

FACT SHEET 10

Introducing the Australian Parliament: The Houses of the Parliament

The Australian Constitution establishes the Australian Parliament, also known as the federal Parliament or the Commonwealth Parliament. Ministers in the government are drawn from elected members of the Parliament (see fact sheet 13). The Parliament has two Houses:

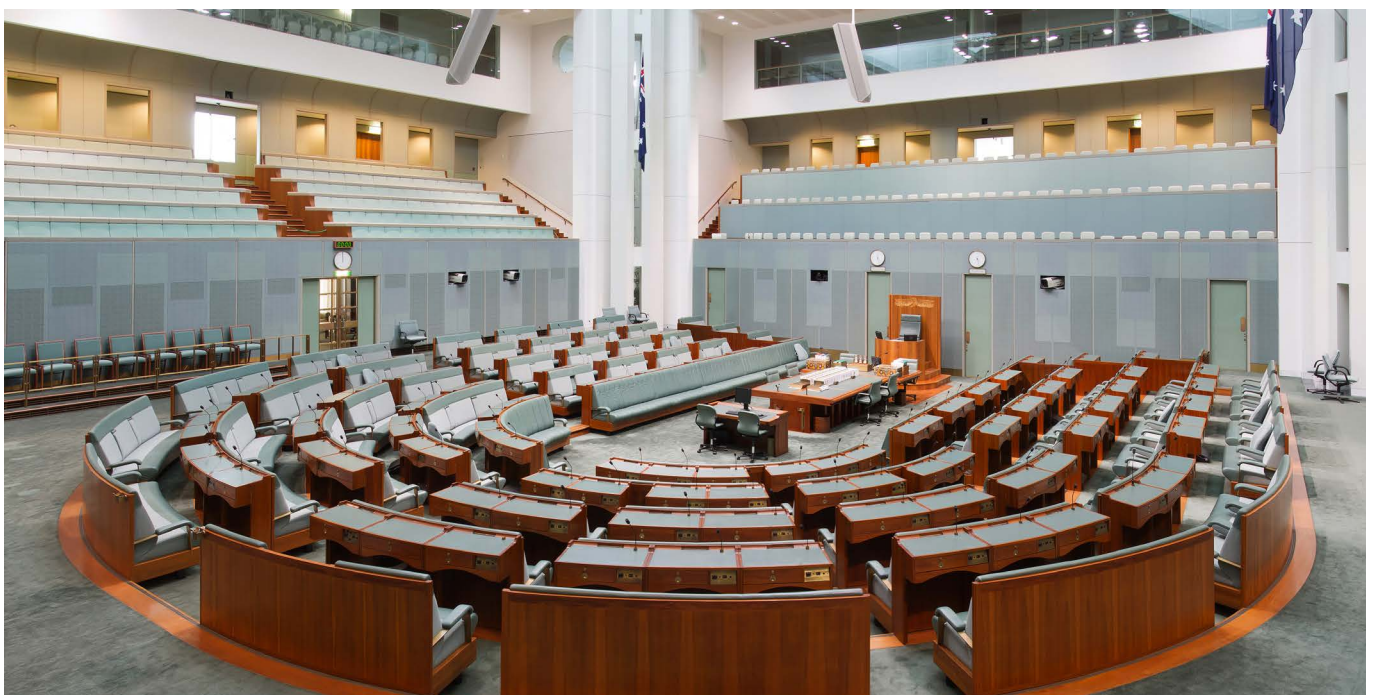
- the House of Representatives
- the Senate

The Parliament's main purpose is to make laws for the good of the people. In a federal election, Australian citizens vote to elect representatives to each House of Parliament.

The House of Representatives

The House of Representatives is also known as the lower house or the people's house. Australia is divided into federal electorates. Members of Parliament (MPs) represent the people in their electorate. The number of MPs for each state and territory is based on the proportionate number of people in that state or territory, except that each original State has a guaranteed minimum of five MPs. Overall, there are 151 members

elected to the House of Representatives. Members debate proposals for new laws in the Australian Parliament. The role of the House is to consider, debate, and vote on proposals for new laws or changes to existing laws, and discuss matters of national importance. The Government is formed by the party, or coalition of parties, with the support of the majority of Members in the House.



The House of Representatives
Source: Wiki Commons

The Senate

The Senate is also known as the upper house, the house of review or the States' house. Voters from each state elect senators to represent them in the Senate. All states are equally represented in the Senate regardless of their size or population. There are a total of 76 senators. Each state elects 12 senators, and the Australian Capital Territory and

Northern Territory elect two senators each. There is currently a discussion about whether territory representation in the Senate should be increased.

Senators also consider, debate and vote on new laws or changes to the laws, and discuss matters of national importance.



The Senate
Source: Wiki Commons



This program
is funded by
the Australian
Government



Administered by
the Constitution
Education Fund
Australia (CEFA)

