

Levels of Government

FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. Discuss as a class why we need government.
2. What are the three levels of government in Australia?
3. What is the federal government responsible for? Give three examples.
4. State government is responsible for...
5. What does local government look after?
6. Before federation the states governed themselves. True or false?
7. When and why were local governments introduced?
8. What happens when local, state and federal governments disagree?
9. Why do you think we need three levels of government in Australia?
10. What was surprising about this story?

ACTIVITY

Discuss the BtN *Levels of Government* story as a class. What questions were raised in the discussion (what are the gaps in their knowledge)? Some questions to help guide discussion include:

- What is democracy?
- Why do we need governments?
- What is a representative democracy?
- What are the three levels of government?
- Why do we have three levels of government?
- Name some responsibilities of each level of government?

The following KWLH organiser provides students with a framework to explore their knowledge on this topic and consider what they would like to know and learn.

<i>What do I know?</i>	<i>What do I want to know?</i>	<i>What have I learnt?</i>	<i>How will I find out?</i>

Students will develop their own question/s for inquiry. Students will collect and record information from a wide variety of sources (internet, books, newspaper and magazines) and present the information they find in an interesting way.

KEY LEARNING

Students will develop a deeper understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the three levels of government.



AUSTRALIAN
CURRICULUM

Civics and Citizenship – Year 6

The roles and responsibilities of the three levels of government, including shared roles and responsibilities within Australia's federal system ([ACHCK036](#))

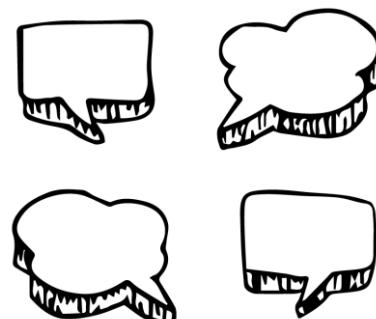
Develop questions and gather a range of information to investigate the society in which they live ([ACHCS040](#))

Present [civics](#) and [citizenship](#) ideas and viewpoints for a particular purpose using [civics](#) and [citizenship](#) terms and concepts ([ACHCS045](#))

Reflect on personal roles and actions as a [citizen](#) in the school and in the community ([ACHCS046](#))

History – Year 6

Key figures, events and ideas that led to Australia's Federation and [Constitution](#) ([ACHASSK134](#))





ACTIVITY

Class glossary

Create your own classroom glossary about Australia's three levels of government. Start by brainstorming words as a class using a mind map to record your responses. Add to your list of words by downloading the BtN *Levels of Government* story transcript and highlighting all the words that relate to three levels of government. Find definitions for each word. Consider using pictures and diagrams to illustrate meanings.

- Federal government
- State government
- Local government
- Representative democracy
- Councillor
- Premier
- Mayor
- Prime Minister



ACTIVITY

Investigating the Three Levels of Government

Students will research responses to the following questions:

Federal government

- What is the decision making body of federal government?
- What are the two houses of parliament?
- What is the leader of the federal government called?
- How often are elections held?
- What are the representatives of each houses of parliament called?
- Give three examples of federal government responsibilities.



State and territory government

- What is the decision making body of state government?
- Are all states made up of two houses?
- What is the leader of the state government called?
- What is the leader of each territory government called?
- Give three examples of state government responsibilities.



Local government

- What is the decision making body of local government?
- What are the representatives called?
- What is the head of the council called?
- Give three examples of local government responsibilities.



Who Represents You?

Students will find out more about who represents them in local, state and federal government. Ask them to record what they already know about their representatives then research the gaps in their knowledge.

Federal government

- Which electorate do you live in? Go to the *Australian Electoral Commission* website to find your electorate.
- Who is the current member for this electorate?
- Which political party do they represent?

State government

- Which electorate do you live in? Go to the *Electoral Commission* website in your state to find your electorate.
- Who is the current member for this electorate?
- Which political party do they represent?

Local government

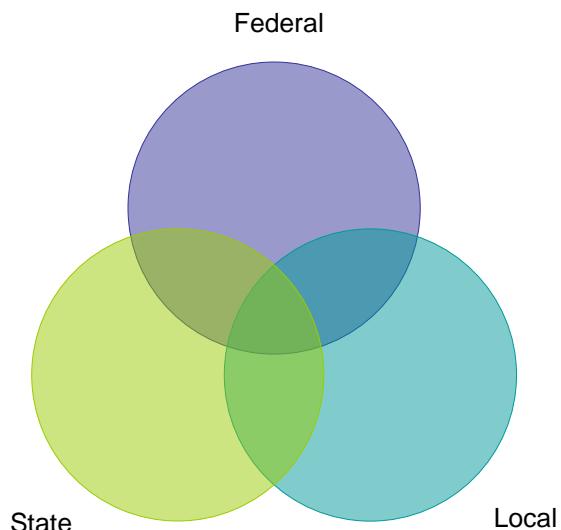
- Which council area do you live in?
- Who is the councillor/s that represents you?
- Who is the Mayor or Shire President?
- What special features or facilities does your council area have?
- What improvements would you like to see in your local area and who would you contact to make those improvements?



ACTIVITY

Shared and separate responsibilities

Working in pairs, students will investigate the shared and separate responsibilities of the three levels of government. They can display their information using a Venn diagram with three circles. Record shared responsibilities in the overlapping areas. Ask students to consider why there are some responsibilities that are shared between the different levels of government.





ACTIVITY

Students will look at the following issues and tick which level of government is responsible. Ask students to think of three of their own examples, one for each level of government.

	Level of Government		
Issue	Local	State	Federal
<i>A railway line needs to be fixed</i>			
<i>I want to make a Medicare claim</i>			
<i>I lost my passport</i>			
<i>My rubbish bin wasn't collected</i>			
<i>I want to submit plans to build an extension on my home</i>			
<i>The footpath in front of my house is unsafe and needs to be repaired</i>			
<i>I want improvements made to public transport in my area</i>			
<i>I have family from overseas who want to live in Australia</i>			
<i>A mine is being planned near the town where I live and I'd like to know more about it</i>			



ACTIVITY

The BtN [State Laws](#) story explains the differences between state and federal laws. After watching the story, students will respond to the following questions:

1. In the BtN story, what law was passed by the State Government in the Australian Capital Territory?
2. Why might this law not be accepted by the Federal Government?
3. List Australia's states and territories.
4. Each of the states has their own parliaments, their own leaders and their own laws. True or false?
5. List some areas that the State Government gets to look after.



6. List some areas that the federal government gets to look after.
7. Give an example from the 80s when the federal government overturned a state government decision.
8. Where are legal fights between the levels of government settled?
 - a. Supreme Court
 - b. State Court
 - c. High Court
9. Do you think the federal government should be allowed to overturn state government decisions?
10. What was surprising about this story?



USEFUL WEBSITES

Behind the News – What is Democracy?

[http://www.abc.net.au\(btn/story/s4460249.htm](http://www.abc.net.au(btn/story/s4460249.htm)

Behind the News – History of Voting

[http://www.abc.net.au\(btn/story/s4464749.htm](http://www.abc.net.au(btn/story/s4464749.htm)

Behind the News – State Laws

[http://www.abc.net.au\(btn/story/s3875892.htm](http://www.abc.net.au(btn/story/s3875892.htm)

Queensland Parliament – Everyone's Parliament: Three Levels of Government

https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/explore/education/factsheets/Factsheet_1.1_ThreeLevelsOfGovt.pdf

Parliamentary Education Office – Snapshots – Three Levels of Government

<http://www.peo.gov.au/multimedia/videos/snapshots-three-levels-of-government.html>

Australian Electoral Commission – Three Levels of Government

<http://education.aec.gov.au/teacher-resources/three-levels.html>