Have your say in our country's future.
Why enrol to vote?

Voting is about making decisions that will affect your life. Enrolling and voting are very effective ways of having your say. This magazine aims to help you make informed decisions.
Contents

Who can Vote?  pages 2 – 3

Government in Australia  page 4

Federal Government  4
State Government  4
Local Government  5

Representation in the Commonwealth Parliament  pages 6 – 7

The House of Representatives  6
Senate  6

Preferential Voting  page 8

The House of Representatives  8
The Senate  9

Stages in an Election  page 10

Issuing the writs  10
The Electoral Roll  10
Nominations  10
Producing Ballot Papers and Polling Material  10
Campaigning  10
Voting Arrangements  11
The Scrutiny  11
Counting House of Representatives Votes  12-13
Counting Senate Votes  14-15
Declaration of the Poll  15

Parliament and the Government  pages 16 – 17

Constitutional Referendums  pages 18 – 19

Redistributions  pages 20 – 21
Federal Government

The decision making body of the Federal Government is Federal Parliament which consists of two houses - the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Representatives elected to the House of Representatives are called Members of the House Representatives (MHRs). The leader of the Federal Government, the Prime Minister, is a Member of the House of Representatives.

Representatives elected to the Senate are called Senators.

Government in Australia

Democracy

Australia is a representative democracy where people elect representatives to speak and make decisions for them. In 1901 the six Colonies (now States) federated forming the new nation of Australia to be governed by a Federal Parliament. It was set up as a constitutional monarchy in which the monarch is head of state and has limited powers. The Governor-General represents the monarch in Australia. Representatives are elected to each of the three levels of government:
- federal government
- state government
- local government

Federal Government responsibilities include: foreign affairs, social security, industrial relations, trade, immigration, currency and defence.

State Government

The decision making body of State Government is the State Parliament which meets in the Parliament House of the particular State. Each State Parliament, except for the Queensland Parliament, is made up of two houses.

Representatives elected to State Parliaments are generally known as "members" - Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) or Members of the House of Assembly (MHA) or Members of the Legislative Council (MLC). The leader of a State Government is called the Premier.

TheNorthern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory have a different arrangement. Each Territory Parliament has one house called the Legislative Assembly. The leader of each Territory Government is called the Chief Minister.

State and Territory Government responsibilities include: justice, consumer affairs, health, education, forestry, public transport and main roads.
The decision making body of local government is usually called the city or shire council. Councils have been established by State Governments to look after the particular needs of a city or local community. The people’s representatives who form the council are called aldermen or councillors. The head of the council is the mayor or shire president.

Local government responsibilities include: local roads, garbage collection, building regulations and land subdivisions, public health, and recreation facilities such as swimming pools.