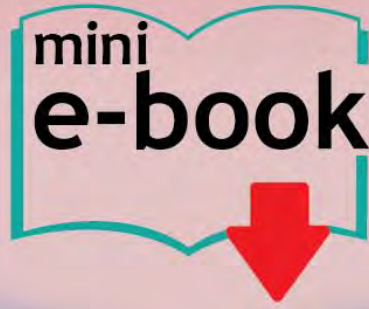


History

# Federation And Federalism



## For Upper Primary



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Preview

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# Governments, Laws and Federation

The first governments and laws in Australia were those of Indigenous Australians. Before the arrival of Europeans, indigenous laws worked through the kinship system. Problems were solved quickly and punishments were given to those who did the wrong thing.

When the British came to Botany Bay they regarded Australia as terra nullius. This term means that the new arrivals believed that nobody owned the land. The rights of Indigenous Australians already living in Australia were not recognised. Their governments and laws were ignored and the British implemented their own political and legal systems.

Australia's first European government system consisted of a number of Governors who were appointed by the British government and responsible for making decisions in each colony. Each colony had a Governor and was self-governed. Australia at that time operated as a collection of colonies rather than one united country. After federation, the joining of the colonies, in 1901, a new system of government was developed. It was known as the Westminster system and was based on the British model. The Australian system of government today is largely based upon this model.

The word federation is used to describe the joining of separate states and colonies to form one nation. Federation did not take place easily, as each colony worried about losing its identity and wanted to keep many powers. A compromise had to be reached.

<b>Arguments for federation:</b>	<b>Arguments against federation:</b>
Protection against foreign threats/ national defence.	Majority rule would favour the stronger states.
Better trade between the states.	Voting was seen as not fair and democratic.
National railway line.	People wanted to spend time getting the constitution right.
A stronger Australia in world affairs.	Loss of state power.
Resistance against non-Europeans.	
The ability for Australia to govern itself.	

Some of the key players in the achievement of federation were:

**Henry Parkes:** often called the 'Father of Federation' he made a famous speech in 1898 supporting federation;

**Sir Edmund Barton:** who played an important role in developing Australia's constitution and was Australia's first Prime Minister;

**Alfred Deakin:** who was a great supporter of federation and Prime Minister of Australia three times.



Sir Edmund Barton and Alfred Deakin  
Wikimedia Commons



Henry Parkes  
Wikimedia Commons

## Activity

# Governments, Laws and Federation 1

- Imagine one of two scenarios:

Federation has NOT taken place and is being discussed today. Does your state or territory think federation is beneficial? Think about the advantages and disadvantages of your state or territory joining with the rest of Australia. What resources does your state have? How well would the people of the state fare if some decisions were to be made by a government in Canberra?

OR

Federation has taken place but your state or territory has decided it wants to secede (separate) from the rest of Australia. Why do you believe moving away from a united Australia will help you?

- In groups of four, complete a large eye-catching newspaper advertisement stating your case.

Preview

## Extra

- Team up with another group of four who have taken a different opinion on federation than your group. Hold a debate. Use the back of the sheet to plan your points.

**Activity****Governments, Laws and Federation 2**

- You have been commissioned by Australia Post to design a set of four commemorative stamps recognising the contributions that Henry Parkes, Edmund Barton, Alfred Deakin and John Quick have made to Australian Federation. Design your stamps in the spaces below. You will need to undertake some research before you begin.

**HENRY PARKES**

**EDMUND BARTON**

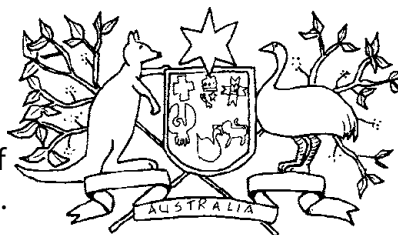
**ALFRED DEAKIN**

**JOHN QUICK**

Preview

## Path to Federation

In order to make sense of the past it is important to develop a logical order or chronology of events. At home or school, for example, time is referred to by saying 'after lunch' or 'in summer'. Historians also have ways to divide time. Time was previously referred to as BC or AD (before and after the death of Jesus Christ) but today is usually noted as CE (the Common Era). This is the period of measured time beginning with Year 1 (the traditional birth date of Jesus) to the present.



To understand Australian's path to Federation look at the timeline below:

- **1860 – 1866** Laws for the British colonies in Australia are made in Britain.
- **1883** Australian colonies meet to discuss French and German interest in the South Seas and begin talking about joining together.
- **1885** Federation Council is established. New South Wales refuses to join.
- **1889** New South Wales' Premier, Henry Parkes, makes a famous speech known as the Tenterfield speech. In the speech he calls for serious consideration of federation.
- **1890** Australasian Federation Conference decides that the joining of the colonies is a good idea.
- **1891** The Federation Convention meet and a draft constitution is presented to the states.
- **1893** Formation of the Australasian Federation League in New South Wales. The Corowa Convention in Corowa (New South Wales) – accepts the idea that people are to vote for delegates to the next convention to consider the constitution.
- **1895** Premiers meet in Hobart and agree to the Corowa Conference approach to achieving federation.
- **1897** Final draft constitution is sent to the state parliaments. Eventually a federation bill is presented and people in each colony vote for or against the federation. Referendums are held a number of times with varying results of yes and no votes from the colonies.
- **1898** Referendum vote result: yes vote in Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and New South Wales but not the required majority in New South Wales.
- **1899** Secret Premiers' Conference to amend the constitution to satisfy New South Wales and Queensland. Referendum vote – all colonies except Western Australia vote yes.
- **1900** Western Australia votes yes.
- **1901** The colonies become the Commonwealth of Australia and a new nation is born.

Match the dates with the events.

1893

1889

1890

1897

1900

1901

Six colonies become a nation.

Henry Parkes makes a speech promoting federation.

The Australasia Federation Conference is held.

The first referendums for people to vote are held.

The result of Western Australia's referendum is yes.

The Constitution Bill is amended at a secret conference.

The People's Convention is held.

- Draw lines to divide Australia into five separate colonies.
- Colour each colony's state government in a different colour.
- Write the year that each state agreed to become one nation in the map.
- When did the colonies become the Commonwealth of Australia?  
1901BC    1901AD    1901CE
- Use your research skills to find a copy of Henry Parkes' Tenterfield speech. Copy the line that you think is the most persuasive here.



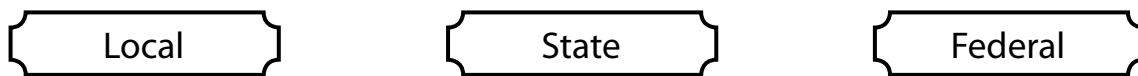
Read through the federation timeline on page 6. Why do you think Western Australia was initially reluctant to join the federation?

# Federalism

In 1901 when Australia became a federation, the new system of government was known as federalism. A federal system of government is one which has:

- *A national government;*
- *State governments;*
- *Division of powers between national and state governments. This means that although all states and territories are united they still remain independent.*

There are three levels of government in Australia:

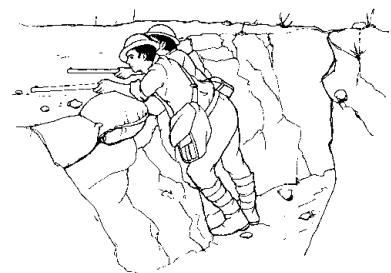
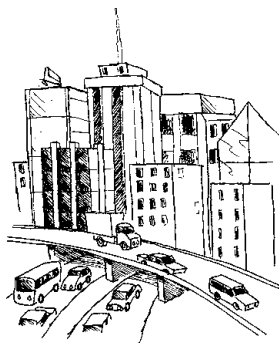
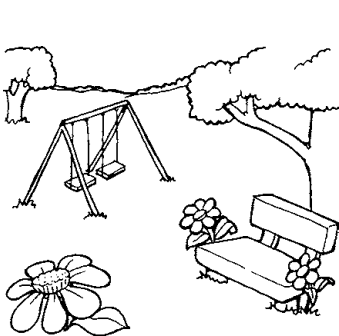


The roles and responsibilities of the various levels of government are quite different. Each state and territory also has its own government, which deals with issues specifically relating to the state. Elections are generally held every four years and the people of the state elect politicians to represent them in government.

Many day-to-day issues are the responsibility of local government. A local government represents the residents of a local area. There are more than 800 councils throughout Australia. Your local government may be known as a shire, town or city.

Some of the tasks of each type of government are shown in the table below.

Local Government	State Government	Federal Government
Rubbish disposal	Schools	Taxation
Libraries	Hospitals	Immigration
Footpaths	Police	Trade
Parks and ovals	Public transport	Defence
Building approvals	Making roads	International relations





## Activity

## Federalism

- Examine the table on page 8. It outlines the responsibilities of the various levels of government. Decide which level of government takes responsibility for the situations shown below.



You apply for a passport to go on holiday to Bali.



A new children's hospital is built in Western Australia.



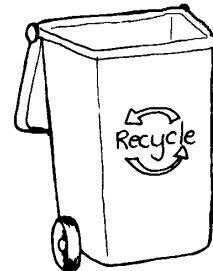
A group of 200 asylum seekers arrive on Christmas Island.



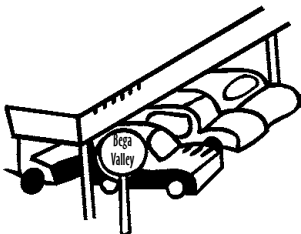
The people of Australia are asked if they want to become a republic.



A water main bursts, flooding the central business district in Sydney.



The City of South Perth changes its rubbish collection day from Friday to Monday.



The shire of Bega Valley increases car parking patrols during January.



A national program encouraging parents to read to their children is started.



Police in Victoria are to receive new powers to tackle crime.

# The Federal Government

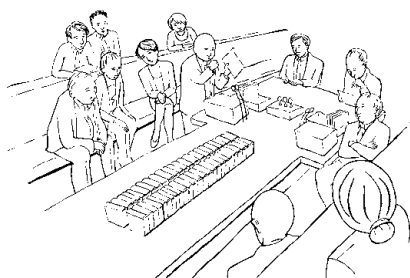
Matters of importance to the nation as a whole are the responsibility of the national or federal government. This government is located in Canberra and the building itself is known as parliament. There are three parts to the federal government. The Queen is the first part. She is the head of state and is represented by the Governor-General in Australia. Because Australia has a monarch as the head of state, Australia's system of government is known as a constitutional monarchy. The other two parts are the two houses of parliament. They are:

- *The House of Representatives (or lower house);*
- *The Senate (or upper house).*

Both houses have very different roles. Any parliament that is made up of two houses is known as a bicameral parliament. England and the USA also have two houses of parliament. In Australia the people elect each house.

## The House of Representatives

This house is traditionally the more powerful of the two. The Prime Minister must come from this house and its most important role is to form the government. The government is formed by the political party with the majority of members in the House of Representatives. Usually proposals for laws start in this house and it is this house (the lower house) that is responsible for laws to do with taxation and spending money. The 150 members of the House of Representatives represent the people who live in their electorate and they often spend a large part of their time in their electorate dealing with local issues. Members are elected for a period of three years. The decor in the House of Representatives is green.



## The Senate

This house is sometimes known as the State's House. When the idea of federation (the joining of the colonies together) was proposed, many of the smaller states were worried that their interests would be overlooked and their concerns not listened to. The Senate was established as a 'State's House' where each state would elect the same number of senators regardless of the size of their population. As political parties have grown over the years, the role of the Senate as a State's House has changed, with senators often voting according to the views of their political party rather than their state. The Senate also operates as a house of review for proposed laws (called bills). For a bill to become law it must be voted for by a majority in both houses. There are 76 Senators (12 representing each of the six states and two Senators representing each of the two territories). Members are elected for six-year terms. The decor in the Senate is red.

## Activity

# The Federal Government

- Write three interesting points about each house of parliament.

### *House of Representatives*

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### *The Senate*

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- Many different people and organisations represent you at various levels of government in Australia. See if you can find out the following:

Prime Minister of Australia:	
Federal Opposition Leader:	
Federal Education Minister:	
Federal Minister for the Environment:	
Premier of your state/territory:	
Deputy Premier:	
Leader of the Opposition:	
Minister for Education:	
Name of your local government organisation:	
Shire President or Mayor:	
Name of the electorate that you live in for federal elections:	
Name of the electorate that you live in for state elections:	

## Answers

### Page 7

1901 – Six colonies become a nation.

1889 – Henry Parkes makes a speech promoting federation.

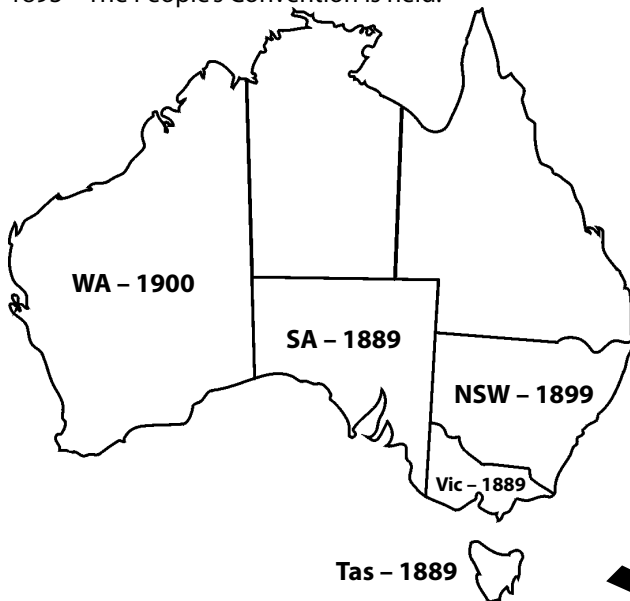
1890 – The Australasia Federation Conference is held.

1897 – The first referendums for people to vote are held.

1900 – The result of Western Australia's referendum is yes.

1899 – The Constitution Bill is amended at a secret conference.

1893 – The People's Convention is held.



The colonies became the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901.

Possible answer: because Western Australia is one of the most isolated states and it is rich in resources.

### Page 9

Federal, state, federal, federal, local, local, local, state, state.