

10 FACTS

DEMOCRACY MATTERS

**A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM CAN ONLY WORK
WHEN ITS CITIZENS PARTICIPATE**

GET YOUR TEN FAST-FACTS
ON OUR AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRACY



Museum of
Australian Democracy
Old Parliament House

FACT 1

BEFORE FEDERATION IN 1901, THERE WAS NO SUCH THING AS THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA



At Federation, all the colonies unified to become the states of the Commonwealth of Australia and new laws were made to govern all Australians.

FACT 2

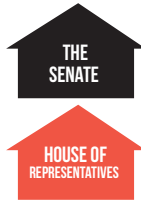
The idea of having two houses that share the power to make laws – a bicameral parliament – was based partly on the British Westminster system and partly on the United States system of government.



OUR SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT IS UNIQUELY
AUSTRALIAN,
A HYBRID OF THE **BRITISH**
AND **AMERICAN** SYSTEMS

FACT 3

OUR DEMOCRACY IS GOVERNED BY A TWO-HOUSE PROCESS



Both the House of Representatives (lower house) and the Senate (upper house) debate and pass bills, scrutinise government and govern for all Australians.

There are 151 members (also referred to as MPs) elected to the House of Representatives. Each MP represents an electorate which might vary greatly in area but is roughly equal in the numbers of voters. The members usually belong to a political party and the party, or parties that win a majority of seats becomes the government.

FACT 4



WE FORM
GOVERNMENT
IN THE
HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES

FACT 5

THE SENATE INCLUDES REPRESENTATIVES FROM EACH STATE AND TERRITORY



The Senate, also known as the “house of review”, is made up of 76 senators elected to represent Australia’s six states and two territories.

FACT 6

THE PUBLIC DOESN'T VOTE IN A PRIME MINISTER



Every political party chooses its own leader. The leader of the majority party in the House of Representatives becomes the prime minister.

The major party not in power, the Opposition, challenges government measures they believe to not be in the best interests of the nation.



THE OPPOSITION IS THE MAJOR PARTY NOT IN POWER

FACT 7

FACT 8

THE PRIME MINISTER IS NOT MENTIONED IN THE CONSTITUTION

Even though they are our most powerful politician, there is no reference to a prime minister in the Constitution. The prime minister exists by tradition and convention.



If you don't want to vote in the next election, be prepared to fork out \$20 in fines!



VOTING IS COMPULSORY FOR AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS OVER 18



FACT 9

FACT 10

AS A REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY VOTING DECIDES WHICH PARTY WILL GOVERN






We can influence the decision-making of those we have elected to govern us. And if we become disillusioned with a party, we can always vote them out and try another.

ARE YOU IN?

**START THINKING, TALKING AND ACTING
IN THE WORLD AROUND YOU TO ENSURE
THE HEALTH AND LONGEVITY OF OUR
AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRACY.**

Enrol to vote, make an informed vote,
write an email, start or sign an online
petition – take a stand on injustices and
exercise the power of your voice.

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