and recommendations. Some of it you already knew, but there are some new ideas and perspectives that may be worth considering.

Do you

Take some recommendations and create a new bill

Take some recommendations and suggest new policy

Thank the committee for their time and return to debate

Return to beginning

Create a new bill

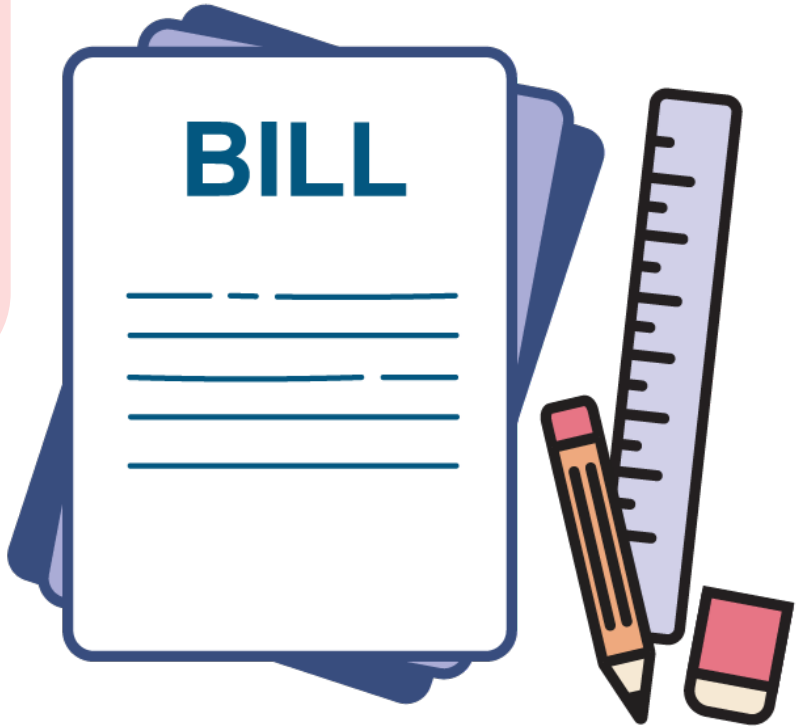
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Sometimes committee reports highlight things that might have been missed in the original bill or suggest new ideas for laws.

It does not mean the work you've done on this bill has been a waste. All the debate and research will hopefully help make better laws.

Choose one option

Create a new bill



Return to beginning

Suggest a new policy

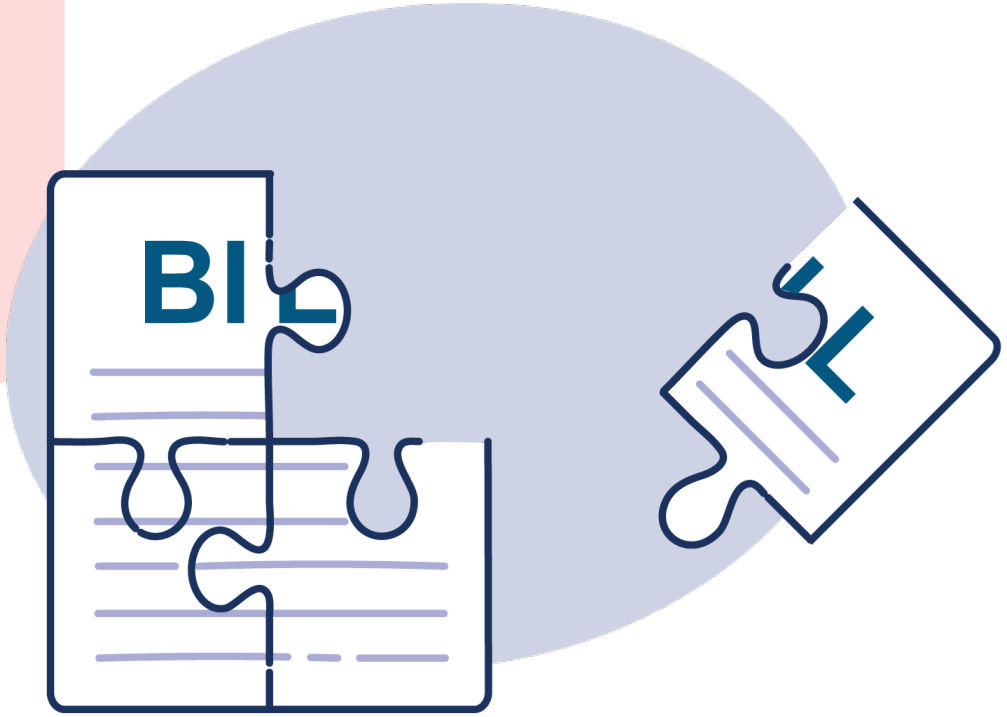
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Policy is a set of guidelines that can help organisations and people to make decisions about actions to take, such as budgets, resources and priorities.

Some of the recommendations in the committee report suggests the need for some new policy. And you agree.

Choose one option

Follow what happens to the bill



Return to beginning

The second reading debate continues

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

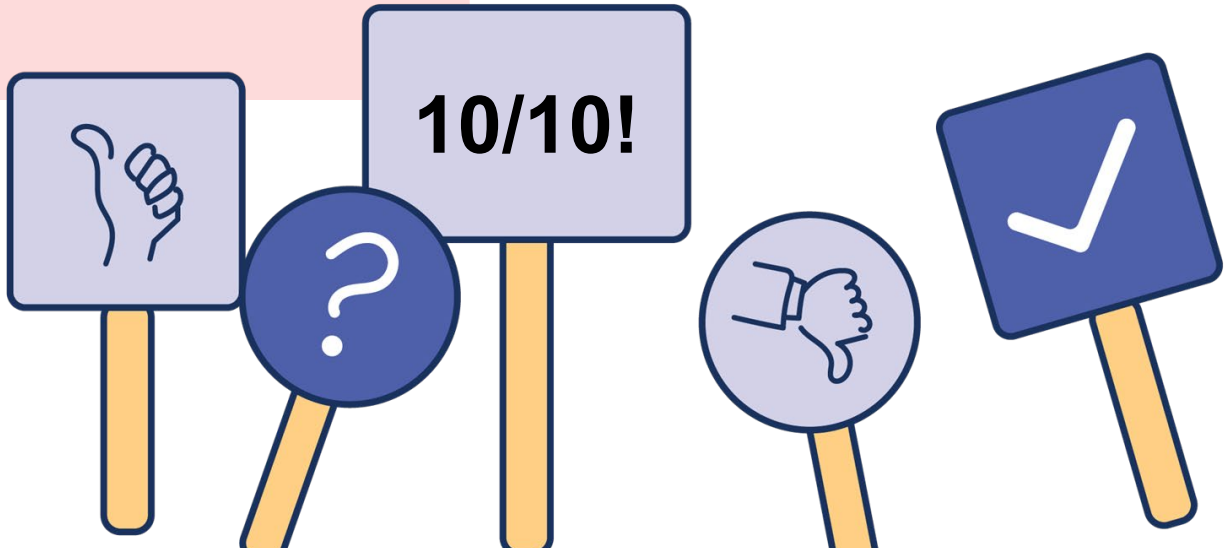
The committee report is really interesting; good findings and good recommendations. But you feel like the bill already has all of it covered, and you'd like to keep debating the bill.

The chamber continues with debate (second reading) and everyone is given more time to share their thoughts.

At the vote (third reading) it's clear that

Most members support the bill

There are still members with concerns



Return to beginning

Introduce the bill into the Legislative Council

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

You've been designated as the person to introduce the bill into the **Legislative Council** (first reading).

It's now time for debate (second reading).

Everyone has the opportunity to speak on the bill.

It's clear the bill has

Lots of support

Some support

No support

Return to beginning

The bill has lots of support

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

As the debate goes on, it is clear the bill has a lot of support.

Most of the members are happy with all aspects of the bill, so there are no changes. Come the vote (third reading) the majority of members in the chamber agree to pass the bill.

The bill has now passed both the **Legislative Assembly** and **Legislative Council**.

But it’s not a law just yet.

Choose one option

Find out what happens next

Return to beginning

The second reading debate continues

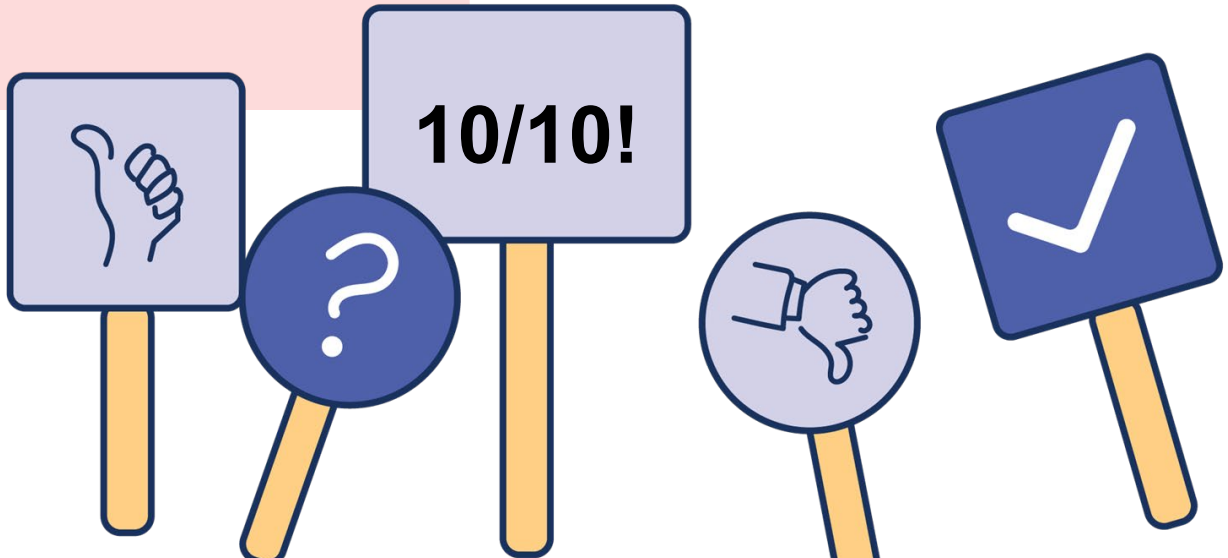
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The chamber continues with debate (second reading) and everyone is given an opportunity to share their thoughts.

At the vote (third reading) it's clear that the majority of members still think the bill is a great idea, even if there might be a few questions and concerns.

Choose one option

Find out what happens next



Return to beginning

The bill has some support

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Without a majority of government members in the **Legislative Council**, you need to start negotiating with the opposition and crossbenchers. You'll need their support to pass the bill.

The chamber votes and decides to

Suggest and debate some amendments (changes)

Send the bill to committee

Continue to debate (second reading)

Return to beginning

Amendments (changes) are suggested

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The majority of members agree that there is an opportunity to make some changes to the bill through a process called Committee of the Whole.

Each clause (dot point) of the bill is read. Members suggest changes, ask questions and debate the changes, and vote on whether each change should be made or not.

After lots of discussion the changes are

Agreed to and the changes are made

Defeated and no changes are made

Return to beginning

The second reading debate continues

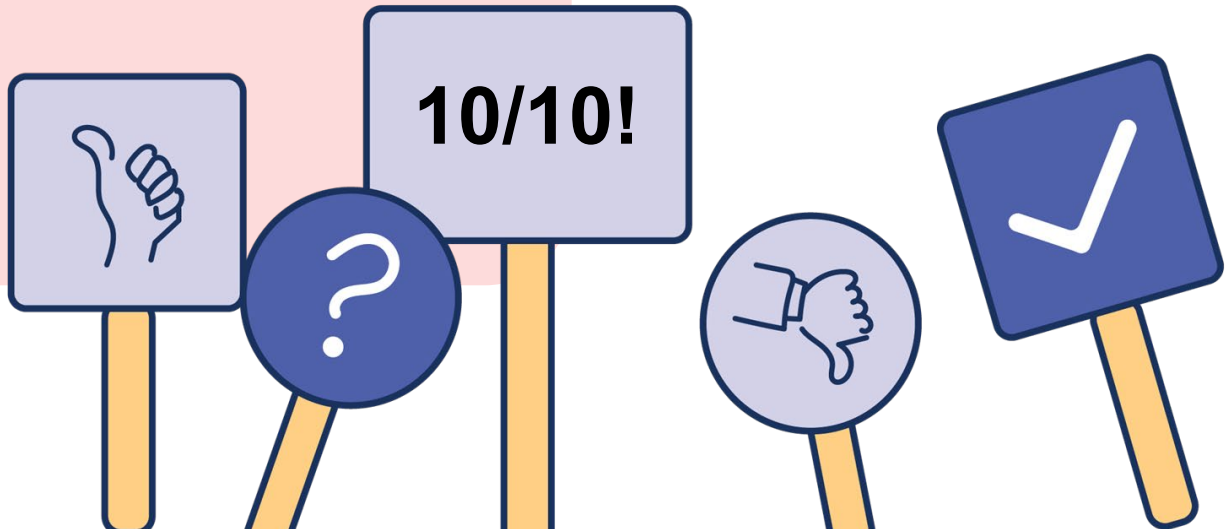
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Some of the amendments that were suggested sounded okay, and there was lots of discussion and debate about possible changes, but not a lot of agreement.

The chamber continues with debating the bill (second reading) and everyone is given another opportunity to share their thoughts.

At the vote (third reading) it's clear that

Many members still have concerns



Return to beginning

Parliamentary committee inquiries

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Parliamentary committees are made up of a group of members who conduct research into issues or areas of interest.

Once they have finished their research, the committee put together a report with their findings and recommendations. The report is presented to parliament.

Does the chamber

Send the bill to committee

Does not send the bill to committee

Return to beginning

Committee process

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The committee report is in and has been presented to parliament. There are lots of interesting findings and recommendations. Some it you already knew, but there are some new ideas and perspectives that may be worth considering.

Do you

Decide on new bill

Create a new policy

Return to debate

Return to beginning

Create a new bill

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

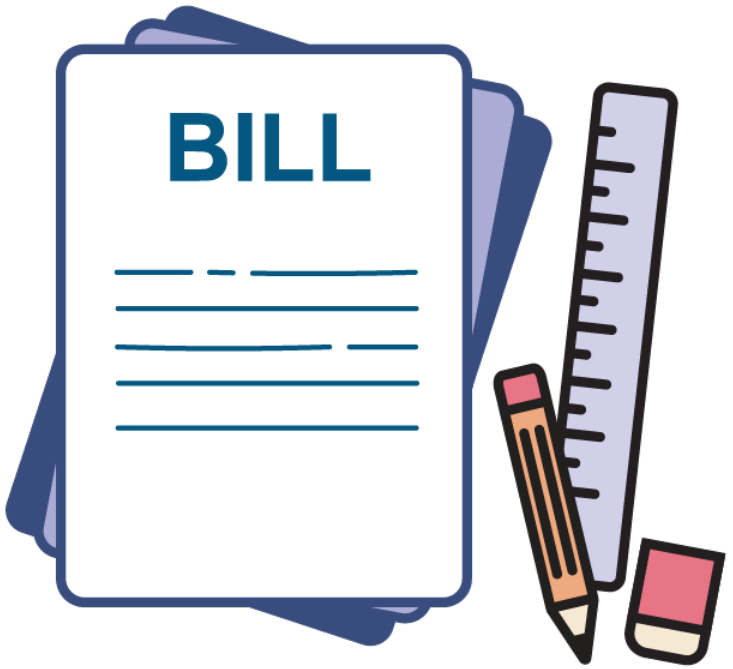
Sometimes committee reports highlight things that might have been missed in the original bill or suggest new ideas for laws.

It does not mean the work you've done on this bill has been a waste. All the debate and research will hopefully help make better laws. And hopefully the new bill will have a lot more support.

Return to beginning

Choose one option

Back to the beginning



Suggest a new policy

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Sometimes committee reports highlight things that might have been missed in the original bill or suggest new ideas for laws.

It doesn't mean the work you've done on this bill has been a waste. All the debate and research will hopefully help make better laws.

Choose one option

Follow what happens to the bill

Return to beginning

Debate continues, but there are still concerns

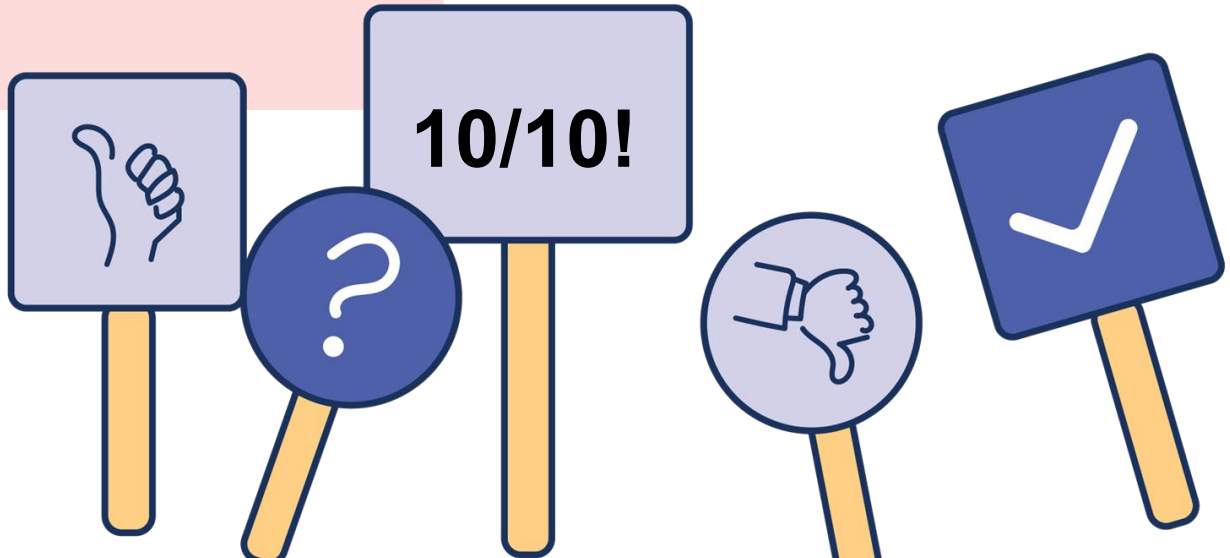
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Choose one option

Find out what happens next

The chamber continues with debate (second reading) and everyone is given an opportunity to share their thoughts.

As the vote (third reading) is called, it’s clear that many members still have questions and concerns.



Return to beginning

Amendments are made to the bill

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

After a very long debate, lots of suggestions and questions, a number of changes have been made to the bill. That's great, because now there might be support for the bill.

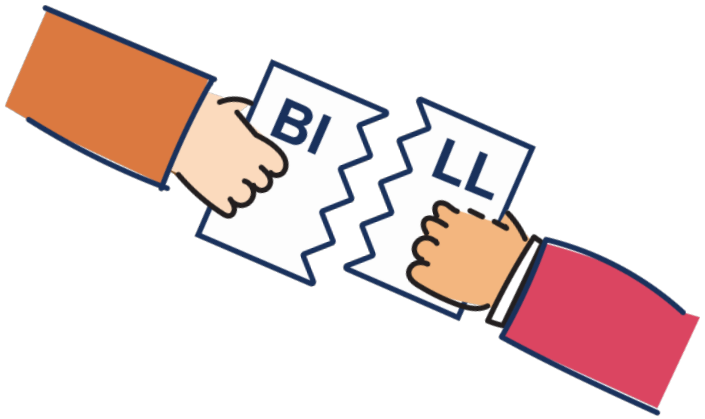
And when the time comes to vote (third reading) the majority of members agree to pass the bill.

The problem is, the bill is now different to the bill that passed the **Legislative Assembly**. A note is sent to the **Legislative Assembly** to ask if they agree to the changes.

The **Legislative Assembly**

Agree to the amendments

Disagree with the amendments



Return to beginning

Congratulations

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Even without a government majority in the **Legislative Council**, the bill has passed.

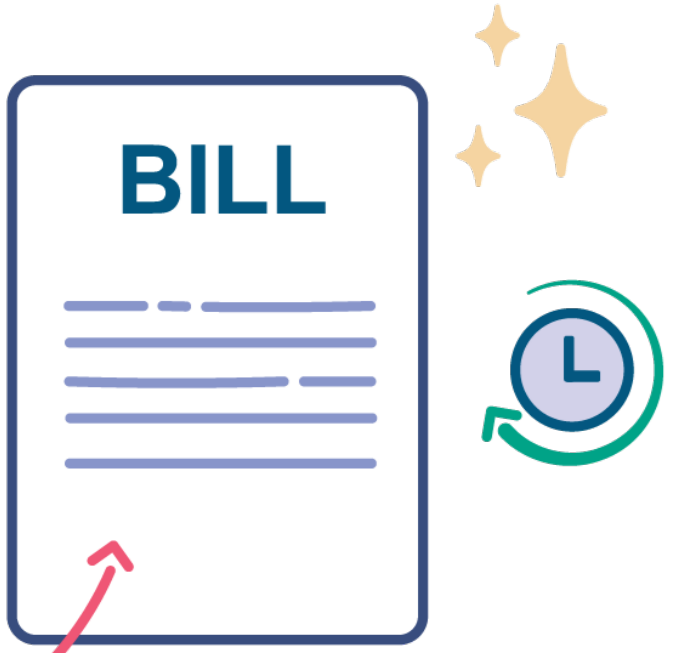
Many of the members agree that this bill is needed and is in the best interest of the people of Victoria.

The bill has now passed both the **Legislative Assembly** and the **Legislative Council**.

But it’s not a law just yet.

Choose one option

Find out what happens next



Return to beginning

Come back to it another time

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Choose one option

Try again

Sometimes it is worth revisiting a bill at a different time. This gives you a chance to:

- work with the government to see if there are different parts of the bill they do support
- continue to highlight important issues in the community and in the chamber

Return to beginning

Oh no…

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The bill has been defeated. There just was not enough support.

While the same bill can’t be introduced again until after the next election, you can continue to highlight the issue through member statements, other speeches, and working with people and organisations in your community.

Return to beginning

Choose one option

Try again

Congratulations…

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The bill has gone through the three readings in the **Legislative Council** and passed with no changes.

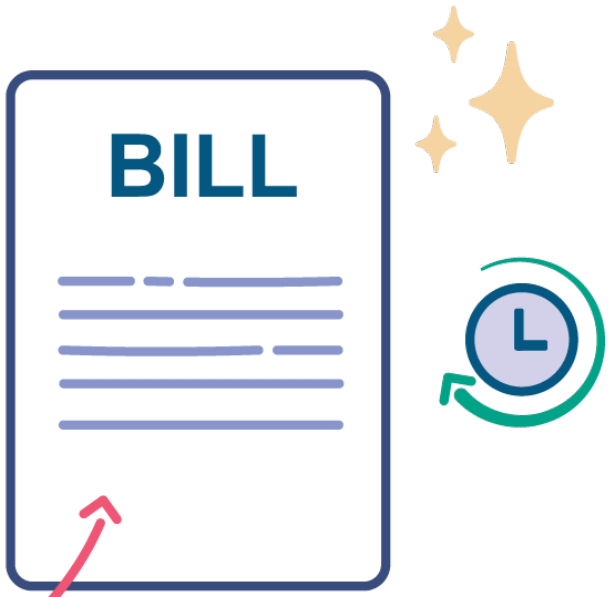
Whether there was lots of support or some members still had concerns and questions, when it came to the vote (third reading), the majority of members thought the bill was a good idea.

The bill has now passed the **Legislative Assembly** and the **Legislative Council**.

But it's not law just yet.

Choose one option

Find out what happens next



Return to beginning

The Legislative Assembly vote on amendments

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The **Legislative Assembly** received the note telling them that the **Legislative Council** has made amendments to the bill.

They have seen the changes, have had some discussion, but the majority of members agree that the changes, and therefore the bill, is still a good idea.

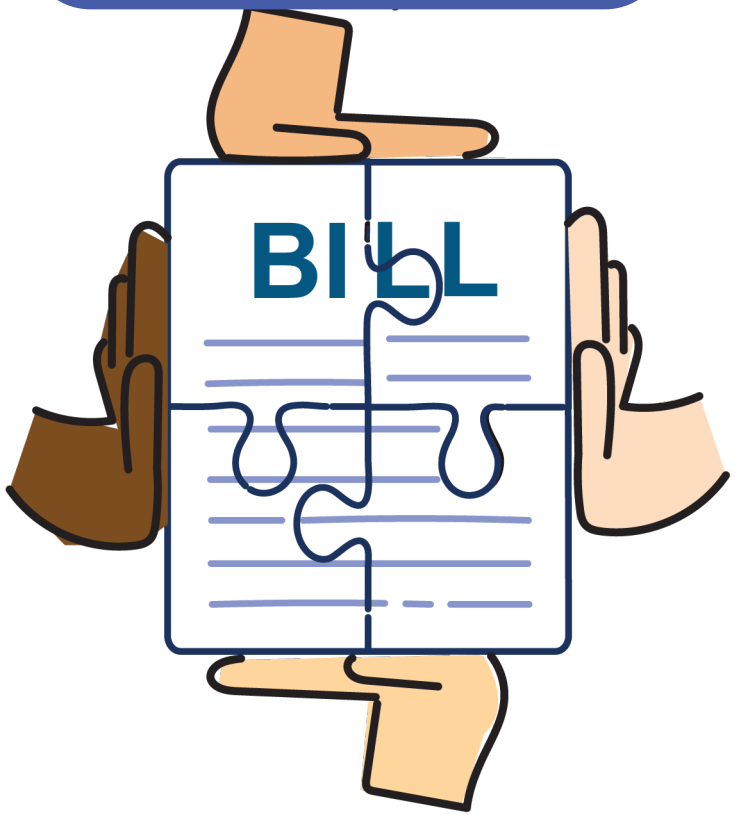
Congratulations, the bill has now passed the **Legislative Assembly** and the **Legislative Council**.

But it’s not law just yet.

Return to beginning

Choose one option

Find out what happens next



Negotiations

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The **Legislative Assembly** received the note telling them that the **Legislative Council** has made amendments to the bill.

They have the changes, have had some discussion, and unfortunately the majority of members do not agree to the changes.

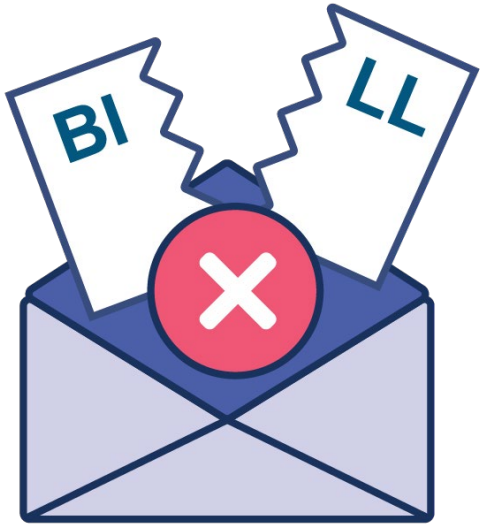
The bill is sent to a committee to discuss further. After much discussion, the **Legislative Assembly** and the **Legislative Council** come to a conclusion.

Return to beginning

Both houses

Agree to the changes, but it's not law yet

Can't agree on the changes



Oh no…

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The bill needs to pass both the **Legislative Assembly** and **Legislative Council** in exactly the same form.

You can

Continue to discuss and try and agree on the changes

Redraft the bill, with some major changes

Return to beginning

Congratulations, your bill is now law!

Try and pass another bill …

Return to beginning

Now the bill has passed both the **Legislative Assembly** and **Legislative Council**, it's time to take the final copy over to the Governor for Royal Assent.

The Governor, with the authority of the Crown, signs the bill…

The bill is now an Act of Parliament and a law.