



# YEAR 7 CIVICS & CITIZENSHIP OVERVIEW 2020

## Hedland Senior High School Humanities & Social Sciences

Year 7 HASS teachers have organised the following program and learning sequence to enable the education of students to continue at home in Term 2.

If you have any questions, concerns or issues, please get in touch with your teacher as soon as possible as they will be available via email or phone call to assist with your learning.

Ms Fazioli – [carly.fazioli@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:carly.fazioli@education.wa.edu.au)

Ms Felgate – [lisa.felgate@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:lisa.felgate@education.wa.edu.au)

HASS Department – 9172 8034

| TERM 2 |   |   |   |
|--------|---|---|---|
| Week   | Topic   | Content / Skills  | Homework Task   |
| 1      | <b>Overview</b><br>Concepts<br><br>Australia's Constitution     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction to Civics</li><li>• Vocabulary</li><li>• Concept of democracy</li><li>• History of Australia's Constitution</li><li>• Values in the Constitution</li><li>• Purpose of the Constitution</li></ul> | Create a classroom constitution (see p.5)   |
| 2      | <b>Australia's Political System</b><br><br>Levels of Government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Levels of Government</li><li>• Federal Responsibilities</li><li>• State and Territory Responsibilities</li><li>• Local (Council) Responsibilities</li></ul>   | Create a pamphlet/poster outlining the responsibilities of each level of government (see p.8).  |
| 3      | <b>Australia's Political System</b><br><br>Separation of Powers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Separation of Powers</li><li>• Parliament</li><li>• Executive</li><li>• Judiciary</li><li>• Role of Governor-General &amp; Queen</li></ul>  | Create a Venn Diagram (3 ways) to show how the roles overlap. Write a few sentences explaining how Australia does not have a full separation of powers. (see p.10). |
| 4      | <b>Australia's Political System</b><br><br>Bicameral Parliament | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Westminster System</li><li>• Bicameral Parliament</li><li>• House of Representatives</li><li>• Senate</li></ul>   | Create a mind-map of the Australian Parliament (see p.12)   |
| 5      | <b>Creation of laws</b><br><br><b>Referendum</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Passing a Bill</li><li>• Changing the Constitution – referendums</li></ul>  | Answer the 'thinking' questions (see p.15)  |

### INSTRUCTIONS

- As you work through the booklet, complete the **activities** section in your **HASS book**. You will see this symbol for **weekly homework**. Submit this to **Connect**.
- Note that **homework tasks** are designed to provide students with formative feedback from their teacher. The timing of homework tasks is subject to change within the school term – students will be given a week's notice on the Connect portal regarding changes.



## GLOSSARY

- Add in the definitions as you work through the booklet.

| Word                        | Definition |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Civics                      |            |
| Citizenship                 |            |
| Democracy                   |            |
| Federation                  |            |
| Constitution                |            |
| Rules                       |            |
| Premier                     |            |
| Federal                     |            |
| Bicameral<br>Parliament     |            |
| Separation of<br>powers     |            |
| Parliament                  |            |
| Executive                   |            |
| Judiciary<br>(courts)       |            |
| Governor<br>General         |            |
| House of<br>Representatives |            |
| Senate                      |            |
| Bill                        |            |
| Referendum                  |            |

# WEEK 1- CONCEPTS & AUSTRALIA'S CONSTITUTION

## 1. INTRODUCTION TO CIVICS & CITIZENSHIP

**Civics** is the study of **rights** and **responsibilities** that citizens have in a society or country. The word **citizenship** is used to describe the act or status of being a citizen of a society of country.

When we study civics and citizenship, we do the following things:

- We look at how we can **work together** to shape our nation into one that is **fair and just for all**.
- We learn to form our **own opinions** but also **accept that other people will have different views**.
- As **open-minded** citizens, we can promote the values of **freedom, respect, compassion** and **equality** that allow us to live in harmony.

Did you know?

- The leader of Australia's government is the Prime Minister. Do you know his name?
- Australia's government is known as a **Constitutional Monarchy**, which means that the Queen is our head of state.



## 2. DEMOCRACY

Imagine you and your friends are trying to decide what to do on the weekend. Four want to see a movie, two prefer to go to the skate-park and five want to hang out at K-mart. To solve the problem, your group will probably discuss the benefits of each activity and then take a vote to decide. This is called '**democratic decision making**', which is like how the Australian government works.

**A democracy is a system of government run by the people, for the people.** The concept of democracy has been around for a long time and comes from the Greek words '**demos**' (meaning citizen) and '**kratos**' (meaning rule).



In most democratic societies, like Australia, citizens can **elect** (vote for) people who will represent them in government. These people then make decisions laws on behalf of the people who elect them. This is called a **representative democracy**. For example, if a person believes strongly in renewable energy they will likely vote for a candidate who represents this belief.

In Australia, **all citizens over the age of 18** are required to vote for candidates in federal, state and local elections. This is compulsory- those who do not vote are fined unless they provide a valid reason for not doing so.

| Activities  |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Comprehension Questions</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Add the following definitions to your glossary: civics, citizenship, democracy</li><li>2. What kind of democracy is Australia?</li></ol>          | <b>Thinking Questions</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Why is it important for citizens to participate in a democracy?</li></ol> |
| <b>Research and Extension</b> <p>Visit the website and watch the video. <a href="https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/what-is-democracy/10524786">https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/what-is-democracy/10524786</a></p> |  |

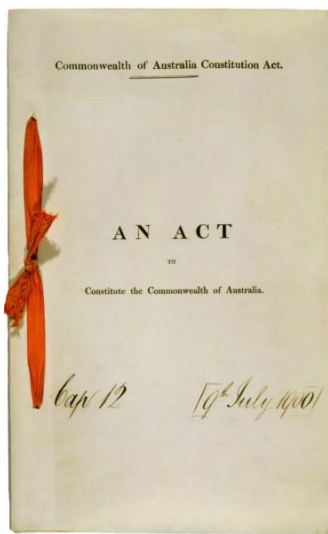
### 3. AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTION – HISTORY

The Australian constitution is a **written document that sets out the rules to govern our nation**. Before 1901, Australia was not a nation. The continent was shared by 6 British colonies which were partly self-governing (could make some of their own rules and laws), but subject to the law-making power of the British government.

On the **1<sup>st</sup> of January 1901**, the 6 British colonies united (came together) to become a new nation- the Commonwealth of Australia. This is known as **federation**. Ten years later, in 1911, the two territories (ACT and NT) came into being as part of the Australian Commonwealth.

With the making of the new nation came the need for new rules. Before **federation**, all the colonies had their own separate rules/laws. An important document, known as the **Australian Constitution**, was written to explain how this new nation would operate and what the main features of its government would be.

### 4. AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTION – VALUE



It is important to have a written constitution for many reasons. Some of these valuable reasons are:

- It gives a set of laws that can be followed or enforced consistently (people can't make things up as they go along)
- It describes the role of government and how it should be structured so that decisions are made on behalf of the country.
- Defines how power should be divided. No single person can have complete control over the way the country is run.
- Allows citizens to read and understand the structures and laws of our country.
- Uniting all Australians and creating a **national identity** separate to Britain. Often referred to as the 'birth certificate' of Australia.

### 5. AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTION- PURPOSE AND FEATURES

The Australian constitution is the most important document in Australia. It is divided into eight sections. Its purposes include:

- Establishing the government of the **Commonwealth of Australia** as a **democracy**
- Outlines how the government should be structured
- Making sure the people in government have been **chosen by the people** (through elections)
- Allow **anyone to run for government** if they want to
- Stating our **rights and responsibilities** we have as Australian citizens
- Outlines the **roles and duties** of state governments
- Ensuring **all people obey the laws**
- The constitution can be changed through a **referendum**. This requires a Yes/No vote from the majority of Australians. This is because laws that were important to us in the past might not be important or relevant to us now.



## Activities

### Comprehension Questions

1. What is the Australian Constitution?
2. What is a rule? Think of an example of a rule that we have at school.
3. Add the following definitions to your glossary: **federation, constitution, rule**
4. What is the main purpose of the constitution?
5. Describe five key features of the constitution.

### Thinking Questions

1. How old is the Australian Constitution?
2. Why do you think some people call the Australian Constitution our 'birth certificate'?
3. What do you think is the most important thing about the Australian Constitution?
4. Do you think there are any problems with the Constitution being written so long ago? What are they?

### Research and Extension

1. Test your knowledge with a constitution quiz! <https://peo.gov.au/teach-our-parliament/education-resources/quizzes/australian-constitution/>
2. Watch this clip about the Constitution. Outline the issues faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people before and after the 1967 referendum. <https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/constitution/10529046>
3. Should the constitution be changed to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people? Explain your answer.

### Creativity Activity (Week 1 Homework Activity)

#### Creating a Constitution

Many schools have 'constitutions' which map out the roles and responsibilities for staff, students and anyone else who might be involved in the day to day activities of the school.

The constitution may cover things such as the process for decision making by the Student Council, how staff are hired, or how rules and policies can be made or changed.

A constitution should reflect the values and goals of a group or organisation. Imagine your class was creating its own constitution.

An organisation's constitution is written by the members of the organisation and is developed to reflect the beliefs and principles of the majority.

**Create a constitution for your HASS class OR your family. Think carefully and complete this using the 9 steps →**



### STEPS

#### Step 1

Write a preamble (statement). A preamble is a brief paragraph that states the overall purpose of the constitution.

#### Step 2

Write the name of the organisation.

#### Step 3

Write the purpose of the organisation.

#### Step 4

State who will be considered a member of the organisation.

#### Step 5

Provide the rules and responsibilities that relate to the people leading the organisation (e.g. your teacher)

#### Step 6

Provide the rules and responsibilities for all members of the organisation (e.g. the students)

#### Step 7

Outline what action can be taken if members do not follow the rules (punishment)

#### Step 8

Explain how changes can be made to the constitution (how can rules be changed?)

#### Step 9

Explain how and when a referendum can be called. (A referendum is a vote held to change the constitution).

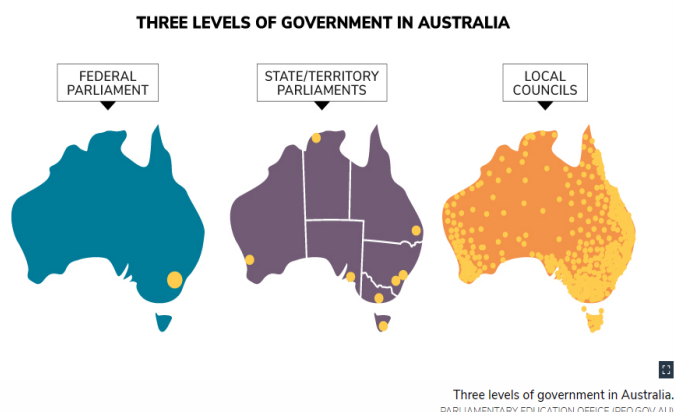
# WEEK 2- LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

## 1. LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

In Australia we have **three levels of government**. They are:

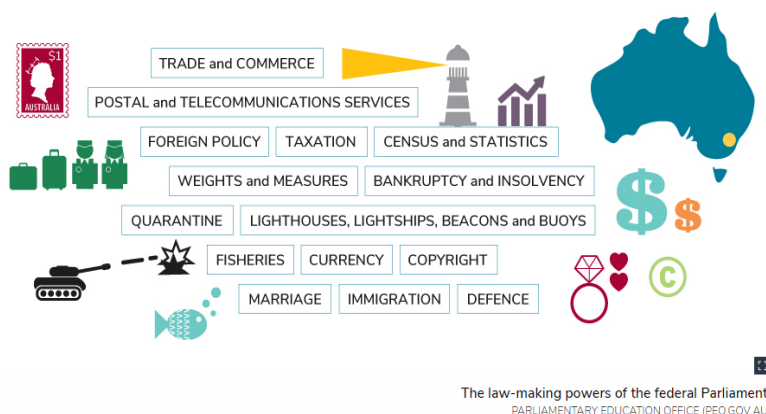
- The **federal** government
- **State** and **territory** governments
- **Local** governments

Each level of government works together to make laws, provide services to the community and can punish people for breaking its laws. Australians who are 18 or older have the responsibility of voting for our federal, state and local governments in elections so that they can make decisions on their behalf.



## 2. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Federal Parliament is based in Parliament House in Canberra, ACT and **makes laws for the whole of Australia**.
- The leader of the federal government is known as the **Prime Minister**.
- Federal governments are responsible for those things that affect the whole nation such as trade, defence, immigration and the environment.
- It is also responsible for countrywide services such as postal services and telecommunications.
- The government collects **taxes** to help pay for these services.



## 3. STATE GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- State and territory parliaments are in each **capital city**. WA's Parliament House is in Perth.
- The head of the Western Australian parliament is called the **Premier**.
- Laws made by state or territory governments *only apply to people in that state*. For example: The Western Australian government cannot make laws for people living in Queensland.

Each state and territory is responsible for the issues that affect them and their citizens which are not covered by the federal government. For example: Schools and Police are state responsibilities.





## 4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Local government is made up of over 500 Local councils, Shires and Municipalities across the nation.
- The area where you live will fall under a local government authority e.g. The Town of Port Hedland
- There are over 500 local councils in Australia and they make local laws (by-laws) for their region or district.
- These by-laws can cover local parks, parking, garbage collection and many other features of local communities
- Local councils are not mentioned in the Australian Constitution but they are included for each state government. Their power and by-laws can be **overruled** by state governments.
- Councils and Local Government are important because they address issues at a local level to meet the needs of the community. The Town of Port Hedland would have different issues in comparison to the City of Fremantle.



### \*Overlap between state and federal parliaments

On some matters, the **state and federal parliaments may make laws about the same things**. For example: roads and health. However, section 109 of the Australian Constitution states that if the federal Parliament and a state parliament pass conflicting laws on the same subject, then the **federal law overrides the state law**. Section 122 of the Constitution allows the Parliament to override a territory law at any time. The federal Parliament has only used this power a few times when the law has created a lot of debate and controversy.

SUMMARY TABLE

|                                  | Federal Government  | State Government  | Local Government  |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Structure</b>                 | Bicameral:<br>Two Houses – the Senate and the House of Representatives  | Bicameral:<br>Two Houses (excluding Queensland)   | Unicameral (made up of one house)   |
| <b>Location</b>                  | Canberra, ACT   | WA: Perth, QLD: Brisbane.<br>NSW: Sydney, VIC: Melbourne,<br>TAS: Hobart, SA: Adelaide,<br>ACT: Canberra, NT: Darwin  | Located in every shire, city or municipality  |
| <b>Laws and Responsibilities</b> | Apply to all of Australia and include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defence</li> <li>• Immigration</li> <li>• Foreign Policy</li> <li>• Trade and Commerce</li> <li>• Marriage</li> <li>• Quarantine</li> <li>• Currency</li> <li>• Taxation</li> </ul> | Apply to just that state and include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Hospitals</li> <li>• Roads and Railways</li> <li>• Public Transport</li> <li>• Mining and Agriculture</li> <li>• Community Services</li> <li>• Police</li> <li>• Prisons</li> <li>• Ambulance Services</li> </ul> | Apply to just that city, shire or municipality and include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local roads, footpaths</li> <li>• Waste Management</li> <li>• Parking</li> <li>• Recreational facilities such as parks, sports fields and swimming pools</li> <li>• Town planning</li> <li>• Building approvals</li> <li>• Land and coast care programs</li> <li>• Pet Regulation</li> </ul> |

## Activities

### Comprehension Questions

1. Add the following to your glossary: premier, federal
2. What are the three levels of government in Australia?
3. What kind of laws does the federal government make?
4. What is the difference between federal and state government?

### Research and Extension

1. Test your knowledge with a levels of government game!  
<https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/how-parliament-works/three-levels-of-government/federal-state-and-local/>
2. Watch this clip about the Three Levels of Government. Write down a question you have.  
<https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/how-parliament-works/three-levels-of-government/levels-of-government/>

### Creativity Activity

#### (Week 2 Homework Activity)

#### Informative pamphlet OR poster

1. Using your knowledge of the three levels of government, create an information poster or pamphlet that shows the responsibilities and powers of each level of government in Australia (Federal, State and Local).



### Thinking Questions

1. Complete the following table:

#### Which level of government?

| Which level of government would you contact if:                                       | Local | State | Federal |
|---|-------|-------|---------|
| 1. Someone from overseas wants to come and live with you in Australia permanently?    |       |       |         |
| 2. Your rubbish wasn't collected on rubbish day?                                      |       |       |         |
| 3. There are potholes in your road?   |       |       |         |
| 4. You have a query about your income tax return?                                     |       |       |         |
| 5. You are unemployed and want to obtain unemployment benefits?                       |       |       |         |
| 6. Someone trespasses on your property?   |       |       |         |
| 7. You want to light a fire in your backyard?   |       |       |         |
| 8. The neighbours play loud music in the middle of the night?                         |       |       |         |
| 9. You want to join the army?   |       |       |         |
| 10. You would like to improve the facilities at the school your child attends?        |       |       |         |
| 11. You want to enquire about a police matter?  |       |       |         |
| 12. You want improvements to the ambulance service in your area?                      |       |       |         |
| 13. A senior secondary college wants approval to build a new computer centre?         |       |       |         |
| 14. You want your elderly mother to receive the meals-on-wheels service?              |       |       |         |
| 15. You want your baby to be inoculated against measles at the local health centre?   |       |       |         |
| 16. You want to make a claim to Medicare for your medical expenses?                   |       |       |         |
| 17. You are campaigning to have a new sport and recreation centre built in your area? |       |       |         |
| 18. You wanted to get on the list to receive accommodation in public housing?         |       |       |         |
| 19. You want to obtain a parking permit?  |       |       |         |
| 20. You are unhappy about aircraft noise at night?                                    |       |       |         |



# WEEK 3 – SEPARATION OF POWERS

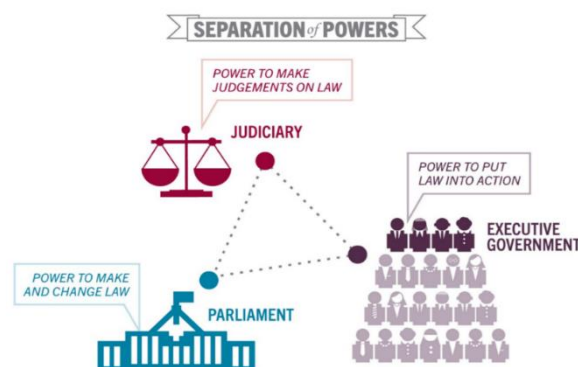
## 1. THE SEPARATION OF POWERS

Can you imagine what would happen in a country if one person had all the power to make and change laws? This person's actions and decisions would likely benefit only themselves. You might think that the Prime Minister has the power to do anything that he/she wants, however this is not the case!

The **Australian Constitution** is the set of rules by which Australia is run. The first 3 chapters define three groups: The **Parliament** (also known as legislature), the **Executive** and the **Judiciary**.

In Australia, the power to make and manage federal law (laws which affect the whole country) is divided between the three groups. This is known as the **separation of powers**. Each group acts separately and they all check on each other to avoid one group gaining too much power.

For example, when a law is made these three groups work independently. The executive comes up with the idea for the bill (a proposed law) and introduces it to Parliament. The Parliament then debates the bill and decides whether it will become a law. If the law is the subject of a court case, the Judiciary will make a judgement on the law or whether it has been followed. *\*You will learn more about law-making in Week 5!*



|                               | ROLE                                       | GROUP INCLUDES:  |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Parliament/Legislature</b> | Makes and changes laws for Australia.      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Queen (represented by the Governor-General)</li><li>• The Senate</li><li>• The House of Representatives</li></ul>              |
| <b>Executive</b>              | Puts law into action                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Queen (represented by the Governor-General)</li><li>• Prime Minister</li><li>• Ministers e.g. minister for education</li></ul> |
| <b>Judiciary</b>              | Interpret and make judgments about the law | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High Court (located in Canberra)</li><li>• Other federal courts</li></ul>  |

## 2. PARLIAMENT



Parliament is also known as the legislature, and is responsible for creating and changing laws. It is made up of the two houses of **parliament**, the **Senate** (known as the upper house) and the **House of Representatives** (known as the lower house). It also includes Queen Elizabeth II (represented in Australia by the **Governor-General**).

## 3. EXECUTIVE

The executive is responsible for **approving laws and putting them into action**. It is made up of the **Prime Minister (PM)**, **Ministers and the Governor-General**. The PM chooses the ministers to be part of the executive and **implement that law**. The group of senior ministers is called the **cabinet**. For example, the PM will select someone to be



the Minister for Education, who will be responsible for all matters relating to the education system and will oversee the Department of Education.

## 4. JUDICIARY

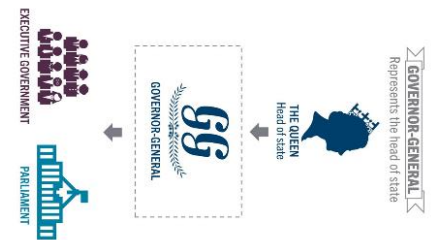
The judiciary **interprets and makes judgements about laws**. This is done through courts such as the **High Court** (the highest court in Australia), and other federal courts. The High Court consists of a chief justice and six other judges. *Judges are appointed (selected) by the **Governor General** after advice from the **Prime Minister**, and can only be removed by the Governor General.* One of the major roles of the High Court is to interpret the Constitution.



## 5. THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL AND QUEEN

The Governor General is the Queen's representative in Australia and performs **ceremonial duties** on behalf of the Queen. The tasks of the Governor General are written in the Constitution and include:

- Administers the oath of office to the PM, ministers, judges
- Signing off on proposed new laws (called Royal Assent)



### DOES AUSTRALIA HAVE A FULL SEPARATION OF POWERS?

No, we do not. This is because **some of the roles overlap**. For example, the Prime Minister and Ministers are part of the Executive and Parliament. High Court Judges, the PM and ministers are officially appointed by the Governor-General, who is part of the Parliament and Executive.

## Activities

### Comprehension Questions

1. Add the following to your glossary: Separation of powers, Parliament, Executive, Judiciary, Governor General.
2. What is the role of the following groups:
  - a) The Parliament
  - b) The Executive
  - c) The Judiciary
3. Who does the Governor General represent?

### Thinking Questions

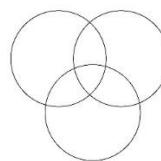
1. Why is it important that Australia has a separation of powers?
2. How does Australia NOT have a complete separation of powers?

### Research and Extension

1. Test your knowledge with a quiz!  
<https://peo.gov.au/teach-our-parliament/education-resources/quizzes/separation-of-powers/>
2. Use the internet to find the name of the current:
  - a) Governor General
  - b) Prime Minister
  - c) Deputy Prime Minister

### Creativity Activity- Week 3 Homework Activity

Create a Venn Diagram (3 ways) to show how the roles overlap. Write a few sentences explaining how Australia does not have a full separation of powers.



# WEEK 4 – BICAMERAL PARLIAMENT

## 1. WESTMINSTER SYSTEM

Australia's system of government is based on the **Westminster system**. This is a form of **parliamentary government** which originated in the United Kingdom. It is named after the area of London where the British Parliament house is located (see the picture). In Australia, the Westminster system is used by both **federal and state governments**.

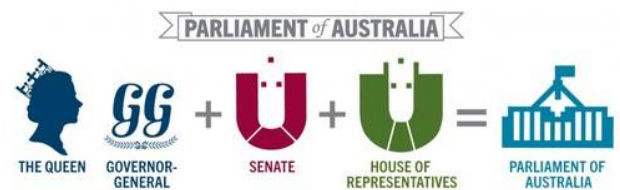


## 2. BICAMERAL PARLIAMENT

The main role of parliament is to make laws for the federal government. A **law** is a formal rule which is designed to govern the way people behave so we can all live in peace.

Australia's parliament is **bicameral**, which means that there are two houses. They are:

- **The House of Representatives** (the lower house)
- **The Senate** (the upper house)

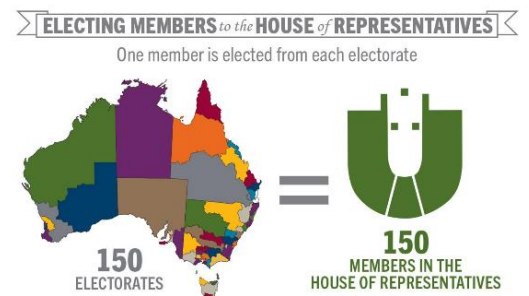


## 3. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (HOR)

The **House of Representatives (HoR)** is also known as the **lower house**. Members vote on laws.

Who gets elected into the HoR?

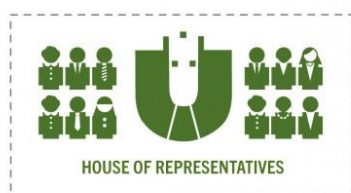
- Australia is divided into **150 electorates** (we live in the largest one!), each having around 100 000 people who can vote. *States with more people have more members in the HoR than others* (you can see that WA and NT have less electorates).
- These people vote for a person to represent them in the HoR. They are known as members of parliament (or MP's). This happens *every 3 years*.



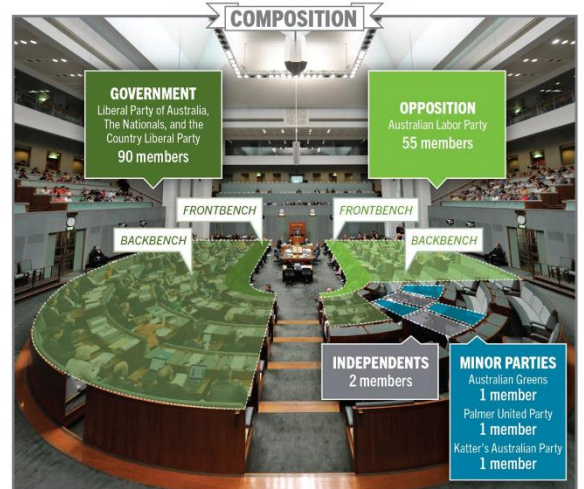
Who forms the government?

- The people who are elected into parliament not only represent their electorate, but usually a **political party** (a group of people who share similar beliefs on how Australia should be run).
- Australia has two major political parties- the **Liberal Party** and the **Labor Party**.
- When Australian citizens vote on which member they want to represent them in the HoR, the political party with the MAJORITY of candidates forms the **government**. The leader of this party becomes the **Prime Minister** of Australia.
- Currently, the Liberal party has the most members in the HoR- which means that they are the Government. The Labor party is the '**opposition**'. The opposition is the party with second most seats in the HoR and can be critical of the government's decisions.

### ROLE of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



### HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES COMPOSITION





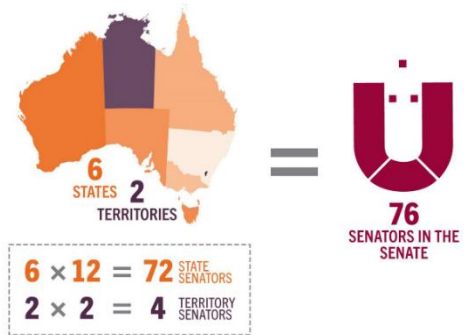
## 4. SENATE

### Who gets elected into the Senate?

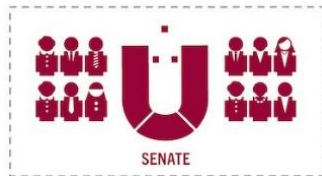
- There are 76 senators, 12 from each state and 2 from each territory.
- This ensures that states/territories with less people still have their interests protected.

#### ELECTING SENATORS to the SENATE

Twelve senators are elected from each state.  
Two senators are elected from each territory.



#### ROLE of the SENATE



- Decide matters of **national interest**
- Represent** the interests of people in their **states or territories**
- Propose, debate and vote on **bills and amendments**
- Examine issues in **committees**
- Scrutinise** executive government

#### SENATE COMPOSITION



### Activities

#### Comprehension Questions

- Add the following to your glossary: bicameral Parliament, law, House of Representatives, Senate
- How many members are in the House of Representatives?
- How many members are in the Senate?
- What name is given to the leader of the majority party in the House of Representatives?

#### Thinking Questions

- Do you think it's fair that some states have more members in the HoR than others? How does the Senate fix this problem?
- What is the difference between the government and the opposition in the HoR?

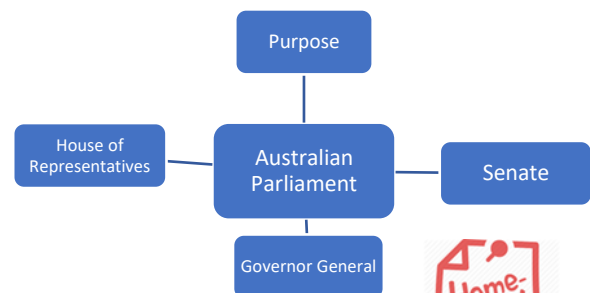
#### Research and Extension

- Test your knowledge with a quiz!  
<https://peo.gov.au/teach-our-parliament/education-resources/quizzes/australian-parliament/>
- Watch the following video on the House of Representatives. <https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/parliament-and-its-people/house-of-representatives/the-house-of-representatives/>
- Watch the following video on the Senate:  
<https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/parliament-and-its-people/senate/the-senate/>

#### Creativity Activity (Week 4 Homework)

Create a mind-map of the Australian Parliament.

Here's an example to start you off:



# WEEK 5- CREATION OF LAWS & REFERENDUMS

## 1. PASSING A BILL – MAKING LAW IN AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT

### What is a bill?

In Parliament, a **bill** is a **proposal for a new law or a change to an existing one**. Bills often seek to address an important issue facing the Australian community. *Bills can start in many ways*, for example: a government department can advise a minister about an issue or a community group can approach Parliament with a suggestion.

A bill can only become law if it is passed by a **majority vote** in the **Senate** and the **House of Representatives**. Once given **Royal Assent** (approval) from the Governor-General, it becomes an 'Act of Parliament' which specifies the date the new law will commence. One example of this is the Same-Sex Marriage Bill in 2017.

It may take months or even years for a bill to pass through Parliament. However, an urgent bill can be passed in a matter of hours or days. Well over 100 bills are introduced into Parliament each year and about 90% of government bills are passed into law. Below is an excerpt (section) of a bill that needed to be passed urgently (due to Covid-19):

### Urgent legislation to support State's COVID-19 response

Tuesday, 31 March 2020

- McGowan Government to introduce new laws to help enforce self-isolation and increase penalties for COVID-19 related incidents
- Amendments drafted and expedited to better protect frontline staff and the community
- New penalties drafted for the current State of Emergency
- In light of COVID-19, Bills before Legislative Council sought to be passed urgently

The McGowan Government will introduce new laws into the State Parliament today that will specifically address COVID-19 challenges.

The Emergency Management Amendment (COVID-19 Response) Bill 2020 will enable authorities to compel someone who is directed to self-isolate, and fails to comply, to wear an electronic device or direct that an electronic device be installed at a person's residence.

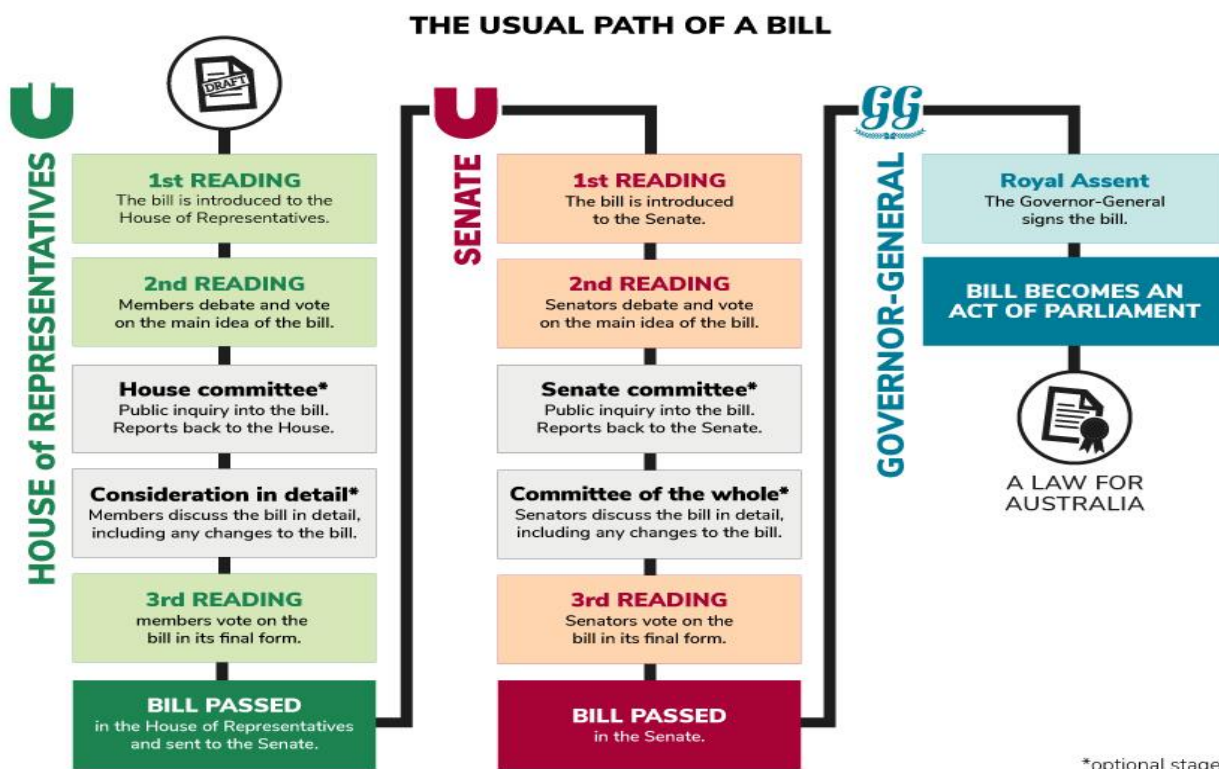
Anyone who fails to comply or removes or interferes with the electronic device without a reasonable excuse, faces a penalty of a \$12,000 fine or 12 months' imprisonment.

The urgent legislation will also introduce \$1,000 on-the-spot fines for individuals and \$5,000 fines for businesses who disobey self-isolation and gathering directives.

The Criminal Code Amendment (COVID-19 Response) Bill 2020 will be introduced to create an offence for anyone who knowingly has COVID-19, or says they have COVID-19, and assaults, or threatens to injure or harm a public officer. This includes police officers, doctors, nurses or anyone working in a hospital or health service, firefighters, SES and ambulance officers.

Penalties of up to 10 years' imprisonment for assaults and seven years' imprisonment for threats or other harm will apply.

### Passing a Bill through Parliament



#### Senate referral

The Senate may refer the text of the bill to a Senate committee for inquiry (this can happen while the bill is in the House).

## Activities

### Comprehension Questions

6. What is a bill?
7. Outline two ways a bill can start.
8. In which year was the Same Sex Marriage Bill introduced into parliament?
9. How many votes would be needed in the HoR to pass a bill? What about the Senate? (remember the HoR has 150 members and the Senate 76).

### Thinking Questions

5. Passing a bill through parliament takes a long time. Why do you think it is normally such a lengthy process?
6. What issues could arise from rushing a bill through parliament?
7. If you had the power to introduce a bill to parliament. Which law would you introduce and/or change and why?

### Research and Extension

1. Watch this video to **see** Passing a Bill in action <https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/how-parliament-works/bills-and-laws/passing-a-bill/>
2. Follow this interactive step by step guide to Passing a Bill <https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/how-parliament-works/bills-and-laws/pass-the-bill/>

### Creativity Activity

1. Create a flow chart to explain each step in Passing a Bill. You can simplify the one on page 13.

## 2. CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION- REFERENDUMS

You may remember that the only way to change something written in the Constitution is by holding a **referendum**.

### What is a referendum?

- A **referendum** is a vote taken by all Australian citizens (over the age of 18) to make a change to the Constitution. They can only vote either '**yes**' or '**no**' to the proposed change.



### Why is it important?

- The Constitution was written in 1901, over 100 years ago! Therefore, it's important that it can be changed.
- It is important that all Australians have a say in changes to the Constitution (considering it is one of the most important documents in the country).

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS AND THE AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTION:

The Constitution was created at a time when Australia was considered a land that belonged to no one before European settlement. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were excluded from the discussion and are still not mentioned in the Constitution.

One of the most important changes to the Constitution happened in 1967. Read the case study below to find out more information:

### casestudy

## The importance of the 1967 referendum

The most successful referendum in Australia's history was held on 27 May 1967 when more than 90 per cent of voters agreed to change the constitution to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Being included in the constitution meant that Indigenous Australians were now abiding by the same laws as the rest of the population. This change was extremely important as it also meant that Indigenous people were given the same rights as other Australian citizens, including the right not to be discriminated against. In the same referendum it was also agreed that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should

be counted when determining the size of Australia's population.

More than the legal consequences, the referendum also had major symbolic implications as it showed that millions of non-indigenous Australians wanted to strengthen the rights of Australia's Indigenous peoples.

Today, 27 May marks the start of National Reconciliation Week, a time when Australia celebrates the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. It is also a time for Indigenous communities to shed light on past and present injustices.

Since federation in 1901, there have been **19 referendums** to propose 44 constitution changes. Only 8 received a 'yes' vote!



## CURRENT ISSUE:

There has been a lot of discussion about the need to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our Constitution. One way to do this would be by changing the wording of the **preamble** (this is the opening statement of the Constitution). This would be to acknowledge and make a statement about the place and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians as the original inhabitants (the first people) of Australia. The following is an example of Victorian Constitution's preamble:

"The Parliament recognises that Victoria's Aboriginal people, as the original custodians of the land on which the Colony of Victoria was established:

- have a unique status as the descendants of Australia's first peoples;
- have a spiritual, social, cultural and economic relationship with their traditional lands and waters within Victoria; and
- have made a unique and irreplaceable contribution to the identity and well-being of Victoria."

## Activities

### Comprehension Questions

1. Add the following to your glossary: referendum
2. How many referendums have been held since federation? How many 'yes' votes?

### Thinking Questions

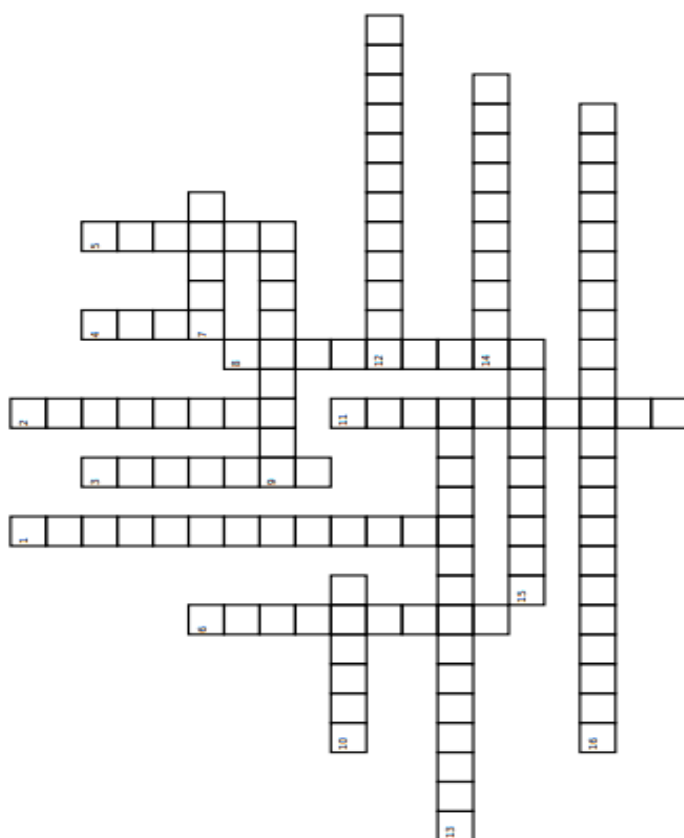
1. What happened in 1967 and why was it so important?
2. Why do think it may be important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be recognised in the Constitution?



### Research and Extension

- Watch the video <https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/1967-referendum/10523010>
- After watching the video, answer the focus questions from this page: <https://www.abc.net.au/btn/resources/teacher/episode/20170523-1967referendum.pdf>

**Fun activity- Create a chatterbox:** <https://peo.gov.au/assets/documents/print-news-resources/a7dfc46a00/PEO-Chatterbox-Parliament-blank.pdf>



Down:

1. Australia's current Prime Minister
2. the opening statement of the constitution
3. the head of the Western Australian Parliament
4. the name for a proposed law
5. the name of the upper house of Parliament
6. the highest court in Australia
8. the branch of government which interprets and makes judgements about the law
11. the branch of government which makes and changes laws

Across:

7. is parking a responsibility of the federal, state or local government?
9. the branch of government which puts laws into action
10. the study of rights and responsibilities of citizens within a society or country
12. a document which describes the rules and laws of Australia
13. the Queen's representative
14. a yes or no vote to change the constitution
15. a system of government where people can elect people to represent them
16. the name of the house of parliament which has 150 members