

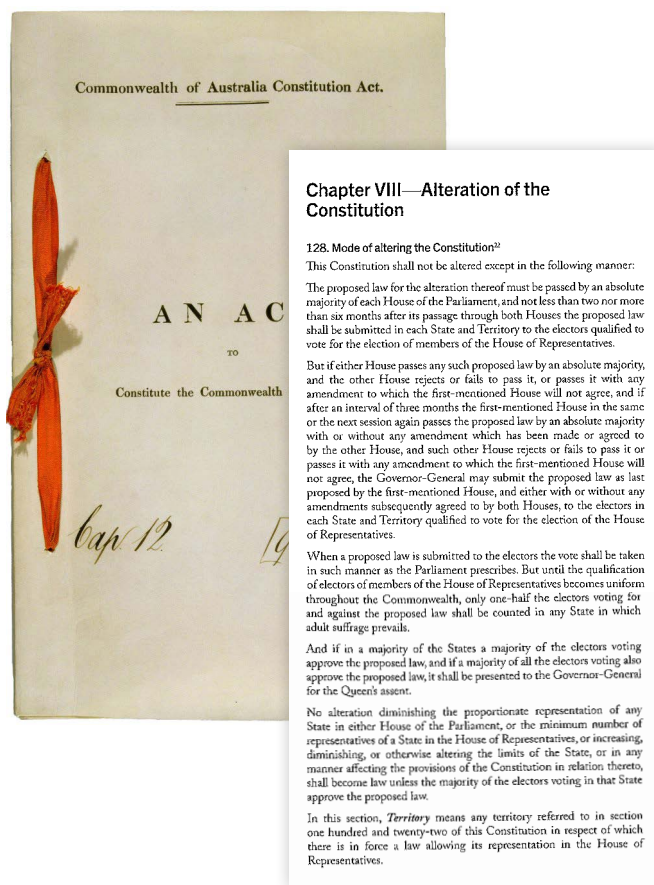
FACT SHEET 1

What is a referendum?

We all know about voting in federal elections, which we do at least every three years, to elect members of Parliament. This then determines the federal Government of Australia. From time to time, we are asked to vote in a referendum on a proposed change to the Australian Constitution, the rule book for our system of government. The only way to change the Australian Constitution is by holding a referendum. Voting in a referendum and the results of that vote are really important because the Constitution is the highest law in the country.

In a referendum, voters are asked to vote Yes or No to a question on their ballot paper about a proposed law to alter the Australian Constitution.

Let's take a moment to learn what the Australian Constitution says about referendums. Australia's Constitution has a whole chapter of its own, the last chapter in the Constitution, on how to alter it.



Chapter VIII: Alteration of the Constitution (s 128) says that the Constitution can only be altered if the particular change is first approved by Parliament and then by the people in a referendum.



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