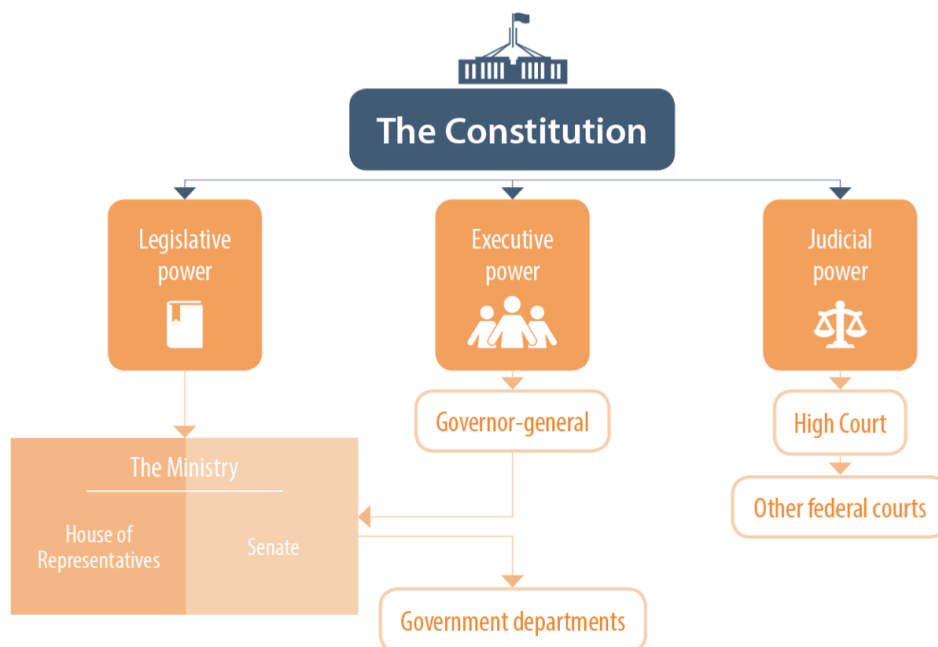


Australia's political system – Appendix 1

The Commonwealth of Australia is a **federation** of states. It was established on 1 January 1901, when six British colonies joined together in a federation and became states of the Commonwealth.

Australia is also a **constitutional monarchy**. Despite being an independent nation, the country shares a monarchy with the UK and other countries that were part of the former British Empire. Although this constitutional status as a monarchy is a contentious issue in Australia, voters rejected a proposal for a republic in a national referendum held in 1999.

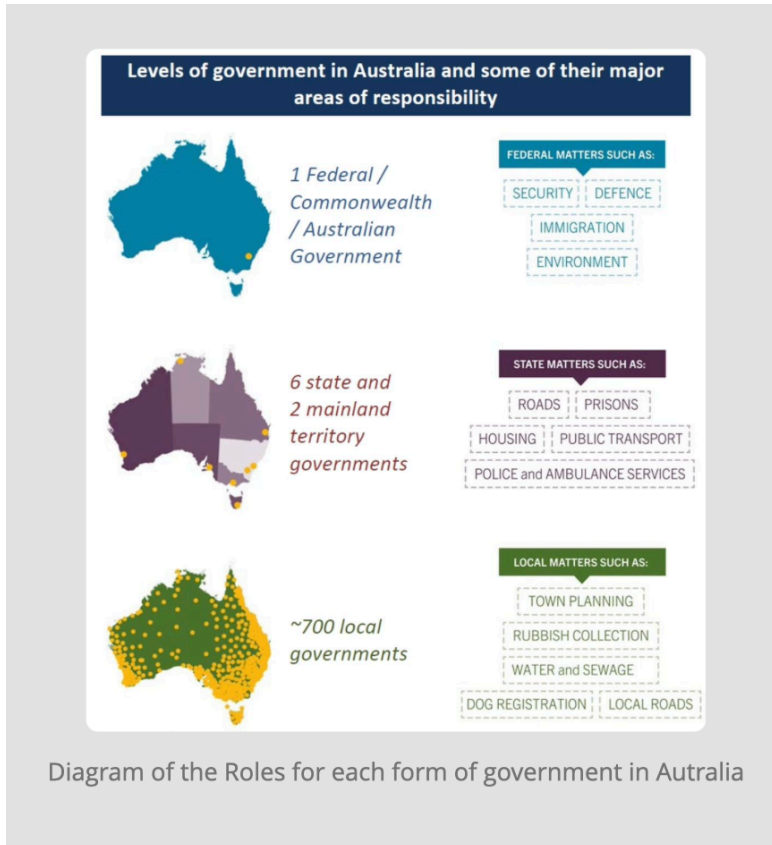
Australia is a **representative democracy** and voting at federal, state and territory elections, as well as – with the exception of certain states – at local elections, is compulsory.



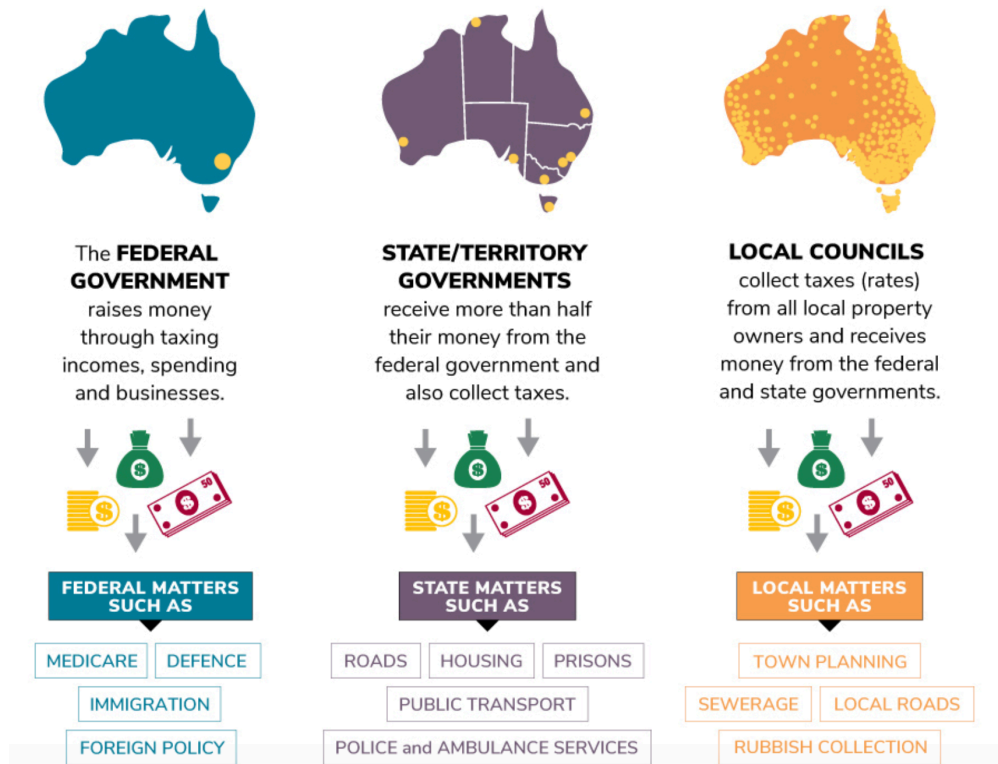
It should be noted that the Australian government system developed from the Westminster model originating in the UK. Key concepts underpinning this model are parliamentary government and responsible government. Accordingly, members of the executive government – i.e. the prime minister, cabinet ministers and other ministers – are drawn from the parliament (parliamentary government); and the executive government is responsible to the parliament (responsible government). Therefore, under the Australian government system the separation of powers is not complete. For instance, the prime minister and ministers, as well as the governor-general, are part of both the parliament and the executive.

Under the Australian Constitution, executive power is exercised by the Governor-General as the King's representative. The Governor-General is appointed by the King on the advice of the Prime Minister of Australia. The Prime Minister is Head of Government.

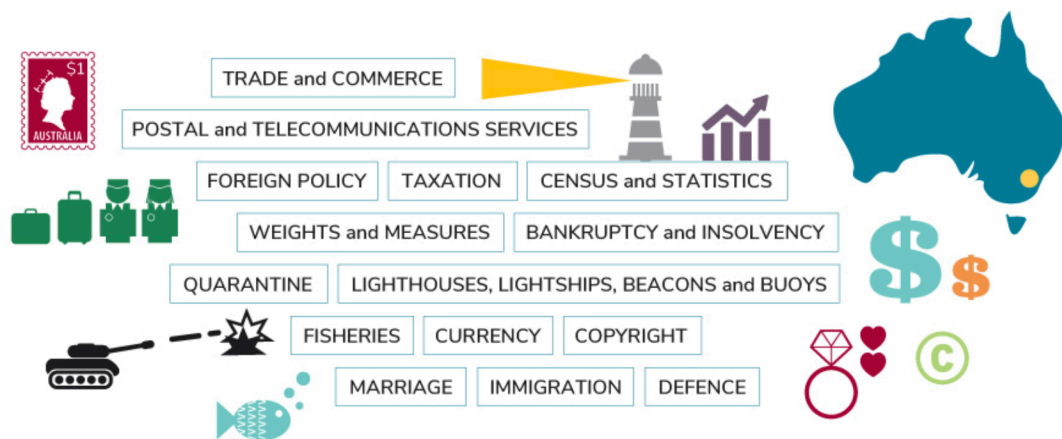
The Governor-General represents the King as head of Executive Government and one of constituent parts of the Parliament. In most matters they must act as advised by the Federal Executive Council. They perform functions of Head of State. The Governor-General performs the ceremonial functions of head of state on behalf of the Queen. While Executive Government powers are exercised by the Governor-General or in the Governor-General's name, such actions are carried out as advised by the Prime Minister and Ministers.



There are 6 state governments in Australia, plus two for the territories. Each government has a parliament and parliament house located in their capital city. This is where laws are made regarding state/territory matters.



The law-making powers of the federal Parliament.



Parliamentary Education Office (peo.gov.au)

The law-making powers of state parliaments.



Parliamentary Education Office (peo.gov.au)

The law-making powers of local government.



Parliamentary Education Office (peo.gov.au)

FROM POLICY TO LAW

