



AEC

Australian Electoral Commission



Democracy Rules

An electoral education resource

Democracy Rules

An important message

Due to changes in the Commonwealth Electoral Act in 2010 please note the following information:

- Australian citizens can enrol from the age of 16 for federal elections, and all Australians citizens over the age of 18 must be enrolled and vote.
- The electoral roll closes seven days from the date the election writs are issued.

As there has been a change in Australia's population, the average number of voters in each electorate has increased and was approximately 99,000 electors for the 2013 federal election.

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Introduction

To the teacher

Teachers play a critical part in shaping young people's understanding of their role as citizens and future electors. In fact, the work of the teaching profession helps to guide the democratic development of our nation.

Education systems and the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) have identified civics and citizenship education as an important priority for all Australian students. The AEC believes it has a significant role to play in the advocacy and practical advancement of this cause with a particular focus on building electoral literacy and encouraging future participation in Australian electoral processes. For this reason, the AEC has worked with Curriculum Corporation to develop a new and exciting classroom-based electoral teaching and learning package called *Democracy Rules: An electoral education resource*.

The proposition that electoral and voting systems safeguard our democratic principles and values underpins this resource. Electoral and voting systems are a vital link between citizen participation and democratic representation, and provide the mechanism for free and fair elections and political change. Sound electoral systems empower representatives to make decisions on behalf of others and confer legitimacy on governments. Electoral systems also have the power to transform conflict and competition into cooperative activity, and prevent rivalries that place a destructive strain on communities.

In Australia, the Commonwealth Parliament contains two representative institutions at the federal level: the House of Representatives and the Senate. They rely on different electoral and voting systems, which in turn affect the nature of their representation.

The Australian Constitution provides for the composition of both houses of parliament. The Constitution also provides the legal framework within which the parliament can determine the electoral and voting systems used to elect both houses of parliament and the procedures and processes used to conduct referendums. The *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (Cth) (the Electoral Act) and the *Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act 1984* (Cth) (the Referendum Act) outline the rules for federal elections and referendums, providing for electoral and voting systems that reflect the principles of democratic representation – including universal adult franchise and free and fair elections – and mechanisms for constitutional change. The Constitution and the Electoral and Referendum Acts thus reflect and give meaning to liberal democratic practice.

Democracy Rules aims to explain these facts and themes in an engaging manner and to make a worthy contribution to what might be described as the 'democratic life experience' of your students.

The role of the Australian Electoral Commission

The AEC is an independent organisation established by an amendment to the Electoral Act in 1984.

Six processes uniquely identify the AEC:

- > managing the Commonwealth electoral roll
- > preparing for, conducting and reviewing elections
- > educating and informing the community about participating in the electoral process
- > providing advice and assistance on electoral matters in Australia and overseas
- > ensuring that political parties and others comply with financial disclosure requirements
- > supporting electoral redistributions.

Through its enforcement of the provisions of the Electoral Act, the AEC ensures that electoral systems for the Commonwealth Parliament are administered fairly and that elections are free from interference and intimidation. The AEC also enforces voter eligibility requirements, and provides electors with access to the ballot. These are some of the key elements of free and fair elections that sustain Australia's democratic system of government.

Should you have any feedback on the content of this electoral education resource please email your comments to education@aec.gov.au.

How to use this resource

The teacher guide contains eight investigations grouped under four topics. Teachers may connect many of the activities to the Discovering Democracy Units already used in Australian classrooms.

Purposes

This guide has two main purposes:

- > to equip teachers with background knowledge so they can confidently lead students in an exploration of Australian electoral and voting systems
- > to provide students with appealing, engaging and accessible material that furthers their understandings of the key concepts and functions of Australian electoral and voting systems.

Inquiry approach

The activities in this book use a three-stage inquiry approach to learning: 'Gathering information', 'Identifying and analysing' and 'Presenting findings'. Students are encouraged to develop understandings of key concepts through exploration and investigation. Where appropriate a linking stage, 'Making connections', is also included.

Ready references

This guide contains 'Background briefings', a 'Glossary' and a 'Franchise timeline' (**BLM 4** in *You and me, the decision makers*) for ready reference. The latter provides a simple introduction to the historical evolution of Australian electoral and voting systems.

AEC website links

Many investigations in this guide direct you to the AEC website.

Investigations and activities

Introductory activities at the beginning of each topic allow teachers to elicit students' prior learning and to develop their understandings of the relevant concepts before tackling more complex investigations. Each investigation is designed around a concept, issue or event, and invites exploration through a series of activities that represent different stages in the inquiry approach.

At a glance

Each investigation begins with a table – 'The investigation at a glance'. This contains important information for teachers, and will assist their navigation of the resource. The table includes:

- > links to relevant background briefings
- > suggested classroom teaching time for each activity
- > indicators of student achievement

Recommended levels

Colour-coded bars help teachers identify the applicability of each investigation to different levels of schooling. The darker the shade, the more relevant the investigation to the level of schooling – but these are only recommendations. Given the diversity of learning abilities and needs in classrooms, teachers are invited to use their professional judgement in using the investigations and activities in this resource.

RECOMMENDED LEVELS

UPPER SECONDARY

MIDDLE SECONDARY

LOWER SECONDARY

UPPER PRIMARY

Blackline masters

Blackline masters (BLMs) accompany every investigation and may be freely photocopied for student use. Many activities make use of BLMs and teachers are advised to prepare them in advance.

Connections to multimedia resources

The teacher guide uses a system of icons to link the text to recommended animations and interactives. Teachers may choose to pause at particular stages to allow students to explore a particular item or may use them as stand alone activities.

THE ANIMATIONS	TOPIC ONE	TOPIC TWO	TOPIC THREE	TOPIC FOUR
History of Voting March through the history of the franchise and the voting systems for the Federal Parliament beginning with the evolution of the franchise in colonial Australia and concluding with compulsory enrolment and voting for Indigenous Australians in 1984.	✓		✓	✓
Counting Your Vote Experience a fun, concise demonstration and explanation of the different voting systems used to elect representatives.	✓	✓	✓	
Election Day Can't remember the order of things? Let the professor take you through a step-by-step description of the election process from the calling of an election and enrolment, to the count and return of writs.	✓		✓	

THE INTERACTIVES	TOPIC ONE	TOPIC TWO	TOPIC THREE	TOPIC FOUR
The History of Voting Game Help the new museum attendant reorder the pictures by researching their place in the history of voting in Australia.	✓		✓	✓
Quiz 1 – Referendums – Do you get it? Test your knowledge of the referendum process and the history of referendums in Australia in this interactive, multiple-choice game show.		✓		✓
Quiz 2 – The Constitution – Are you a whiz? Test your knowledge of the Australian system of government in this interactive, multiple-choice game show.		✓	✓	
History Challenge – Test your knowledge Take a speed test of your knowledge of the history of the franchise in Australia with this quick, interactive, multiple-choice quiz.	✓		✓	
Voting Challenge – What do you know? Use your knowledge of voting to compete against the clock in this quick, interactive, multiple-choice quiz.	✓	✓	✓	
Comic Creations Create your own cartoon strip, demonstrating your electoral knowledge.	✓	✓		
Democracy Rules – The Quests 1 & 2 Compete against the clock, or a friend, and collect as many gems about Australia's democracy as you can by answering as many questions as you can.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Voting Tool Running an election in your school or classroom? Learn about preferential voting from the animation in this interactive and then use the preferential counting tool to count the votes in your election.	✓	✓	✓	

Curriculum links

The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has been tasked with developing the Foundation to Year 12 Australian Curriculum. This on-going process has been done through a rigorous and consultative, national process with a variety of Education Sector stakeholders.

The Australian Curriculum aims to set consistent national standards to improve learning outcomes for all young Australians. It sets out, through content descriptions and achievement standards, what students should be taught and achieve, as they progress through school. It is the base for future learning, growth and active participation in the Australian community.

Set out below are the links Democracy Rules has to the Australian Curriculum Humanities and Social Sciences - Civics and Citizenship content descriptions.

YEAR 3

Concepts for developing understanding

The content in the civics and citizenship sub-strand provides opportunities for students to develop understanding about democracy, laws and citizens and citizenship, diversity and identity. Drawing on familiar contexts and personal experiences of fair play, different points of view, rules and consequences, and decision-making, students begin to develop an understanding of democracy as rule by the people (democracy, laws and citizens). Students explore how individuals, including themselves, participate in and contribute to their community (citizenship, diversity and identity).

Inquiry question

- How are decisions made democratically?

CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING	DEMOCRACY RULES
Content Description The importance of making decisions (ACHASSK070)	Topics and Investigations You and me, the decision makers
Elaborations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• making a decision as a class by allowing everyone to have a say and a vote• building empathy by reflecting on how it feels to be included or excluded from making decisions and identify situations when it is fair for decisions to be made without taking a majority vote(for example by teachers or parents)• identifying places and situations in communities where decisions are made democratically	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do we mean by democracy?• Can we all make the decisions?

YEAR 5

Concepts for developing understanding

The content in the civics and citizenship sub-strand provides opportunities for students to develop understanding about government and democracy, laws and citizens and citizenship, diversity and identity. Students are introduced to the key values of Australia's liberal democratic system of government, such as freedom, equality, fairness and justice (government and democracy). Students begin to understand representative democracy by examining the features of the voting processes in Australia (government and democracy).

Inquiry questions

- What is democracy in Australia and why is voting in a democracy important?

CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING	DEMOCRACY RULES
<p>Content Description</p> <p>The key values that underpin Australia's democracy (ACHASSK115)</p> <p>Elaborations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• discussing the meaning of democracy• discussing the meaning and importance of the key values of Australian democracy (for example, freedom of election and being elected; freedom of assembly and political participation; freedom of speech, expression and religious belief; rule of law; other basic human rights)• considering how students apply democratic values in familiar contexts <p>The key features of the electoral process in Australian (ACHASSK116)</p> <p>Elaborations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• exploring the secret ballot and compulsory voting as key features of Australia's democracy• recognising the role of the Australian Electoral Commission in administering elections that are open, free and fair• clarifying who has the right to vote and stand for election in Australia	<p>Topics and Investigations</p> <p>You and me, the decision makers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do we mean by democracy?• Can we all make the decisions? <p>What's your vote worth?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How and why do Australians vote?• How do electorates change over time?

YEAR 6

Concepts for developing understanding

The content in the civics and citizenship sub-strand provides opportunities for students to develop understanding about government and democracy, laws and citizens and citizenship, diversity and identity. Students study the key institutions of Australia's democratic government, including state/territory and federal parliaments, and the responsibilities of electors and representatives (government and democracy).

Inquiry question

- What are the roles and responsibilities of the different levels of government in Australia?

CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING	DEMOCRACY RULES
<p>The responsibilities of electors and representatives in Australia's democracy (ACHASSK145)</p> <p>Elaborations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• considering the responsibilities of electors (for example, enrolling to vote, being informed and voting responsibly)• identifying the characteristics that would make for a 'good' representative at the local, state/territory or national level	<p>Representing everyone!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you have your say?• How are we represented?

YEAR 7

Concepts for developing understanding

The content in the civics and citizenship sub-strand provides opportunities for students to develop understanding about government and democracy, laws and citizens and citizenship, diversity and identity. The year provides a study of Australia's constitution and how its features shape Australia's democracy (government and democracy) and how Australia's legal system aims to provide justice (laws and citizens). Students explore diversity within Australian society, how groups express their identities and the role of shared values in promoting social cohesion (citizenship, diversity and identity).

Inquiry question

- How is Australia's system of democratic government shaped by the Constitution?

CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING	DEMOCRACY RULES
<p>The process for constitutional change through a referendum (ACHASSK194)</p> <p>Elaborations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">describing the process by which referendums to change the Australian Constitution are initiated and decidedexploring examples of attempts to change the Australian Constitution by referendum (for example, the successful vote on the Constitution Alteration (Aboriginals) 1967; the unsuccessful vote on the Constitution Alteration (Establishment of Republic) 1999)discussing the advantages and disadvantages of having a Constitution that can only be amended by referendum	<p>Representing everyone!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Are there other ways to have your say?How does the Australian Constitution influence our lives? <p>The voice of a vote in a world of change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">How did Indigenous Australians achieve civic rights?

YEAR 10

Concepts for developing understanding

The Year 10 curriculum develops student understanding of Australia's system of government through comparison with another system of government in the Asian region. Students examine Australia's roles and responsibilities within the international context, such as its involvement with the United Nations. Students also study the purpose and work of the High Court. They investigate the values and practices that enable a democratic society to be sustained.

Key Inquiry questions

- How is Australia's democracy defined and shaped by the global context?

CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING	DEMOCRACY RULES
<p>Government and democracy</p> <p>The key features and values of Australia's system of government compared with ONE other system of government in the Asia region (ACHCK090)</p> <p>Elaborations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">categorising the key features of Australia's system of government, for example democratic elections and the separation of powers, and comparing and contrasting these to the key features found in another country in the Asia region, such as Japan, India or IndonesiaAustralia's roles and responsibilities at a global level, for example provision of foreign aid, peacekeeping, participation in international organisations and the United Nations (ACHCK091) <p>Elaborations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">exploring the types of participation that Australia has in the Asia region and internationally, for example exchange programs, peacekeeping, election monitoring, health programs, disaster management	<p>The voice of a vote in a world of change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">How did East Timor take the first steps to democracy?

Background briefings

These briefings, arranged alphabetically for teachers' reference, provide additional information about the electoral system.

Australian Electoral Commission

The Australian Electoral Commission is an independent statutory authority that is empowered by the Electoral Act to maintain the Commonwealth electoral roll, and to organise and conduct federal elections and referendums. As such it plays a crucial role in ensuring that elections operate according to democratic principles and values and are independent of politics. For example, the AEC supports the process of redistributing electoral boundaries.

The AEC administers election funding and financial disclosure and has the responsibility to conduct electoral education programs. While the AEC's primary responsibilities are carried out in Australia, it also assists in the conduct of foreign elections and referendums as approved by the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (Cth)

Although the Constitution provides for the basic legal framework for representative government at the federal level, the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (Cth) (the Electoral Act) provides supplementary machinery for the conduct of federal elections. In effect, the Electoral Act provides the legal basis for the administration of elections including:

- the creation and maintenance of the electoral roll; the distribution of electoral divisions (electorates) for the House of Representatives in each state and territory;
- the registration of political parties and

- election funding; the election timetable; the rules relating to the marking of ballot papers and the counting of votes; the rules regulating electoral advertising; and the rules governing challenges to election results.

Constitution

The *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act* (the Constitution) is the basis of the Australian Federation (see **Federation**) and broadly defines the relationship between the Commonwealth and the states, as well as the structure and powers of the Commonwealth Parliament and the High Court. The Constitution provides the legislative basis for the Commonwealth Parliament's law-making powers, and laws made by the Commonwealth Parliament must be in accordance with the Constitution.

The Constitution also establishes the basis of representation and the terms of the two houses of parliament: the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Some of the laws governing representation in the House of Representatives and the Senate are laid down in the Constitution, and these are given effect and supplemented by the provisions of the Electoral Act and its subsequent amendments.

Democracy

Democracy comes from the Greek words *demos* meaning 'the people' and *kratos* meaning 'power'. Effectively, the word 'democracy' means 'people power' – the right of people to make decisions on how they are governed. In modern democracies citizens elect representatives to govern on their behalf, and these representatives remain answerable to electors at periodic elections.

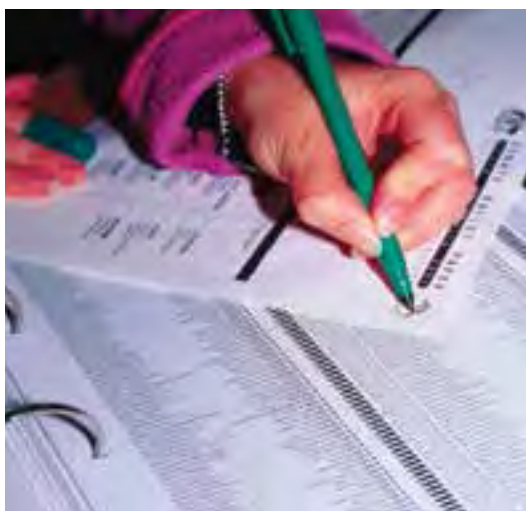


Fig 1: A polling official initialling a ballot paper

Electoral division

A fair electoral system ensures that each citizen's vote has equal value and that voters have, as near as possible, equal representation. For House of Representatives elections (see **House of Representatives**), each Australian state and territory is divided into electoral divisions (also called electorates) which each elect one member to the house. Each member of the House of Representatives therefore represents an individual electorate.

The number of House of Representatives electoral divisions for each state and territory is based, as near as possible, on the total population of that state or territory as a proportion of the Australian population. The exact quota is arrived at using the formula in section 24 of the Constitution. Within a given tolerance, each electorate in a particular state or territory contains the same number of electors.

Population changes affect electoral division boundaries, which are altered to ensure that electorates have, as near as possible, equal enrolments (see **Redistribution**).

The Senate (see **Senate**) differs from the House of Representatives in that it is not a single-member system. A proportional system of representation applies and electors of a state or territory, voting as a single electorate, elect the relevant number of senators to represent them.

Electoral roll

The Commonwealth electoral roll is the list of the names and addresses of all people who have enrolled to vote at Australian elections. You cannot vote unless you have enrolled. Australian citizens 18 years of age and over must enrol to vote and must also notify any change of address in order to stay on the roll.

Federation

In 1901 the six British colonies in Australia joined to form the Commonwealth of Australia, and became the six states of the new federation. The colonies had formerly been self-governing. The rights of the new states were protected by the Constitution in the new federation, creating two levels of government: state and Commonwealth.

Full preferential voting

Australia uses the full preferential voting system for both House of Representatives and Senate elections. Electors number the candidates in the order of their preference. For the House of Representatives, a valid ballot paper would contain a preferential order which includes all candidates. This is also true for 'below the line voting' on the Senate ballot paper. However, electors for the Senate can also vote 'above the line', where they defer to the order of preferences as decided by a particular group or party, by placing the number 1 in one of the squares.

In the House of Representatives, a single-member system, electors in an electoral division vote using the full preferential system and elect one Member of Parliament to represent them. To be elected, a candidate must gain an absolute majority (more than 50%) of the formal vote in an electorate or division.

While the Senate also uses a full preferential voting system, a proportional system applies to counting the votes in the Senate. This means that candidates must gain a proportion of the electorate's votes (a quota) to be elected. Each state or territory forms a single electorate and voters elect the relevant number of senators.

House of Representatives

Under the Constitution, the House of Representatives (or 'people's house') represents the people of the Commonwealth. It is the House where government is formed and where most legislation is initiated. The party (or coalition) that commands a majority of Members in the House of Representatives forms the government, and the leader of that party or coalition becomes the Prime Minister. The House of Representatives is elected for a term of not more than three years.

Indigenous Australians' rights

In Australia, Indigenous Australians were progressively granted citizenship rights, including the right to vote in 1962. However, during the 1960s there were calls for the Australian Constitution to be changed. Although Indigenous Australians were mentioned in the Constitution, these references were to their exclusion, as under section 51 the Commonwealth Government had no power to make laws for them and, under section 127, they were excluded from being counted in the census.

These provisions meant that Indigenous Australians, who at the time were subject to a range of differing laws and regulations in various Australian States and Territories, were denied the status of equality of citizenship with other Australians. The anomalies resulted in calls to amend the Constitution. The referendum of 1967 had enormous symbolic significance for Indigenous Australians, and was passed by an overwhelming majority of Australians with 90.77% voting in favour of change. In 1984, compulsory enrolment and voting in Commonwealth elections for Indigenous Australians came into effect, bestowing upon them the same responsibilities as other citizens under the Electoral Act.



Fig 2: Indigenous Australians received the right to vote in Commonwealth elections in 1962

International assistance – East Timor

East Timor was the first democratic nation formed in the 21st century, but the path to democracy was not smooth and continues to be difficult. Nine days after a unilateral declaration of East Timorese independence in 1975, Indonesian forces invaded East Timor, later claiming it as the 27th province of Indonesia. The United Nations, however, did not recognise Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor.

By the late 1990s increased international attention to human rights abuses, as well as pressure on the Indonesian government, led the United Nations to organise a 'popular consultation'. The vote was to allow the East Timorese to decide whether to remain part of or separate from Indonesia. The East Timorese voted not to remain part of Indonesia.

Australia led the international peacekeeping efforts during the period of violence that followed the popular consultation in East Timor in 1999, and contributed to an international contingent of police. This peacekeeping role included supporting the establishment of democratic institutions and conducting democratic elections. Australia has continued to provide support for democratic governance since, through education programs and capacity building.

The AEC assisted with electoral planning, conducting the ballot for the East Timorese diaspora in Australia, and providing voter registration equipment kits and ballot papers. The AEC also helped with the development of registration, polling and counting procedures and the training of United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) electoral staff for subsequent democratic elections in 2001 and 2002.

Parliament

The Commonwealth Parliament was created under the Constitution; it consists of two houses: the House of Representatives and the Senate. The law-making powers and functions of each House, as well as the bases of their election, are described in the Constitution.

Redistribution

The rearrangement of an electoral divisional boundary is called a redistribution. The AEC is responsible for regular redistributions of electoral boundaries for the House of Representatives.

A redistribution is needed when there is a change in the number of members in the House of Representatives to which a state or territory is entitled, or if a redistribution has not taken place for a period of seven years. A redistribution is also undertaken when the difference in the number of electors across divisions is outside a given tolerance. This is defined as a variation of more than one-third of the divisions within a state or territory from the average divisional enrolment for that state by more than 10% for two consecutive months.

The AEC uses population data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Referendum

The Constitution contains provisions that allow for its alteration. Section 128 allows for the Constitution to be altered by referendum. In a referendum to alter a provision of the Constitution, the proposed change must be approved by a double majority: a majority of voters in Australia as a whole *and* a majority of voters in a majority of States (at least four of the six States). Citizens eligible to vote must participate in a referendum and vote 'Yes' or 'No' to the proposed change. Since Federation, 44 proposals for constitutional change have been put to the Australian electors but only eight referendums have been successful.

Representation

In modern democracies electors elect representatives to parliaments, or other representative institutions, at periodic elections. These representatives, who are usually members of political parties, participate in the legislative process, and are entrusted to make decisions on behalf of electors for which they are accountable at elections. In the Australian democratic system, citizens elect representatives to make decisions on their behalf. Because voting is such an important part of a democratic representation, electoral laws and the systems that are used to elect representatives are critical in ensuring that democratic principles and values are upheld – and the worth of each citizen's vote is maintained.

Senate

Under the Constitution, each state has equal representation in the Senate (currently 12 senators per state, but two senators per territory). To be elected to the Senate, candidates must receive a specific proportion of the votes. This is called a 'quota'.

The term of office for senators for the states is six years. In 1974, parliamentary legislation granted Senate representation to the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. However, the term of office for senators from the territories is contingent on the term of the House of Representatives, a maximum of three years, unless dissolved earlier.

The Senate reviews legislation passed in the House of Representatives and must approve it before it becomes law. The Senate has equal powers with the House of Representatives, except that it cannot initiate money bills.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Australia was a founding member of the United Nations, which was formed in 1945 a few months after the end of World War II. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed by all United Nations member nations in 1948, obliging them to promote its ideals among their peoples and aspire to its principles in the areas over which they had jurisdiction. The Declaration outlines civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights, and it has significant symbolic and moral importance for all people. Article 21 of the Declaration is an example of its democratic principles:

Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives ... The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote ...

(Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/)

TOPICS AND INVESTIGATIONS

You and me, the decision makers

We are all decision makers. Our decisions range from those that impact only on our own lives to decisions that affect the way we participate in and contribute to society. We make many decisions individually or collaboratively but other decisions are made for us or are made indirectly through representatives.

You and me, the decision makers provides students with the opportunity to explore the purpose and meaning of voting as a democratic form of decision making.

The topic contains two investigations:

What do we mean by democracy?

Can we all make the decisions?

These investigations explore the democratic principles and values that underpin the individual's right to a free and fair vote, the concept of representation and the electoral systems that facilitate the election of parliamentary representatives.

Introductory activity

Randomly choose four students to be the class decision makers for a day or two. Draw colour-coded paper or discs out of a box to ensure random selection.

Inform the class that you will only be consulting these four students on classroom decisions over the next one to two days. They are to be the 'decision makers' who will be making the decisions for the entire class over this time. Tell the decision makers that they are not to consult the rest of the class about the decisions that they will make.

Decisions could include the choice of any games played, which students go to recess first, group structures for activities, where students sit, timing of an activity, medium of activity, sport, and so on.

If students become agitated about their lack of consultation during this time, reassure them that in a few days they will be told the reasons for deciding class activities in this way.

Provide all students with a reflective journal and ask them to record their feelings and perceptions of the situations they encounter during the day. Prompts could include:

- > Did you agree with the way the decision makers were chosen?
- > How are you feeling about the situation?
- > Are decisions being made fairly?
- > Is your opinion changing, and if so, in what way?

After one or two days (according to teacher judgement), conduct a classroom discussion directing the following questions to the decision makers and to the rest of the class. Their answers should be summarised and recorded on poster paper as a PMI (plus, minus, interesting) chart:



Fig 3: Being marked off the roll in a class election

	Decision makers	Other class members
Plus (Positive points)		
Minus (Negative points)		
Interesting		

Decision makers

- > How did you make the decisions?
What did you take into account?
- > Did you mainly consider yourself, your friends or everybody?
- > How did you feel about yourself and other class members when making these decisions?
- > Did you feel you were able to 'represent' other class members?
- > Would you feel the same if you had been making decisions with the help of everyone in the class?
- > Did you like or dislike this role? Why?

Other class members

- > Did you like the decisions being made for you?
- > Did you feel that they 'represented' you?
- > What did you think about the decision makers? How did they make you feel?
- > What did you think about the way the decision makers made their decisions?
- > Would you have felt any different if there were a different group of decision makers?

Whole class

Was this a fair way of organising the decision making in the class?

- > What did you like or dislike about it?
- > How could it have been fairer?
- > How can you have your say?

Teachers should now contrast this undemocratic system by asking the class about issues in school life that concern them. Make a list of contributions on the board, then ask the students to consider that if one person were to be chosen to speak on behalf of the class on these issues, what skills and personal qualities would this representative need. Make a list of these qualities. Finally, ask the group to nominate candidates who would be good class representatives and who could take class concerns to the principal or year level coordinator. Elect one or two representatives by a show of hands. Arrange a meeting between the representatives and the principal or year level coordinator, and have the representatives report the results to the rest of the class in a subsequent lesson.



Fig 4: Receiving a ballot paper before voting in a school election

Investigation

What do we mean by democracy?

In this investigation students explore the principles and values that underlie the right of all individuals to a free and fair vote. They will learn about the exercise of the franchise, and link the act of voting with democratic decision making. The investigation emphasises the formalities of the voting process and the different kinds of voting in Australian elections, especially full preferential voting. Students will participate in an ‘election’ using the procedures followed by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) to ensure a free and fair vote.

RECOMMENDED LEVELS

UPPER SECONDARY

MIDDLE SECONDARY

LOWER SECONDARY

UPPER PRIMARY

THE INVESTIGATION AT A GLANCE

Background briefings for teacher reference	Australian Electoral Commission; Constitution; Democracy; Electoral division; Full preferential voting; House of Representatives; Senate
Suggested classroom teaching time	Activity 1: What is a democracy? (40 minutes) Activity 2: How do we make decisions in a democratic society? (80 minutes) Activity 3: Who has the right to vote and choose our representatives? (40 minutes) Activity 4: How do we make sure that elections reflect democratic values? (80 minutes)
Indicators of student achievement	Understand how the Australian electoral system accords with democratic principles and values Understand how voting and electoral systems facilitate representation Describe the key features of the Australian electoral system including the franchise, preferential voting and electoral processes Explain the role of the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) in administering the electoral system



Fig 5: The Australian Electoral Commission works with other countries to improve their electoral processes

ACTIVITY 1

What is democracy?

FOCUS QUESTIONS

What do you know and understand about democracy?
What are democratic values?

RESOURCES

- **BLM 1** Concept cards
- National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools, DEST, 2005



Fig 6: National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools

Gathering information

Review the ideas about fairness that students arrived at in the introductory activity then ask them what they think the term 'democratic' means. For example: 'We say that Australia is a democratic society; what does this mean?' Briefly discuss and write class responses on poster paper or the board.

Identifying and analysing

Have students sit in a circle on the floor. In the middle of the circle place signs labelled 'democratic', 'undemocratic' and 'not sure'. Cut out and distribute to each student the

concept cards (**BLM 1**), which list a range of democratic and undemocratic values, behaviours and systems. Ensure there is enough room for students to place their concept cards around each of the signs.

Students individually classify their concept cards as 'democratic', 'undemocratic' or 'not sure' and place cards around the appropriate sign.

When all cards have been positioned, ask students whether they agree or disagree with the placements. Ask them to clarify and justify their reasons for placement. At this stage, some cards may be changed to different positions because cards next to the 'not sure' position might be explained by others. Cards are moved with the agreement of the person who placed that card and by class consensus. Any cards that students disagree about can be classified in the 'not sure' category and be revisited later.

Teachers should keep a checklist of the card placements so the concepts can be revisited in 'Going further' at the end of this investigation.

Presenting findings

Ask students to use the cards grouped around the 'democratic' sign to develop their own short definition of democracy. After writing their definitions on sticky notes, students place them on a class poster where they can be displayed under the heading: 'Our definitions of democracy'.

FROM THE MARGIN

VOTING FOR THE PRIME MINISTER

The Prime Minister is not directly elected by the Australian people. By convention, the party or coalition of parties, with a majority (more than half) of the members elected to the House of Representatives, form the government. The position of the leader of the government is known as the Prime Minister and this position is determined by the members of the elected government. The members of the government can also decide to change their leader at any time.

ACTIVITY 2

How do we make decisions in a democratic society?

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- What is representative democracy?
- How does choosing representatives reflect democratic principles?
- How are we represented in the Australian Federal Parliament?

RESOURCES

- **BLM 2** Representation – Federal Parliament
- **Electoral Division Profiles and Maps**
- **www.peo.gov.au (Learning>Parliament NOW)**
- **www.aph.gov.au (House of Representatives>Members)**
- **www.aph.gov.au (Senate>Senators)**

FROM THE MARGIN

JOINING THE PARTY

Political parties are organised groups of like-minded people with broadly similar views. They aim to influence or control government by having members elected to parliament. Parties are a key feature of Australia's representative democracy as the majority party or coalition of parties in the House of Representatives forms the government.

Gathering information

Tell students that the word 'democracy' comes from two Greek words: *demos* meaning 'the people' and *kratos* meaning 'power'. Effectively, the word 'democracy' means 'people power' – the right of the people of a nation to make decisions about how they are governed.

Discuss the practicality of a country the size of Australia, with over 14m voters, all taking part in democratic decision making. Is it possible? (Canvass factors such as size of population, remoteness, time to make a decision and vote counting.) Could it be an effective way of making decisions and would it be fair?

Using the analogy of school, discuss the ways students take part in decision making in different situations.

For example:

- > between friends – discussion and mutual agreement
- > in the classroom – discussion, hands-up voting, decisions made by the teacher
- > within the school – Junior School Council through representatives, elections.

Identifying and analysing

Use a PMI (plus, minus, interesting) chart on the board or a sheet of poster paper to analyse these three examples and comment on the effectiveness of different decision-making processes.

For example, agreement between friends is direct involvement, gives ownership to the decision and is quickly decided. Classroom decisions can be made quickly in small groups of people who know each other. Hands-up voting is fast and allows majority decisions within a larger group, but can be intimidating and subject to peer pressure. Decisions made by the teacher alone are fast but imposed without agreement, and free students of responsibility. Junior School Council involves lengthier processes and representatives, rather than direct participation, but allows a larger group to be involved in decision making.

Making connections

Explain to students that Australia is a representative democracy, meaning that we choose representatives to make decisions on our behalf, similar to a Junior School Council.

Confirm student understanding of what we mean by the terms 'representative' and 'representation'. Clarify any misconceptions (refer to *Can we all make the decisions?* Activity 1: *Who makes the decisions?*).

Briefly explain that Australia has three levels of government with different responsibilities and law-making powers.

Provide students with **BLM 2** and photos and seating plans of the Parliament of Australia.

Explain to students that the citizens of Australia have chosen representatives in both houses of parliament to make the laws that govern all Australians.

Ask students to fill out the two blank maps of Australia in **BLM 2** with the number of members in the House of Representatives and the number of senators for each state and territory.

Divide students into two broad groups: one to obtain information about the House of Representatives and one to obtain information about the Senate. Allocate an electorate (House of Representatives) or state or territory (Senate) to individual students or groups of students to investigate. They should use the AEC website and the Australian Parliament website with its details of the Parliament of Australia to complete the listed questions.



Fig 7: Parliament House, Canberra

House of Representatives

- > What is the name of the electorate you are investigating?
- > What is the size (square kilometres) of the electorate?
- > What is the total enrolment for the electorate?
- > How many members of the House of Representatives come from the state or territory in which the electorate is located?
- > What is the history of the electorate's name?
- > Who is the representative?

Have students compare the electorates they are investigating using the above questions.

The Senate

- > Which state or territory are you investigating?
- > What is the total enrolment for the state or territory?
- > How many senators represent the state or territory?
- > Who are they?

Have students compare the states or territories they are investigating using the above questions.

Bring students together to discuss what they have learnt about parliamentary representation from these maps, pictures and electoral research, including reasons for the different numbers of representatives.

Confirm student understanding of the House of Representatives being based on single-member, population-based electorates, and the Senate electorates as multi-member with senators chosen to represent their state or territory.

Presenting findings

Students may work as individuals or in pairs to present their research on electoral representation as a poster or booklet. They could title the posters or booklets *Electorates and Representatives* and display them in the classroom or school library.

FROM THE MARGIN

GERRYMANDER

A gerrymander is the deliberate drawing of electoral boundaries to maximise the number of seats that one party might win while minimising the number of seats that might be won by another. The term comes from America, where in 1812 Governor Eldridge Gerry, of Massachusetts, rigged the boundaries of electoral districts to give maximum advantage to the Republican Party. On a map, one of these electorates looked like a salamander (a type of amphibian) – thus the term gerrymander.

ACTIVITY 3

Who has the right to vote and choose our representatives?

FOCUS QUESTIONS

What is the meaning of the word 'franchise'?
How has the franchise changed over time?

RESOURCES

- **BLM 3** Franchise cards
- **BLM 4** Franchise timeline
- Magazines, poster paper, textas, scissors and glue
- **Animation History of Voting**
- **Interactive The History of Voting Game**
- **Interactive History Challenge** – Test your knowledge



Fig 8: Australian citizenship certificate

Gathering information

Cut out and distribute the cards on **BLM 3** to students. Copy extra cards to ensure that each class member has a card. Read **BLM 4** to students and ask individuals to stand in line as their 'person' is read out. (Suggested teaching points have been provided on the BLM in italics.) Explain to students that people remaining seated would not have been able to vote for representatives at that time in history and would not have had a voice in decisions that affected their daily lives. In practice, they were disenfranchised. Continue until all 'persons' are standing.

FROM THE MARGIN

ON A ROLL

It is compulsory for Australian citizens who have attained the age of 18 years to enrol and to vote (*Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*, section 101). The AEC maintains the electoral rolls for federal elections. Eligible voters only need to enrol once, but need to ensure that their details such as name and address remain up to date.

Identifying and analysing

Remind students of the introductory activity and discuss how they felt about not being able to vote because of colour, race, gender or financial status. Was this fair? Was this democratic? Why do they think the right to vote has changed over time?

Ask students to draw a picture of their 'person' and paste it onto their own history of the franchise in Australia timeline.

Provide students with the opportunity to explore the **Animation History of Voting** during this stage of the activity.

Bring students together and discuss the following:

- > Who do you think is eligible to vote in Australia today?
- > Is this a reasonable and democratic franchise?
- > Who is disenfranchised?
- > Should the franchise be extended? If so, why and to whom?

Presenting findings

Using magazines and hand-drawn illustrations, create a class collage or poster headed *The Faces of our Voters* to show who can vote in Australia today. Use multiple pictures of people who look over 18, and create labels for them, such as university student, apprentice, wait staff, rock band member, teacher, parent, sky diver, grandparent, and so on. The poster should also include an image of an Australian birth certificate, passport or Australian citizenship certificate to remind the class that citizenship is a necessary qualification for voting. Display the finished poster or collage in the classroom or school library.

ACTIVITY 4

How do we make sure that elections reflect democratic values?

FOCUS QUESTIONS

What are the features of our voting system that ensure a free and fair vote?

What are the rights and responsibilities of voters?

What is meant by preferential voting and compulsory voting?

What role does the AEC have in ensuring free and fair elections?

RESOURCES

- **BLM 5** Participating in free and fair elections
- **BLM 6** The wild residents of Blackwattle Swamp
- **BLM 7** What makes an election free and fair?
- **Running an election in your school**
- Poster paper, scissors and glue
- **Animation Election Day**
- **Animation Counting Your Vote**
- **Interactive Voting Challenge** – What do you know?



Gathering information

Provide students with **BLM 5** and briefly discuss the rights and responsibilities of the voter.

Run an election in your classroom following the procedures outlined in the *Running an election in your school* section of this teacher guide. Mock election scenarios have been provided in the guide to facilitate this activity.

Outline the chosen scenario and explain to students that they will be taking part in an election using the voting formalities and practices that are used in a federal election to elect members to the House of Representatives. The Animations and Interactives will also assist in explaining these features and concepts.

Explain full preferential voting to students and how to cast a formal vote; choose polling officials and scrutineers and explain their roles. These are outlined in *Running an election in your school*. Use the class list as the electoral roll and provide ballot papers, a sealed ballot box and a place for voters to vote in secret.

Conduct the election and count according to the guidelines.

FROM THE MARGIN

COMPULSORY VOTING

What do Singapore, Cyprus, the Philippines, Uruguay and Egypt have in common? Like Australia, they have compulsory voting. Other countries with compulsory voting include Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Panama, Switzerland (some cantons only) and Venezuela.

Identifying and analysing

Reflecting on the experience and drawing on understandings and information from previous activities, ask students to critically evaluate the election, discussing:

- > Was it a fair and free election? Why, or why not?
- > What processes and features were used?
- > Did the election follow AEC procedures?
- > What were the benefits and/or problems of this model of voting and election?

Making connections

Provide students with a copy of **BLM 6** and ask them to read it individually. Alternatively, the reading could be conducted as a whole-of-class activity.

Draw the class together and discuss the election described in the article. Ask students to compare that election with the running of their classroom election based on AEC procedures.

Questions could include:

- > Were there any similarities?
- > How did they differ?
- > Which election reflected the democratic principles of a free and fair election?

Presenting findings

Group students in pairs or small groups and distribute **BLM 7**, a large sheet of poster paper, scissors and glue.

Using information from **BLM 5** and **BLM 6** and the classroom experience of participating in an election, ask students to complete a table classifying illustrations from **BLM 7** under the following heading:

WHAT MAKES AN ELECTION FREE AND FAIR?	
Fair	Unfair

As a class draw on the information from the table and summarise the democratic voting/electoral system in Australia in a statement beginning: 'The electoral rights of Australian citizens are protected by As Australian citizens we have the responsibility to



Fig 9: Respecting the secret ballot in a school election

FROM THE MARGIN

ARE YOU QUALIFIED?

Australian citizens 16 years or older are eligible to enrol, but only those who have attained 18 years of age are able to vote. British subjects who were on the electoral roll prior to 26 January 1984 are also eligible to enrol and to vote. (*Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*, sections 93 and 100)

Going further

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- What are the key features of our democratic society?
- What processes facilitate democratic representation?

Ask students individually to reflect and draw on their understandings from the previous activities in the investigation to complete a Y-chart (looks like, feels like, sounds like) on the features of Australian democracy.

Drawing on individual Y-charts combine responses onto a class 'Democracy' Y-chart and display.

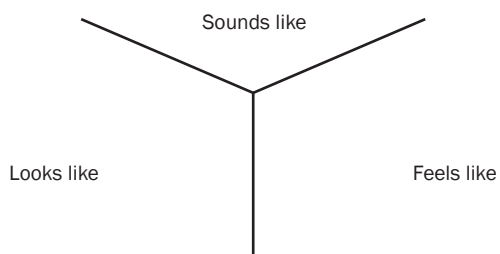
Revisit the original democratic values concepts chart from Activity 1 and discuss with students whether there are any additions or changes they wish to make, and any further clarifications.

Ask students to rewrite their definition of democracy and to compare it with their original definitions. Discuss the changes they made, and inquire if their definitions are more comprehensive. What have they added or changed?

Write a combined class statement beginning: 'We say that Australia is a democratic country because it has the following values, systems and features

Examples could include: the people of the country make the decisions on how it is governed; it has free and fair elections; the ballot is secret; we choose our representatives.

Fig 10: Australian Democracy Y-chart



FROM THE MARGIN

FAIR SHARE

Each original state (New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania) is entitled to a minimum of five members in the House of Representatives, regardless of its population.



Fig 11: Voters being checked against the electoral roll

Investigation

Can we all make the decisions?

In this investigation students consider the concept of representation and the role of voting and electoral systems in facilitating representation. Students consider how electoral representation translates into parliamentary representation and accountability. The need for informed choices about candidates and criteria for selecting candidates is examined.

RECOMMENDED LEVELS

UPPER SECONDARY

MIDDLE SECONDARY

LOWER SECONDARY

UPPER PRIMARY

THE INVESTIGATION AT A GLANCE

Background briefings for teacher reference	Democracy; Parliament; Representation
Suggested classroom teaching time	Activity 1: Who makes the decisions? (40 minutes) Activity 2: What should we consider when choosing a representative? (80 minutes) Activity 3: Who represents you? (40 minutes)
Indicators of student achievement	Understand the importance of making informed decisions Evaluate the qualities and characteristics of good representatives Analyse the role of representatives at school and in the general community



Fig 12: House of Representatives

ACTIVITY 1

Who makes the decisions?

FOCUS QUESTIONS

How do we make decisions?
Who makes decisions on our behalf?

RESOURCES

- **BLM 8** Who makes the decisions?
- Government websites, such as the following examples:
Local: www.darebin.vic.gov.au; www.randwick.nsw.gov.au; www.cottesloe.wa.gov.au
State/Territory: www.qld.gov.au; www.vic.gov.au; www.nsw.gov.au
Federal: www.australia.gov.au (Directories>Portfolios, Departments and Agencies)
- Locally collected pamphlets

Gathering information

Provide students with **BLM 8** and a range of pamphlets and website addresses to assist them to investigate decision-making responsibility at different levels of government.

Ask students to read through the examples of decision making and check for understanding. Explain, or give examples to clarify. Students individually complete **BLM 8** drawing on their own experience. They also research personal, community, local, State and federal areas of decision-making responsibility while completing their investigation.

Identifying and analysing

Following completion of **BLM 8** discuss responses with the class. Suitable prompts to elicit understanding of direct, indirect and consultative representation could include:

- > What decisions do you make personally, without consultation, or in direct consultation? (Note: Some answers will differ according to family dynamics.)
- > Are many decisions made through representation? If so, what are they?
- > How do others know what we want?
- > How important is it for us to have good representatives who are making all these decisions on our behalf?

Presenting findings

Organise students into pairs or small groups and instruct them to design a decision-making concept map based on their understanding of direct, indirect, personal, group, consultative and representative decision making. Ask students to include examples of each.

Draw the class together and allow each group to present their maps, justifying their links and placements.

FROM THE MARGIN

BALLOT PAPERS

For the 2013 federal election approximately 300 tonnes of paper was used to print approximately 43 million ballot papers. Strict security during the printing, handling and storage of ballot papers ensures the integrity of the electoral process.

ACTIVITY 2

What should we consider when choosing a representative?

FOCUS QUESTIONS

What are the qualities and characteristics of a good representative?
Why is it important to make informed decisions about candidates when electing representatives?

RESOURCES

- **BLM 9** Qualities in a good representative
- Poster paper

FROM THE MARGIN

PUMPING FLESH

Not a new gym program but a colourful term that describes the way of campaigning some candidates use to gain votes – they shake the hands and slap the back of every citizen they meet. Some even hold and kiss lots of babies during campaigning!

Gathering information

Linking to the previous discussion of decision makers as representatives, and the need for ‘good representation’, discuss with students what they think are the qualities and characteristics of a ‘good’ representative. If students have difficulty, try to initiate discussion by asking whether they would choose someone with qualities such as aggression, impressive sporting achievements, assertiveness, effective communication, knowledge, kindness, fairness, intelligence or good looks. Students

then conduct a survey of other students, teachers, family and friends using **BLM 9**. This could be a homework assignment where students report their findings in the following lesson.

Identifying and analysing

Using results from the survey, list all the qualities and rank the qualities according to the number of responses. Students could graph the results as part of a related mathematics activity.

Discuss what most people think are the three or four most important qualities of a good representative. Do students personally agree with these responses? Record responses on a sheet of poster paper for display.

Further analysis could include classifying the responses according to groups interviewed, for example qualities parents thought were important and qualities different age groups thought were important.

Making connections

Explain to students that representation relies on people in the community being willing to take on the responsibility to represent others. Our representative democracy could not function without people willing to stand as candidates. In Australia any person who is over 18 years of age and who is an Australian citizen (with some exceptions such as people serving prison terms and people of unsound mind) is eligible to stand as a candidate in federal, state or local elections.

Discuss with students why they think people are willing to stand as candidates, considering motives and benefits. Drawing an analogy with the Junior School Council could be a useful starting point.



Fig 13: Receiving information about the candidates outside a polling place

Questions could include:

- > Why do you think people are willing to be candidates?
- > Do all candidates seek election for the 'right' reasons?
- > What other reasons could there be?
- > What are the benefits of being able to choose from a range of candidates?
- > How does choice of candidates improve our representation?
- > How important is it that we make an informed decision when choosing candidates?

Summarise discussion points on poster paper, linking the qualities of a good representative to making informed decisions when electing candidates.

Presenting findings

Ask students to use the information they have gathered from the survey and through discussion to design their ideal representative. They could work in pairs or in small groups to present their ideas in a choice of mediums: cardboard cut-out, role-play, outline of a person, model, poster, comic, cartoon, illustration, jigsaw or PowerPoint™ presentation. The final product should clearly display the qualities of a good representative.



Fig 14: A polling official assisting a voter at a polling place

FROM THE MARGIN

AN INFORMED DECISION?

In 1974, the voters of a town in Western Australia re-elected a mayor whose death had caused the election in the first place. The town clerk explained that the bad mistake was caused by confusion while preparing the ballot papers. The sister-in-law of the deceased mayor said, 'I know that George was very popular with the townsfolk, but I was surprised to hear his election victory announced on the radio, driving back from the crematorium'. (NSW Electoral Commission website)

ACTIVITY 3

Who represents you?

FOCUS QUESTIONS

How are you represented?

Why is it important for electors be informed about their representatives?

Why is representative accountability important?

RESOURCES

- Locally collected photos and newspaper articles profiling a selection of local, state and federal government representatives (if an election is taking place, include any articles about the candidates)
- Photos and articles involving community representatives, for example from environmental groups, sporting clubs, volunteer organisations
- Poster paper, scissors, textas and glue

Gathering information

Provide students with a range of newspapers and ask them to read and select articles that refer to issues, profile representatives, describe candidates, or present viewpoints.

Instruct students to look for a range of articles that reflect different types of representation, for example local clubs, lobby groups, and local council and government.

Ask students to bring further examples to build up profiles of a range of representatives. Encourage students to also include representatives from Junior School Council, School Council, clubs and sports organisations.

Identifying and analysing

Distribute one to two photos and newspaper articles to pairs or small groups of students and ask them to analyse the articles, to find the name of the representative, whom they represent, the issues discussed, and viewpoints expressed by the representative. Paste articles on poster paper and record accompanying summaries as representative profiles.

Presenting findings

Draw the class together and allow students to present their representative profiles to the class. Discuss with students the importance of being informed about how our representatives represent us, reinforcing the concept of representative accountability.

Combine posters to make a book entitled *Our Representatives at Work*.

Going further

Provide students with the opportunity to compose a series of questions they can use in an interview with a local representative. If an interview is not possible, students can use the questions to frame a letter which can then be sent to a representative.

Ask students to choose one of their representatives (community, local, state, federal) and write a series of questions about

being a representative. They could ask what the person likes about the job, the main difficulties faced, views about representation, how they deal with community issues, what qualities and characteristics they think make a good representative, why they chose to be a candidate seeking election, and so on.

OR

Arrange for a representative to visit the school so students can conduct an interview based on questions that have been collaboratively constructed by the class.



Concept cards

Elections	Freedom	Being responsible for your behaviour	Acknowledging that people have rights	Displaying tolerance
Respecting others	Fairness	Secret ballot	Free speech	Allowing citizens to elect representatives
Understanding	Giving people a fair go	Including others in activities	Understanding	Excluding people because of their background or gender
Racism	Decisions made by one	Laws	Voting	Behaving in a violent way towards others
Treating people equally	Providing people with opportunities to reach their potential regardless of race, age, gender	Being allowed to express your opinions	Citizenship	Bullying
Punishing people without reference to the law	Freedom	Having one vote, one value	Rigging of elections	Bribing people with money to get your own way
Franchise	Living in fear	Dictatorship	Corruption	Intolerance
Elected government	Punishment according to the agreed laws	Being given choice	Constitution	Leadership
Being able to demonstrate against a decision	Respecting diversity	Trustworthiness	Interference by governments in our daily lives	Justice
Actions that match words	Caring for self and others	DEMOCRATIC	UNDEMOCRATIC	NOT SURE

Representation – Federal Parliament

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Electorate name:

Size (square kilometres):

Total enrolment:

Number of members in the House of Representatives from the state or territory in which the electorate is located:

.....

History of the electorate's name:.....

Member's name:.....

Number of members for each state or territory:



THE SENATE

State or Territory:

Total enrolment for the state or territory:

Total enrolment for the state or territory:

Number of senators who represent the state or territory:

.....

Senators' names:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Number of senators for each state or territory:





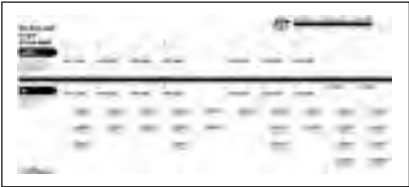







Franchise cards

Male who owns land in 1843	21-year-old Victorian male
21-year-old male living in South Australia	21-year-old male living in New South Wales
21-year-old male living in Queensland	South Australian female aged 21
21-year-old male living in Western Australia	Tasmanian male 21 years of age or over
Female from New South Wales 21 years of age or over	Western Australian female 21 years of age
Victorian female 21 years of age or over	Queensland female 21 years of age or over
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander man who had served in the defence forces	Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person 21 years of age or over
18-year-old person	Governor of the colony of New South Wales

Franchise timeline

Pre-European settlement	<p>Prior to European settlement Australia was occupied by groups of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people led by elders and subject to traditional laws. These groups governed themselves through a corporate decision-making process.</p> <p><i>Acknowledge the rule of law pre-European settlement before starting the timeline.</i></p>
European settlement prior to 1843	<p>Autocratic government</p> <p><i>New South Wales was a British penal colony with a governor appointed by the Crown who made all decisions concerning the policies and laws of the colony, both for convicts and free settlers.</i></p>
1843	<p>Only men who owned or paid rent on property could vote.</p> <p><i>Most men, all women and Indigenous Australians could not vote.</i></p>
1856	<p>The right to vote in South Australia was granted to males 21 years of age or over.</p>
1857	<p>The right to vote in Victoria was granted to all males 21 years of age or over.</p> <p><i>This was the time of the gold rush in Victoria. There were many people from around the world living there – Chinese, Americans, Europeans – and many had settled permanently, but they had no right to vote.</i></p>
1858	<p>The right to vote was granted in New South Wales to all males 21 years of age or over.</p>
1872	<p>The right to vote in Queensland was granted to all males 21 years of age or over.</p> <p><i>Remind students that Australia was six independent colonies at this time with separate laws and policies, including franchise laws.</i></p>
1893	<p>The right to vote in Western Australia was granted to all males 21 years of age or over.</p>
1895	<p>Women 21 years or over were given the right to vote in South Australia.</p> <p><i>This was the first time in Australia's European history that women could vote – it was one of the first places in the world to give women the vote.</i></p>
1896	<p>The right to vote in Tasmania was granted to all males 21 years of age or over.</p>
1899	<p>Women 21 years or over were given the right to vote in Western Australia.</p>
1901	<p>The first federal elections were held under state legislation – state franchises applied.</p> <p><i>This meant that the only people allowed to vote in the first federal elections were men 21 years or over from NSW, Vic, Qld, Tas, SA and WA; and women from SA and WA. How many people are still not included on the timeline?</i></p>
1902	<p>Universal suffrage at federal elections (most men and women over 21) <i>but there were some exceptions.</i></p> <p><i>Indigenous Australians and natives of Asia, Africa and the Pacific Islands (except New Zealand) were excluded from enrolment and voting unless they had the franchise at state level. Australia at this time thought of itself as a 'white' society, still a British society.</i></p> <p>Women over 21 were given the right to vote in New South Wales state elections.</p>
1903	<p>Women over 21 were given the right to vote in Tasmanian state elections.</p>
1905	<p>Women over 21 were given the right to vote in Queensland state elections.</p>
1908	<p>Women over 21 were given the right to vote in Victorian state elections.</p>
1949	<p>Indigenous Australians, as long as they had the right to enrol at State elections (NSW, SA, Vic, Tas) or had served in the defence forces, were given the right to vote in federal elections.</p> <p><i>Many Indigenous Australians served during WWII. Indigenous Australians in Qld, WA and NT were still not able to vote, unless they had served in the defence forces.</i></p>
1962	<p>Indigenous Australians were entitled to enrol and vote at federal elections and referendums.</p> <p><i>Voluntary, not compulsory enrolment and voting.</i></p>
1973	<p>Franchise was lowered from 21 to 18 years of age.</p>
1984	<p>Compulsory enrolment and voting for Indigenous Australians.</p> <p>Franchise qualification changed to Australian citizenship.</p>

Participating in free and fair elections

OUR RIGHTS	OUR RESPONSIBILITIES
<p>To vote in elections</p> <p>Australian citizens, 18 years of age or over and enrolled have the right to vote. In Australia enrolment and voting is compulsory.</p> <p>No person can be prevented from voting because of their appearance, religion, wealth, disability, racial background, or where they live.</p> 	<p>Enrol as voters</p> <p>Australia has compulsory enrolment. Only people who have enrolled to vote may vote in an election. People can enrol to vote when they are 16 years old so that they are on the electoral roll ready to vote at the next election after they turn 18. Voters are required to keep their details (address) up to date.</p> 
<p>Equal vote</p> <p>All voters have one vote in each election. This is the same for everyone. Votes cannot be bought or sold, nor can extra votes be given to people. Every vote has the same value. For example, an 18-year-old's vote is worth the same as the vote of someone twice their age.</p> 	<p>Vote in elections</p> <p>Australia has compulsory voting, so it is against the law not to vote in an election.</p> 
<p>Secret ballot</p> <p>Citizens vote in secret. A screen is provided to prevent others from seeing how they voted. The secret ballot allows people to vote without fear of intimidation from others and reduces the risk of bribery.</p> 	<p>Know how to fill out a ballot paper correctly</p> <p>Voters should understand how the voting system works, from filling out a ballot paper correctly to how it is counted when all the votes are collected. If a ballot paper is not filled out correctly, an elector's vote cannot be counted.</p> 
<p>Participate in regular elections</p> <p>Elections must be held regularly. This is outlined in the Australian Constitution. Each Member of Parliament must go before the people in an election to be re-elected to Parliament. New candidates can also stand for election.</p> 	<p>Be 'active citizens'</p> <p>This means having your say in choosing representatives who make decisions that affect your life. Citizens need to be aware of the issues that affect their lives and choose representatives who will take action on those issues.</p> 
<p>Participate in elections that are free and fair</p> <p>The Australian Electoral Commission conducts federal parliamentary elections according to the provisions of the Australian Constitution and the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i>.</p> 	<p>Make informed decisions</p> <p>This means that electors know who the candidates are in an election, and understand their viewpoint and opinions on issues, because if elected they will be making decisions on behalf of the people of Australia.</p> 

Participating in free and fair elections

Australia is a representative democracy where voters elect people to represent them in parliaments. It is important that its citizens are able to participate in free and fair elections. It is also important that we take our right to vote and participate in elections seriously as we are electing representatives to parliaments to make the policies and laws that govern us.

How are our rights protected?

Federal elections are organised by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). The AEC is an independent statutory body. This means that it organises and conducts elections without interference from government, political parties, businesses or other groups. It is against the law for anyone to interfere with the organising and running of elections.

The AEC protects the rights of the voter by:

- > ensuring candidates follow nomination rules
- > planning, setting up and controlling polling places on election day
- > training staff to run polling places
- > producing the ballot papers used and keeping them secure
- > counting votes and announcing election results
- > maintaining the electoral roll
- > educating the public on Australian voting systems, enrolling to vote and how to vote correctly.



The Australian Electoral Commission ensures that everyone has an opportunity to vote in elections

The wild residents of Blackwattle Swamp

This is a description of a NSW Legislative Council election in 1843. It was written by the manager of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, FG Brewer.

The **nomination** took place on Tuesday, June 13th at the **hustings** in front of the old Star Hotel. Mr Wentworth, Mr Bland and Captain O'Connell were three of the **candidates** standing for election. Each had his own colours. Those of Wentworth and Bland were blue, and O'Connell's were green.

Separate processions escorted each candidate to the hustings. However, the processions all reached Macquarie Place at the same time and a fierce struggle took place. The O'Connellites took over the area occupied by the **returning officer** and his staff so the Wentworth and Bland group stormed the platform. Many people were hurled to the ground.

It was so noisy that orderly speaking was impossible. Mr Cooper spoke loudly to the mob and stated his claims to election. His supporters were the wild residents of Blackwattle Swamp. They attacked anybody who had different opinions so Cooper was able to talk away for some time without interruption.

Election day finally arrived. The **polling** started at nine o'clock on June 15th, and went fairly well for the first two hours. About twelve o'clock, a mob of some 500 O'Connellites went to the **polling booth** in Gipps Ward on Flagstaff Hill, tore down the colours of Wentworth and Bland, flattened their booth and made a furious attack on their supporters, who ran away in all directions.

The polling booth was surrounded. For a while, the mob stopped anybody entering except people who wanted to vote for O'Connell. They attacked Mr John Jones, the owner of some whaling ships. He ran down to his wharf in Windmill Street and returned with a number of sailors, armed with **whale lances**. Luckily the mob had gone to another place, and the whalers were met by a unit of the mounted police, who chased them back to their ships and disarmed them.

Meanwhile, there was such a **riot** on Flagstaff Hill that the returning officer decided to put off the poll until the following morning. The same mob then

went to other polling places. It stopped outside the residence and auction rooms of Mr Samuel Lyons, who was a strong supporter of Wentworth and Bland. Large stones were hurled through the plate-glass windows of the auction rooms and smaller ones were used on the windows of the first and second floors.

The mob proceeded to Hyde Park. They chased Captain Innes, one of the police magistrates but he escaped by jumping his horse over a fence. Then there was a short battle with fists against friends of the popular candidates. The rioters were driven from the park but returned with fence palings they tore from some houses in Elizabeth Street. They attacked again until some mounted police arrived to restore order.

In the evening a group of some thirty or forty men, with as many boys, carrying O'Connell's colours, paraded some of the streets, violently assaulted a peaceable passer-by and broke a number of windows. So ended the first election day in Sydney.

(Source: Adapted from *A Century of Journalism: The Sydney Morning Herald and Its Record of Australian Life 1831-1931*, John Fairfax & Sons, Sydney, 1931)

Glossary

candidate – a person running for election to a political position

hustings – a platform where speakers stand to address a crowd of listeners

nomination – somebody put forward as a suitable person for election

polling – what happens at a political election including the casting, recording and counting of votes

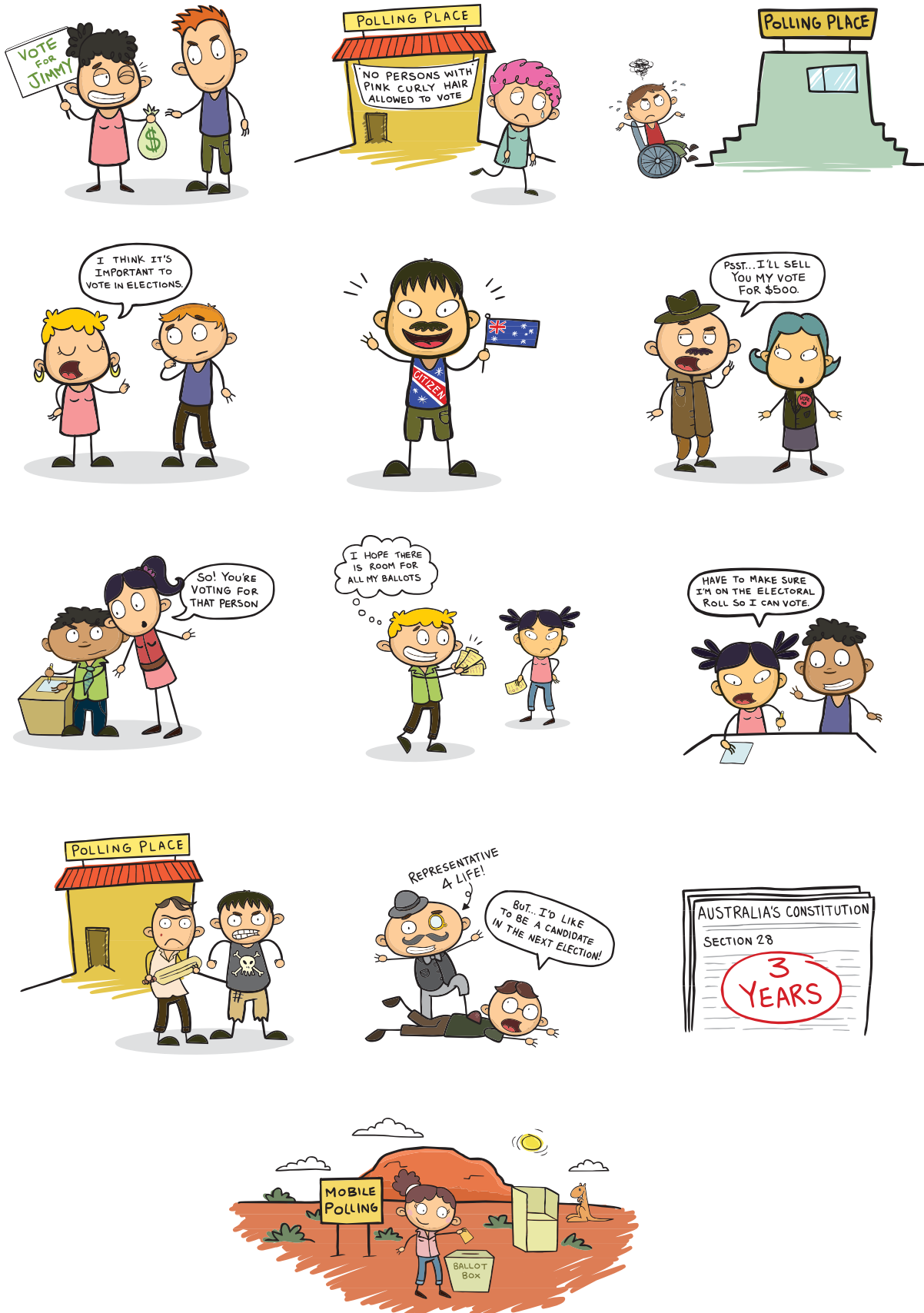
polling booth – a small cubicle where people can vote

returning officer – an election official who supervises the counting of votes and announces the result

riot – a violent public disturbance where people are noisy and out of control

whale lance – a long spear with a metal point used to kill whales

What makes an election free and fair?



Who makes the decisions?

	Me	I ask others to help me Who?	Others make it for me Who?
Sports team selection			
Family holiday destinations			
Style of school uniform			
Garbage collection days			
School fundraising			
Granting of Australian citizenship			
Road and traffic rules			
My bedtime			
Where Australian defence forces serve			
Funding for schools			
Pet registration fees			
Postal services			
Public transport			
Local parks			
Homework			
School crossings			
Television viewing			
Movie ratings (e.g. PG, M15+)			
Amount of pocket money			
Spending pocket money			
Street tree planting			
Who can come and live in Australia			
National parks			
Seeing a movie with friends			

Qualities in a good representative

Name of person interviewed	Age group (e.g. primary student, secondary student, adult)	Gender	Three or four most important qualities of a good representative and why

TOPICS AND INVESTIGATIONS

Representing everyone!

Australia is a representative democracy. The Australian Constitution provides the framework for our government. The democratic principles of representation are protected under the Australian Constitution. Included in the provisions of the Constitution is the right of individuals to be represented at the federal level and to participate in the choosing of representatives.

Representing everyone! provides students with the opportunity to explore how individual citizens are represented at the federal level.

The topic contains two investigations:

How do you have your say?

How are we represented?

These investigations explore the federal arrangements created by the Australian Constitution, how individual citizens are represented at the federal level through different voting and electoral configurations, and the referendum process required for constitutional change.

Introductory activity

RESOURCES

Photos/illustrations/objects representing the Constitution, Parliament House, the Senate, House of Representatives, laws (Electoral Act), a referendum, elections, Member of Parliament, enrolment form, ballot paper/box seven large sheets of poster paper, extra seven sheets for summary statements



Fig 15: Ballot boxes for the House of Representatives and Senate elections

Divide the class into seven groups and allocate each group a photo and poster paper. Ask all groups the following questions: What does this image represent? What do you know about it? What questions does this image raise? Allow enough room for all groups to record their responses under each heading.

Inform students that they are to discuss each image and record their responses to the questions. Rotate each group to add their responses.

Draw the class together to discuss responses. To facilitate discussion ask one group to read out or summarise recorded responses from one of the posters.

Some questions to consider are:

- > Do we agree on what the image represents?
- > What do we know about (the image)? Does anybody disagree with this information? Why? (Any incorrect or queried responses should be transferred to the 'questions raised' heading.) Is there any other information that you would like to add?
- > What were the questions raised about (the image)? Can you think of others to add?

FROM THE MARGIN

A VOTE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

A large amount of cardboard equipment and paper materials is produced for each federal election. Whenever possible, the AEC uses cardboard and paper equipment manufactured from recycled materials that are in turn recycled or reused.

Return the poster to group discussion facilitators. Using the revised information on each poster ask students to summarise information under the heading of 'What we know' on poster paper. Ask students to group similar questions and to summarise these in two to three 'big' questions. Write these on the poster under the heading 'What we would like to know'.

Display the seven new posters. Students will be given the opportunity to revisit these posters and add information under 'What we know'. Questions answered can be crossed off the 'What we would like to know' list.

Investigation

How do you have your say?

In this investigation students examine the federal arrangements created by the Constitution and compare the different voting and electoral configurations used to facilitate representation in the House of Representatives and the Senate, and in the referendum process.

RECOMMENDED LEVELS

UPPER SECONDARY

MIDDLE SECONDARY

LOWER SECONDARY

UPPER PRIMARY

THE INVESTIGATION AT A GLANCE

Background briefings for teacher reference	Australian Electoral Commission; Constitution; Electoral division; Full preferential voting; House of Representatives; Referendum; Senate
Suggested classroom teaching time	Activity 1: How are we represented in Federal Parliament? (40 minutes) Activity 2: How are Members of Parliament elected? (40 minutes) Activity 3: Are there other ways to have your say? (40 minutes) Activity 4: How do referendums help decision making? (80 minutes)
Indicators of student achievement	Compare voting procedures for the House of Representatives and the Senate Understand the differences between Senate and House of Representatives electorates Explain how the citizens of Australia can alter the Constitution by voting in a referendum



Fig 16: A busy polling place on election day

FROM THE MARGIN

SWINGING VOTERS

Swinging voters do not hang from the trees or on a trapeze! These are voters who tend to vote for different parties at different elections. These voters are in a minority as most people tend to vote for the same party at each election.

ACTIVITY 1

How are we represented in Federal Parliament?

FOCUS QUESTIONS

How many members represent us in Federal Parliament?

What is the distribution of members of the House of Representatives and the Senate across all the states and territories?

What are the similarities and differences in representation for the House of Representatives and the Senate between each state and territory?

RESOURCES

- **Electorates/map**
- **AEC elections results map**
- **www.aph.gov.au** (House of Representatives>Members)
- **www.aph.gov.au** (Senate>Senators)
- **www.peo.gov.au** (Learning>Parliament NOW)

Gathering information

Explain to students that Australia is a representative democracy. This means that its citizens choose representatives to make the laws on their behalf. Through provisions made in the Australian Constitution, there are two houses in Federal Parliament: the House of Representatives and the Senate, which make the laws which govern Australia. The members of both these houses are elected by the citizens of Australia.

Provide students with website addresses, election results maps or hard-copy information showing electorates and members of both houses of parliament.

Ask students to investigate the number of seats in the House of Representatives and Senate. Instruct students to record their findings in a table.

Identifying and analysing

In pairs or small groups ask students to analyse their findings for commonalities and differences between the states and territories for both the House of Representatives and the Senate, and to record their findings.

For example: NSW has ... members in the House of Representatives. South Australia has ... There are different numbers of members for the House of Representatives for each state and territory. However, there is the same number of senators from each state and from each territory. All states have 12 representatives and each territory has two representatives in the Senate. Although each state has a different number of members in the House of Representatives, they have the same number of senators.

Presenting findings

Draw the class together and discuss this finding. Summarise students' findings on poster paper or the board.

Ask students to question and hypothesise about the reasons for commonalities and differences. Add these questions and hypotheses to the summary.

ACTIVITY 2

How are members of Parliament elected?

FOCUS QUESTIONS

How are members elected to the House of Representatives?

How are senators elected to the Senate?

How do the voting systems and electoral configurations differ and what are the similarities?

RESOURCES

- Multiple class numbers list for year levels or whole school (depending on size of school)
- **Animation Counting Your Vote**



Gathering information

Explain to students that both houses of parliament use full preferential voting to elect representatives. Electors number the candidates in order of preference. The houses differ in that the House of Representatives is a single-member system and the Senate is a multi-member system. These arrangements have been set out in the Australian Constitution. The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) conducts elections for both houses.

The House of Representatives is often called the 'people's house'. The 150 members of the House of Representatives are chosen from each of the 150 electorates in Australia. These electorates are population based, and

within each state or territory electorates have similar numbers of voters. For each member to be elected they must receive an absolute majority of the formal vote, over 50%. For example, if an electorate has 88 368 electors who voted formally, a candidate must receive 44 185 votes to be elected. These may have been gained by a candidate as the result of first preference votes only or after the distribution of further rounds of voter preferences.

Demonstrate this to the class on the board. Also direct students to explore the **Animation Counting Your Vote**.

Provide students with lists indicating the number of students in each class at a year level or in whole-school year levels. Using the school as an analogy, explain to students that each class will be a single-member 'electorate'.

Instruct students to work out how many votes a candidate would require to be elected. For example, a class of 24 students as an electorate would require a candidate to receive 13 votes to become the member for that electorate. In a class of 21 electors, 11 votes would be required for election, assuming that all class members vote formally. Students can record their results in a table like the one below.

Class	Number of electors	Votes required by candidate

Check student responses.

Explain to students that each state and territory is an electorate in the Senate and voters choose senators to represent their state or territory.

The Senate is often called the 'states' house'. Each state, regardless of its size or population, is represented by the same number of senators to ensure equal representation.

FROM THE MARGIN

DONKEY VOTE

Some voters number the candidates in the order that they appear on the ballot paper, not because it reflects their real choice, but because it is the easiest way to cast a formal vote. Until 1983, candidates were listed in alphabetical order on ballot papers. This gave candidates at the top the 'donkey vote' advantage – estimated to be 2–3% of the vote. (Jaensch, D, *Election: How and Why Australia Votes*, Allen & Unwin, 1995, p 47)

The boundaries of each state or territory form an electorate and people voting in those eight electorates elect a group of people to represent them. There are 12 senators for each state; the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory are each represented by two senators. There are 76 senators in the Senate.

A proportional system of representation applies to the Senate. Under this system candidates must gain a specific proportion of the electorate's (the state or territory) votes – a quota – to be elected.

The quota is worked out by dividing the total number of formal ballot papers by one more than the number of vacancies to be filled and by adding 1 to the result:

$$\frac{\text{number of formal votes}}{\text{number of vacancies} + 1} + 1 = \text{quota}$$

For example: Three senators are to be elected and the total number of formal votes for the state is 2,400.

$$\text{Therefore the quota} = \frac{2,400}{3+1} + 1 = 601$$

Therefore, for a candidate to be elected as a senator they must receive 601 votes. This may be through first preferences or by a complicated distribution of preferences until a candidate has received the quota. Demonstrate this to the students and also allow them to again view the **Animation Counting Your Vote**.

Using the selected lists, inform students that the whole year level or school (depending on what was used in the first section of this activity) will be the electorate (state) and that three representatives need to be elected. Explain that other schools (states or territories) would form other electorates.

Using the quota formula, ask students to work out how many votes each candidate would require to be elected. Assume that all members of the electorate will vote formally.

Record as follows:

Number of electors	Votes required by candidate

Check students' responses.

Identifying and analysing

Discuss how the different electoral configurations of the same population provide us with representation. Are you represented in both systems? How are you represented? Review the previous discussion and hypotheses in Activity 1.

Were the questions answered and were the hypotheses correct? What needs revising?

Summarise discussion points.

Presenting findings

Instruct students in pairs or small groups to visually represent the electoral configurations of the school – as single-member electorates and as a multi-member electorate. For example: 12 classes, 12 single-member electorates, with 12 representatives; total number of students in 12 classes as one multi-member electorate with three representatives. Allow students to be as creative as they wish, as long as the information is accurate and able to be interpreted by others. Display visual representations.

Fig 17: A sample ballot paper for the Australian Senate

ACTIVITY 3

Are there other ways to have your say?

FOCUS QUESTIONS

What is a constitution?

How is the Australian Constitution changed?

What is a referendum?

What voting system is used in referendums?

RESOURCES

- **BLM 1** Referendums – double majority
- **BLM 2** Referendum maps of Australia
- **Referendums**
- **Interactive Quiz 1 – Referendums** – Do you get it?

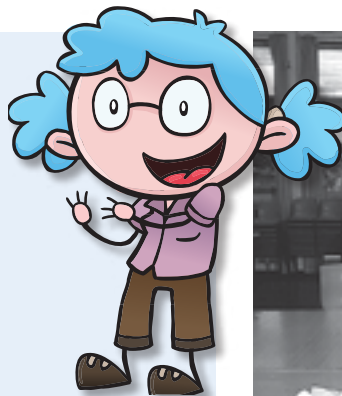


Fig 18: Counting ballots in the 1999 referendum

Gathering information

Provide students with a copy of **BLM 1**.

Explain that the only way that the Constitution can be altered is by the citizens of Australia voting to change it. Alterations cannot be made by the Governor-General, the Prime Minister, the Commonwealth Government, groups of members of parliament, lobby groups, or business. The Australian Constitution outlines these procedures and the voting system in section 128. To become law, each proposed change to the Constitution must be approved by a 'double majority' of electors voting for the proposed change. Referendums ask the voters to write 'Yes' or 'No' to the proposed alteration.

Discuss the information on **BLM 1**. Check for understanding by asking, for example, if a referendum would be passed if 45% of the national population voted 'Yes', and the majority of voters voted 'Yes' in two states? Give a range of examples asking students to justify their responses.

Identifying and analysing

Provide students with **BLM 2**.

Instruct students to use information from the AEC website on referendums from 1901–1999 to research three constitutional referendums. Information could include proposed alterations, which states voted 'Yes/No', national 'Yes/No' votes and whether the proposed alterations were passed. Students could graph the 'Yes/No' votes by national and state results. Ensure that students choose a range of referendums. Present information pictorially on **BLM 2** with accompanying statements.

Presenting findings

Cut out the maps of the completed **BLM 2** and ask students to classify each example under the headings of 'Approved alterations – Yes' and 'Not approved – No'.

Display and discuss:

- > Is it easy to change the Constitution?
- > How important are the states in such decisions?
- > Is it fair to require a double majority?
- > What are the safeguards provided by a double majority?

Summarise discussion points.

ACTIVITY 4

How do referendums help decision making?

FOCUS QUESTIONS

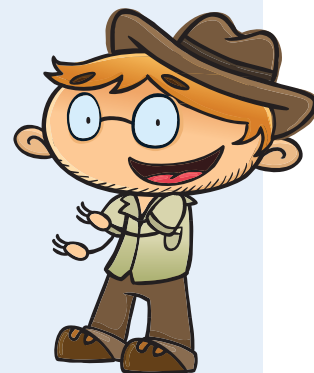
How does the referendum process allow for decision making?

What type of representation does the referendum process facilitate?

How does this representation differ from the House of Representatives and the Senate?

RESOURCES

- **BLM 3** Representation
- Ballot boxes; ballot paper with the proposed change and provision to write: 'Yes' or 'No'
- Class lists to use as electoral rolls
- Poster paper
- **Animation Counting Your Vote**
- **Interactive Quiz 1 – Referendums** – Do you get it?
- **Interactive Voting Challenge** – What do you know?



Gathering information

Inform students that they will participate in a referendum.

Provide a scenario, either one decided by the students on an issue of their choice, or the example provided. Other scenarios could be based on the desirability of school uniforms, privileges for final-year students, or another school-related issue.

Scenario example

The School Council has decided that they would like to introduce a school blazer which will have to be worn by all students to and from school. They believe that this will help profile the school in the area, create uniformity and look neater than the current mixture of jumpers, windcheaters and spray jackets being worn. Others believe that the introduction of the blazer will impose too great a cost on parents, especially for those with students in the final years of school. Blazer cleaning is costly and time consuming. Dirty blazers would not look good. Some believe that part of the charm of the school is that students have some choice in what they wear.

The introduction of the school blazer requires a change to the school uniform rules.

The school believes it is important for the school community to be involved in decision making. It has decided to hold a referendum. The question is: 'A school blazer will be worn by all students to and from school. Yes or No?'

Ask students to summarise reasons for and against the proposal. They may add their own reasons as well. Discuss and summarise all responses on large poster paper. The paper will serve the role of the pamphlets that are distributed to all voters to help them make an informed decision.

Divide the students into five groups. It is not necessary that groups be even as states and territories do not have even populations. Four groups will be States and one group will represent a territory.

FROM THE MARGIN

TAKING POLLING TO THE PEOPLE

Early voting is available for people who are not able to get to a polling place on election day.

Early voting centres are located;

- at AEC offices around the country
- in remote areas with mobile polling teams
- at airports for Australians travelling interstate or overseas
- at special sporting and cultural events depending on the time of the election

Ask the groups to choose a name for their state or territory. Label each ballot box with the chosen name.

Instruct students on how to participate in a referendum by following the AEC procedures as outlined in *Running an election in your school* – highlight compulsory voting and the secret ballot. The procedures for running an election and a referendum are similar, with the same rules applying to the franchise, electoral roll, secret ballot and polling officials. The procedures differ in the design of the ballot paper and the count.

Discuss with students what will be required for the referendum to pass. That is, three out of the four states will need to have voted 'Yes' plus a majority of all the class will have to have voted 'Yes'. Display visually to reinforce the concept.

The ballot paper needs to state: 'A school blazer will be worn by all students to and from school.' Students need to write 'Yes' or 'No' in the square.

Identifying and analysing

Allow each state or territory to vote and place their ballot paper in their respective ballot box. Count the formal votes separately for each state and record the results. Record the states with a majority of 'Yes' votes. Is there a majority of states with a 'Yes' vote? Now recount the states' votes together and include the territories' votes. Has a majority of voters voted 'Yes' in the class? Record results on a poster showing 'State' and 'National' votes and result.

Making connections

Drawing on information from previous activities, discuss with students how citizens are represented in our federal system and how they can have their say.

Prompt questions could include:

- > Who represents us in the Federal Parliament?
- > How do we choose these representatives?
- > What types of electorates and voting systems facilitate this representation?

- > How do we have our say in changing the Constitution?
- > Do we have a direct or indirect say in the proposed alterations to the Constitution?
- > How does this differ from other ways of having our say?

Provide students with a copy of **BLM 3** to complete based on this discussion. At this point, students can also be referred to the CD-ROM Animations and Interactives.

Presenting findings

Draw the class together and combine information from individual responses to create a class summary. This will also provide an opportunity to clarify understandings.

Ask students to provide summary statements about what they have learnt in this investigation, for example: 'Both the House of Representatives and the Senate use the full preferential voting system to elect representatives'; 'The Senate and the House of Representatives have different electoral configurations'; 'Australian citizens have the opportunity to change the Constitution through the referendum process', and so on.

Write statements on large poster paper and display findings. Instruct students individually or in pairs to design a pamphlet outlining the features of the different systems.

Going further

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- How are citizens represented in Australia?
- What are the relationships between the Constitution, Parliament, referendums, electoral systems and electoral configurations, and the voter?
- How do the features of Australian democracy assist to represent us?

Display images used in the introductory activity and posters produced in the investigation. Revisit the original questions; check how they have been answered during the investigation.

Divide the class into small groups and ask each group to design a concept map showing the relationship between the Constitution, Federal Parliament, the House of Representatives, the Senate, referendums, elections, voting systems, members of parliament and Australian citizens. Encourage students to think about how they want to present concept maps, whether as illustrations, labels, sentences or computer graphics.

Display maps and allow each group to speak to their concept map explaining reasons for placement and links. Further discussion could take place around the commonalities and differences of each map.

Investigation

How are we represented?

In this investigation students research the history of arrangements created by the Constitution and the history of referendums in Australia as a means of changing the Constitution.

RECOMMENDED LEVELS

UPPER SECONDARY

MIDDLE SECONDARY

LOWER SECONDARY

UPPER PRIMARY

THE INVESTIGATION AT A GLANCE

Background briefings for teacher reference	Australian Electoral Commission; Constitution; Democracy; Electoral division; Federation; Full preferential voting; House of Representatives; Referendum; Senate
Suggested classroom teaching time	Activity 1: Who rules? (80 minutes) Activity 2: How does the Australian Constitution influence our lives? (120 minutes) Activity 3: How can we change the Constitution? (80 minutes)
Indicators of student achievement	Describe the ways that rules help society to function in a fair and orderly way Identify the arguments for and against the federation of the Australian colonies Understand the way the Australian Constitution can be changed by a referendum Explain the role of the Australian Electoral Commission in administering the referendum process

ACTIVITY 1

Who rules?

FOCUS QUESTIONS

How do rules allow us to function in society?
 How and why are rules formalised?
 What is a constitution?

RESOURCES

- *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll
- Multiple copies of the school rules
- Multiple copies of a constitution, for example from a sports club
- Poster paper

Gathering information

Begin by reading chapter 8 'The Queen's Croquet-Ground' from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Set the scene by reminding students of the story. Some students will have knowledge of the book and could help set the context.

In discussion with students include the following questions:

- > What happened in the chapter?
- > Why was the croquet game so chaotic? What made it chaotic?
- > Were there any rules? Were they followed?
- > How did the Queen behave? Was her behaviour consistent?
- > Did the playing cards have any say?
- > Could you live in a world like this? What would be the problems?

Pose the question: 'Why are rules important in a society?' Record student responses on the board or poster paper.

Identifying and analysing

Instruct students to list examples of rules they follow in their everyday life. Ask whether they are informal (general consensus) or formally written, and the reasons for the rules. For example: Classroom (hands up to ask questions/to allow everyone to

participate, to be heard); Community group, for example sports club (getting to practice on time, doesn't waste others' time, respects others). List this information under the headings in the table below.

Draw the class together and ask students to share their examples. Record examples on a class poster and display.

Making connections

Group students into pairs or small groups and provide each with a copy of the school rules and the selected constitution. Instruct students to analyse the documents according to their purpose, who they are directed to, areas covered, mechanisms for change, format and language.

Draw the class together. Discuss the analysis and record responses under the table categories.

Presenting findings

As a class compare information recorded, discussing commonalities and differences between documents. Summarise findings in the following statements:

- > Rules provide
- > A constitution provides

Display statements.

	Rules	Formal /Informal	Reasons
Friends			
Home			
Classroom			
School			
Community groups			

ACTIVITY 2

How does the Australian Constitution influence our lives?

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- How has our past influenced the Australian Constitution of today?
- How does the Australian Constitution provide the framework for our society?
- What are the federal arrangements provided by the Constitution?
- Why is it important to protect State rights and how are they protected?

RESOURCES

- **BLM 4** Provisions of the Constitution
- **Interactive Quiz 1 – Referendums** – Do you get it?
- **Interactive Quiz 2 – The Constitution** – Are you a whiz?

Gathering information

Explain to students that the six British colonies of Australia joined to form the Commonwealth of Australia, with these colonies becoming the six states of the new

Federation. The Australian Federation was proclaimed on 1 January 1901. The colonies had been self-governing, making laws for their own territories. In the 1890s there had been much debate about whether the colonies should join together or remain separate. Different colonies had different opinions; people within colonies had different viewpoints. There was no uniform point of view, with a range of reasons on both sides of the argument. Throughout the 1890s debate raged. A series of conventions was held to debate these issues, and finally a draft constitution was agreed upon. The draft constitution was submitted to the people of each colony in referendums. The people of the six colonies voted 'Yes' to federate under the Australian Constitution. When agreed to by the people, the Constitution was taken to the British Parliament. Queen Victoria signed the *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act* into law. This Act took effect on 1 January 1901.

Divide the class into two groups. Explain that one group will be taking the position of those opposed to Federation and the other for Federation. Encourage sub-groups, such as defence and trade, to research information on points of argument. These 'experts' can present the research on behalf of the larger group. Ask students to nominate who in their group will present each argument. Responses to arguments can be by anyone in the team.



Fig 19: The *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act* was passed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom in 1900, during the reign of Queen Victoria

Identifying and analysing

Select two teams of four members each to argue opposing views. Use the following modified debating model to debate the issue. Numbers indicate the order in which speakers present their case.

IN FAVOUR OF FEDERATION (AFFIRMATIVE CASE)		AGAINST FEDERATION (NEGATIVE CASE)	
1	First speaker presents first argument in favour	2	First speaker presents first argument against
3	Second speaker presents second argument in favour	4	Second speaker presents second argument against
5	Third speaker presents third argument in favour	6	Third speaker presents third argument against
7	Fourth speaker rebuts the opposing side's arguments and sums up the arguments in favour of federation	8	Fourth speaker rebuts the opposing side's arguments and sums up the arguments against federation
The remainder of the class can take notes during the debate and score the teams on criteria such as content, relevance and performance of individual speakers. A show of hands at the end can be used to decide which team presented the better case. Alternatively, the teacher may use the board to record points made during the debate and adjudicate the result.			

Follow up by discussing the importance of the colonies maintaining their voices in the new federation.

Jigsawing information from the previous debate instruct students to complete the following table:

FEDERATION	
Advantages	Disadvantages

Draw students' attention to the fact that the colonies' respective franchises applied in the Federation referendums. This meant that men over the age of 21 and women over 21 in South Australia and Western Australia could vote. Women in Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and Queensland did not have a voice. With some exceptions, Indigenous Australians also did not have a vote.

Making connections

Group students in pairs. Provide students with a copy of **BLM 4**. Using information from **BLM 4** instruct students to summarise in their own words the provisions outlined. Draw the class together and discuss provisions made under the Constitution, for example federal arrangements, bicameral system, terms of office, state and federal responsibilities and division of powers. Also discuss with students why they think the people of the colonies were willing to accept the draft constitution. How were their rights protected? Summarise discussion points on poster paper.

Presenting findings

Organise students into pairs or small groups. Instruct students to draw on information from the debate and the provisions of the Constitution to present a persuasive case for adopting the Australian Constitution. This could be presented orally, as a role-play or in graphic form (such as a cartoon or poster).

FROM THE MARGIN

THE SENATE

At the time of the drawing up of the Constitution, the Senate was designed to represent the states equally. This was to stop states with large populations such as New South Wales and Victoria dominating states with small populations such as Tasmania and South Australia.

ACTIVITY 3

How can we change the Constitution?

FOCUS QUESTIONS

How are state and federal rights protected under our Constitution?

How does the referendum process allow for both the states and the nation as a whole to have a say?

How does the Australian Constitution remain relevant in contemporary society?

What is the role of the AEC in the referendum process?

RESOURCES

- **The Australian Constitution:** www.aph.gov.au (About Parliament>Senate>Powers, Practice and Procedures>Constitution)
- **Referendums**
 - 1999 Republic referendum: www.australianpolitics.com/topics/republic (Topics>Republic Vs Monarchy)
 - www.peo.gov.au (Learning>Fact sheets>Referendums and Plebiscite)
 - www.aph.gov.au (Publications>Library Publications>Research Papers>Constitutional Referenda in Australia)
 - Poster paper
- **Interactive Quiz 1 – Referendums** – Do you get it?



Gathering information

Explain to students that the Australian Constitution is a living document. Display a copy of the Constitution for students and give them the opportunity to examine it. The Constitution of Australia was written over 100 years ago, and society has changed dramatically since that time. The writers of the Constitution provided a mechanism for change, to deal with situations that were unforeseen at the time of its writing. Section 128 of the Constitution provides the framework for changes to the Constitution. Only the citizens of Australia can alter the Constitution through the process of a referendum. Since Federation there have been 44 proposals for constitutional change put to the Australian electors but only eight have been approved. For a referendum to be successful and become law, a double majority of electors must approve the proposed change: a national majority of electors from all states and territories; and a majority of electors in a majority of states (at least four of the six states).



Fig 20: Australia's Constitution

In 1999 two proposed laws to change the Constitution were put to eligible voters. One was to alter the Constitution to establish the Commonwealth of Australia as a republic and the other was to alter the Constitution to insert a preamble.

Divide the class into six groups; each group is to research one of the following:

- > The 'Yes' position for Constitution Alteration (Establishment of Republic)
- > The 'No' position for Constitution Alteration (Establishment of Republic)
- > The 'Yes' position for Constitution Alteration (Preamble)
- > The 'No' position for Constitution Alteration (Preamble)
- > The results of each of the referendums
- > The role of the AEC in conducting the 1999 referendums.

Explain to students that they will be the 'experts' in their area and will be presenting to the rest of the class. Groups may choose the medium of presenting the information.

This could include role-plays, speeches, Yes/No posters, diagrams, PowerPoint™ presentations and flow charts.

Identifying and analysing

Drawing on information presented by each group, discuss with students:

- > How do referendums give Australian citizens a voice?
- > What is the importance of the double majority? Why do you think the double majority is required?
- > How does our system of referendums protect our Constitution?
- > Do you think it is too difficult to change the Constitution?
- > Can you think of other ways that would allow us to change our Constitution in a fair and responsible way?
- > What problems do you think could arise if referendums were not administered by an independent statutory body?

Presenting findings

Instruct students in pairs to design a 'report card' to evaluate and assess the Australian Constitution based on agreed rubrics. They might consider such criteria as relevance in contemporary Australia, mechanisms for change, protection of State and federal rights, and representation. Provide an opportunity for students to present their 'Australian Constitution report cards' to the class.



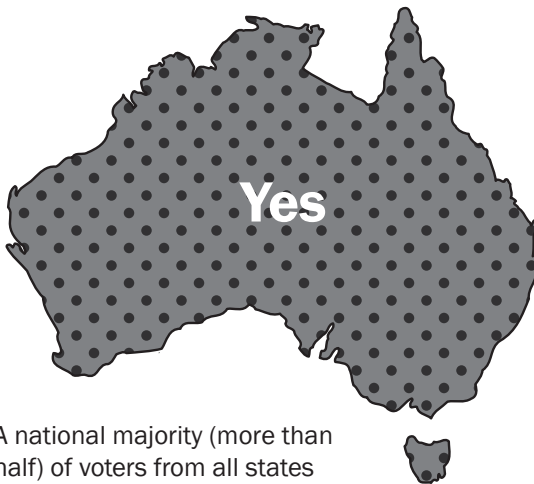
Fig 21: Promoting in the referendum in 1999



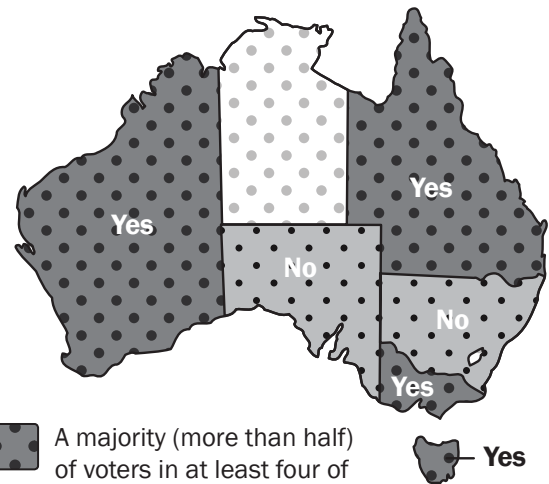
Referendums – double majority


To change the Australian Constitution, each proposed alteration must be approved by a double majority of voters in a referendum


A referendum is passed when:



and



 A national majority (more than half) of voters from all states and territories vote 'Yes'.

 A majority (more than half) of voters in at least four of the six states vote 'Yes'.

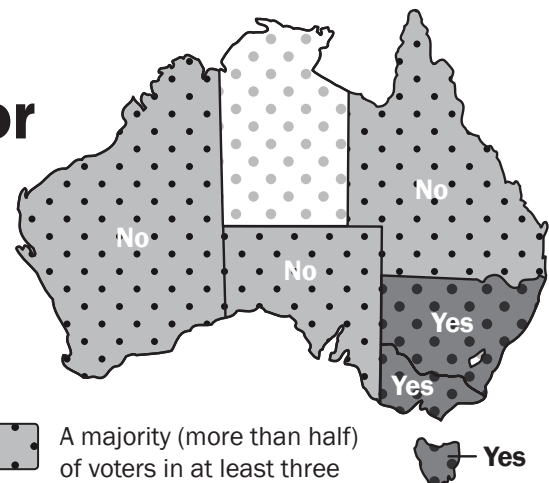



The votes of people living in the ACT, the NT and any of Australia's external territories count towards the national majority only.


A referendum is not passed when:



and/or



 A national majority (more than half) of voters from all states and territories vote 'No'.

 A majority (more than half) of voters in at least three states vote 'No'.

Referendum maps of Australia



Proposed alteration:

.....

Referendum date:

National vote: 'Yes' votes 'No' votes

Number of States with majority 'Yes' votes:

Was the referendum successful?



Proposed alteration:

.....

Referendum date:

National vote: 'Yes' votes 'No' votes

Number of States with majority 'Yes' votes:

Was the referendum successful?



Proposed alteration:

.....

Referendum date:

National vote: 'Yes' votes 'No' votes:

Number of States with majority 'Yes' votes:

Was the referendum successful?

Representation

Interesting facts I learnt about the Senate:

Interesting facts I learnt about the House of Representatives:

Interesting facts I learnt about referendums:

Provisions of the Constitution

CHAPTER 1: THE PARLIAMENT

Section 1: Legislative power

The legislative power of the Commonwealth shall be vested in a federal parliament, which shall consist of the Queen, a Senate and a House of Representatives, and which is hereinafter called 'The Parliament', or 'The Parliament of the Commonwealth'.

Section 7: The Senate

The Senate shall be composed of senators for each state, directly chosen by the people of the state, voting, until the parliament otherwise provides, as one electorate ...

Until the parliament otherwise provides there shall be six senators for each original state. The parliament may make laws increasing or diminishing the number of senators for each state, but so that equal representation of the several original states shall be maintained and that no original state shall have less than six senators.

The senators shall be chosen for a term of six years, and the names of the senators chosen for each state shall be certified by the Governor to the Governor-General.

Section 8: Qualification of electors

The qualification of electors of Senators shall be in each state that which is prescribed by this Constitution, or by the parliament, as the qualification for electors of members of the House of Representatives; but in the choosing of Senators each elector shall vote only once.

Section 15: Casual vacancies

If the place of a senator becomes vacant before the expiration of his term of service, the Houses of Parliament of the state for which he was chosen ... shall choose a person to hold the place until the expiration of the term ...

Where a vacancy has ... occurred in the place of a senator chosen by the people of a state and, at the time when he was so chosen, he was publicly recognized by a particular political party as being an endorsed candidate of that party ... a person chosen or appointed under this section ... shall, unless there is no member of that party available to be chosen or appointed, be a member of that party ...

Section 24: Constitution of House of Representatives

The House of Representatives shall be composed of members directly chosen by the people of the Commonwealth, and the number of such members shall be, as nearly as practicable, twice the number of the senators ...

Section 27: Alteration of number of members

Subject to this Constitution, the parliament may make laws for increasing or diminishing the number of members of the House of Representatives.

Provisions of the Constitution

Section 28: Duration of House of Representatives

Every House of Representatives shall continue for three years from the first meeting of the House, and no longer, but may be sooner dissolved by the Governor-General.

Section 30: Qualification of electors

Until the Parliament otherwise provides, the qualification of electors of members of the House of Representatives shall be in each State that which is prescribed by law of the State as the qualification of electors of the more numerous House of Parliament of that State; but in the choosing of members each elector shall only vote once.

Section 34: Qualifications of members

Until the Parliament otherwise provides, the qualifications of a member of the House of Representatives shall be as follows:

- i He must be of the full age of twenty-one years, and must be an elector entitled to vote at the election of members of the House of Representatives, or a person qualified to become such elector, and must have been for three years at the least a resident within the limits of the Commonwealth as existing at the time when he is chosen;
- ii He must be a subject of the Queen, either natural-born or for at least five years naturalized under law of the United Kingdom, or of a Colony, which has become a State, or of the Commonwealth, or of a State.

Section 51: Legislative powers of the Parliament

The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to:

- i Trade and commerce with other countries, and among the States ...
- v Postal, telegraphic, telephonic, and other like services;
- vi The naval and military defence of the Commonwealth and of the several States, and the control of the forces to execute and maintain the laws of the Commonwealth ...
- xii Currency, coinage, and legal tender ...
- xv Weights and measures ...
- xxi Marriage ...
- xxiii Invalid and old-age pensions ...
- xxiv The service and execution throughout the Commonwealth of the civil and criminal process and the judgments of the courts of the States ...
- xxvi The people of any race, for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws;
- xxvii Immigration and emigration ...
- xxix External Affairs ...

Provisions of the Constitution

CHAPTER 3: JUDICATURE

Section 71: Judicial power and Courts

The judicial power of the Commonwealth shall be vested in a Federal Supreme Court, to be called the High Court of Australia, and in such other federal courts as the Parliament creates, and in such other courts as it invests with federal jurisdiction. The High Court shall consist of a Chief Justice, and so many other Justices, not less than two, as the Parliament prescribes.

CHAPTER 8: ALTERATION

Section 128: Mode of altering the Constitution

This Constitution shall not be altered except in the following manner: The proposed law for alteration thereof must be passed by an absolute majority of each House of the Parliament, and not less than two nor more than six months after its passage through both Houses the proposed law shall be submitted to each State and Territory to the electors qualified to vote for the election of members of the House of Representatives ...

And if in a majority of the States a majority of the electors voting approve the proposed law, and if a majority of all electors voting also approve the proposed law, it shall be presented to the Governor-General for the Queen's assent ...

Note: Only selected provisions of the Constitution are reproduced here.



Australia's Constitution

TOPICS AND INVESTIGATIONS

What's your vote worth?

What's your vote worth? allows students to explore key features of the electoral system such as compulsory voting and the voting systems used to elect representatives to federal and state and territory parliaments. It also examines why voting is important, the democratic principles which underpin a democratic electoral system and the role of redistributions in ensuring the equality of citizens' votes.

Introductory activity

RESOURCES

BLM 1 Hypothetical – student election

FROM THE MARGIN

VOTER TURNOUT

Approximately 94% of eligible electors voted in the 2013 Australian federal election. In the USA, where voting is not compulsory, approximately 55% of eligible electors turned out for the 2012 presidential election. In the UK in 2015 60% of eligible electors voted.

In a 'think, pair and share' exercise, ask students to consider their experiences of voting, especially in relation to interactive television programs, which allow audiences to express their opinions of contestants or participants through voting. Have students outline or describe the method of voting used, taking care to record the details of the procedure. They might ask, for example: Who votes? How many times can they vote? Who counts the votes? Is there a cost for voting?

Maintaining the pairs, ask students to use their knowledge of voting in formal elections to compile a list of key principles or stages of an election. Their list could include details such as enrolment, voting once, voting in private, compulsory voting, 'one vote, one value', and so on. Once students have compiled this list, ask them to compare



Fig 22: Voting in an election

it to the process they described for voting in an interactive television program. This comparison may be made using a Venn diagram, or by ticking the shared features on the list.

Once the comparison is complete, ask students in a class discussion to consider the fairness of each process, and to contribute to a class list of voting principles.

Using **BLM 1** students work in groups to complete the activities and present their findings. Ask students to use their findings to supplement or modify the class list of voting principles.

Students should now be able to propose definitions for 'secret ballot', 'one vote, one value' and 'preferential voting', as well as definitions for any other principles they suggest are needed for the conduct of a free and fair election.

This knowledge can now be applied to a review of the current voting provision for student elections in your school. Have students propose amendments to these voting provisions and prepare a set of recommendations for the school's Student Representative Council to consider.

Investigation

How and why do Australians vote?

In this investigation students explore compulsory voting, the importance of participation in a democracy and the reasons why it is important for people to enrol to vote. They examine the voting systems used to elect representatives to the federal parliament as well as to state and territory parliaments. The investigation also asks students to evaluate the principles that underpin democratic elections including 'one vote, one value', equality of representation, fair representation, majority rule and representation of minorities.

RECOMMENDED LEVELS

UPPER SECONDARY

MIDDLE SECONDARY

LOWER SECONDARY

UPPER PRIMARY

THE INVESTIGATION AT A GLANCE

Background briefings for teacher reference	Australian Electoral Commission; Democracy; Electoral division; Full preferential voting; House of Representatives; Representation; Senate
Suggested classroom teaching time	Activity 1: The value of a vote (80 minutes) Activity 2: Profiles of Parliament (80 minutes) Activity 3: Voting systems (80 minutes)
Indicators of student achievement	Understand electoral law relating to voting in Australia Analyse the voting systems used in federal elections and in the states and territories Evaluate the impact of voting systems used on the outcome of elections and representation in parliament

ACTIVITY 1

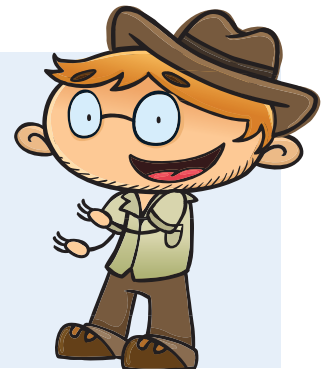
The value of a vote

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- Who can vote in Australia?
- What are the arguments for and against compulsory voting?
- How do citizens enrol to vote?
- Why should young people enrol to vote?

RESOURCES

- **BLM 2** Young people and the vote
- **Enrolment**
- **Voting**
- **Animation History of Voting**
- **Interactive The History of Voting Game**



Gathering information

Read through **BLM 2** with students.
Explain to them that they will be researching information about voting in order to evaluate the material on the BLM.

Discuss with students their current understandings of the following:

- > Who can vote?
- > How do you enrol?
- > What are the arguments for and against compulsory voting?

Divide the class into groups and ask them to use the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) website to research who can vote, how citizens enrol to vote, the purpose of the electoral roll and the reasons for and against compulsory voting.

Have students research voting knowledge and the voting attitudes of your senior school population as well as attitudes to lowering the voting age to 16. Develop a simple class survey that could be used by all groups in the class.

Identifying and analysing

Have student groups report back to the class and discuss the following:

- > What arguments are there for and against compulsory voting? (Have students, in turns, present an argument for or against compulsory voting.)
Which arguments are most convincing to students?
- > Who is eligible to enrol to vote?
- > How do you enrol?
- > What is provisional enrolment?
- > How does provisional enrolment encourage increased participation of eligible voters?



Fig 23: Mobile polling makes voting accessible to all electors

Revisit the material on **BLM 2**. Discuss the arguments put forward by young people about voting. Consider the following:

- > How do the 'Yes' arguments differ from the 'No' arguments?
- > What reasons are offered for lowering the voting age?
What is your opinion about this issue?
- > What suggestions do you have that might convince young people to enrol to vote?

Presenting findings

Have student groups use the knowledge gathered through local research to develop:

- > a report to the AEC on attitudes to voting among students at your school
- > a letter to the newspaper arguing the case for or against voting for 16-year-olds
- > an advertising campaign to inform students at school about voting.

ACTIVITY 2

Profiles of Parliament

FOCUS QUESTIONS

How do citizens vote for the House of Representatives and the Senate?

How are the votes counted?

What role is played by the AEC in conducting democratic elections?

RESOURCES

- **BLM 3** Voting for the House of Representatives and the Senate
- www.aph.gov.au (House of Representatives>Introduction)
- www.aph.gov.au (Senate>Introduction)
- **Counting the Votes**
- **Election Results**

RESOURCES (Cont.)

- **Animation Counting Your Vote**
- **Animation Election Day**
- **Interactive Quiz 2 – The Constitution** – Are you a whiz?
- **Interactive History Challenge** – Test your knowledge
- **Interactive Voting Challenge** – What do you know?



Gathering information

As a preliminary activity to researching the voting systems used in the House of Representatives and the Senate, have students research the role and functions of the two federal houses of parliament. Information should be arranged under the following headings:

- > Name of house (as well as other names given to this house)
- > Who is represented?
- > Number of representatives
- > Terms of office of members of parliament and senators
- > Roles and functions.

Provide students with a copy of **BLM 3** and the spreadsheets of party federal election results from the AEC website.

Read through **BLM 3** with students. In pairs students investigate the electoral systems – the process of voting and the process of counting the vote, as well as the latest election results.

Identifying and analysing

Bring students together to report on their findings and discuss:

- > How does the electoral system used for the House of Representatives support the principle of majority rule?
- > How might minor parties and independents influence the outcome of an election?
- > What are the principles of Senate voting?
- > Why might Senate elections take a long time to finalise?
- > What might be the advantages for a democracy of having a range of parties represented in the Senate?
- > What are the implications for democracy when the same political party has a majority in both houses of parliament?

Presenting findings

Have students use the results of their research and discussions to produce an information guide on one on the following:

- > voting for the Senate
- > voting for the House of Representatives.

Students should include charts, diagrams, photographs and illustrations to explain and analyse each of the voting systems, including the ways that votes are counted.

FROM THE MARGIN

HUNG PARLIAMENT

Capital punishment was abolished in Australia so this does not refer to hanging parliamentarians! It's a term used to describe a parliament in which no political party or coalition of parties has a majority in the House of Representatives. The term is becoming more applicable to modern parliaments, as minor parties and independent candidates are increasingly holding the balance of power in minority governments.



Fig 24: The Australian Senate

ACTIVITY 3

Voting systems

FOCUS QUESTIONS

What voting systems are used in the States and Territories?

How voter-friendly are websites with information on voting?

RESOURCES

- **BLM 4** States', Territories' and New Zealand voting systems
- **Electoral Council of Australia**
- State and Territory electoral authority websites:
 - ACT: www.elections.act.gov.au - SA: www.ecsa.sa.gov.au
 - NSW: www.elections.nsw.gov.au - Tas: www.tec.tas.gov.au
 - NT: www.nt.gov.au/nteo - Vic: www.vec.vic.gov.au
 - Qld: www.ecq.qld.gov.au - WA: www.waec.wa.gov.au
- **Animation History of Voting**
- **Animation Counting Your Vote**
- **Interactive The History of Voting Game**
- **Interactive Voting Challenge** – What do you know?

FROM THE MARGIN

WESTMINSTER SYSTEM

Westminster is the place where the British Government sits, so the Westminster system refers to the procedures of the British Parliament which were adopted by Australia at the time of Federation and are still in use today.



Gathering information

Provide students with a copy of **BLM 4**. Divide students into eight groups, each to research one state or territory. Refer them to the websites listed above as well as the parliamentary websites which can be found by using a search engine and typing in search terms such as 'Northern Territory Parliament'.

Ask students to find out the following:

- > a brief history of the parliament
- > symbols of government (such as coats of arms, colours, bird and flower emblems)
- > length of parliamentary terms
- > numbers of representatives in house(s) of parliament
- > numbers of electorates and the ways they are organised
- > nature of the voting systems used.

Identifying and analysing

Discuss with students the similarities and differences among the states and territories, as well as differences between the state and federal systems. What accounts for these differences and similarities?

How do the voting systems of the states and territories uphold democratic principles and values such as majority rule and representation of minorities, fair representation and 'one vote, one value'?

Presenting findings

Ask students to present their understandings in groups on a series of posters for the classroom. Have them include the aspects in the research list above. Their presentations should include visual aids, charts and images such as state coats of arms and symbols, and timelines of key electoral events.

Investigation

How do electorates change over time?

A fair electoral system ensures that each citizen's vote has equal value and that voters have, as near as possible, equal representation. For the House of Representatives each state and territory is divided into electoral divisions. The number of electoral divisions is determined by the population in each state and territory. To ensure equal representation, the boundaries of these divisions have to be redrawn or redistributed periodically. This rearrangement of electoral division boundaries is called a 'redistribution'.

In this investigation students analyse the characteristics of Australian electorates, investigate the redistribution process and analyse how democratic values are evident in these processes.

RECOMMENDED LEVELS

UPPER SECONDARY

MIDDLE SECONDARY

LOWER SECONDARY

UPPER PRIMARY

THE INVESTIGATION AT A GLANCE

Background briefings for teacher reference	Australian Electoral Commission; Democracy; Electoral division; Redistribution; Representation
Suggested classroom teaching time	Activity 1: Electorates (80 minutes) Activity 2: Redistributions (80 minutes) Activity 3: Issues (120 minutes)
Indicators of student achievement	Analyse the characteristics of their own and other Australian electorates Understand the process and importance of redistributions in maintaining a democratic electoral system Explain the ways that local issues can influence the way people vote

ACTIVITY 1

Electorates

FOCUS QUESTIONS

What is an electorate?

In what ways do electorates vary across Australia?

What is taken into account when determining electoral boundaries?

RESOURCES

- **BLM 5** Analysing the data
- Copies for each student of the **map** and description of the electorate in which your school is located
- **Animation Counting Your Vote**

FROM THE MARGIN

OVERSEAS VOTING

Eligible Australians living, working or holidaying overseas can still vote in a federal election. In the two weeks leading up to election day, Australians overseas are able to visit their nearest Australian embassy, consulate or high commission and vote in person.



Gathering information

Provide students with a copy of the electorate map and AEC information about the electoral division in which your school is located.

Discuss with students the sorts of information that can be obtained about electorates in Australia. These include size (area), enrolment (numbers of electors), demographic rating (see table), products and industries, and seat status. Ensure that they understand the meaning of each of these terms.

Students then examine the map of the electorate. Discuss with them the considerations that appear to have been made in drawing up the electoral boundaries (such as major roads or geographic features, suburb boundaries).

Have students in pairs construct a spreadsheet or table with the following column headings:

- > Electoral division
- > State or Territory
- > Size (area)
- > Enrolment
- > Demographic rating
- > Products and Industries
- > Seat status
- > Characteristics of boundaries.

Using the AEC website, the pairs complete the spreadsheet or table columns for six or seven individual electorates. Use the alphabetical list of House of Representatives electorates from the AEC website to allocate groups of electorates to students. Ensure a variety of electorates from all states and territories and that all student pairs examine different electorates.

Once students have completed their spreadsheet or table, arrange for them to aggregate their information into a master database, which can then be given to all students. This can be used electronically by all students to sort information.

DEMOGRAPHIC RATINGS FOR ELECTORATES

Inner metropolitan:	Situated in capital cities and consisting of well-established built-up suburbs
Outer metropolitan:	Situated in capital cities and containing large areas of recent suburban expansion
Provincial:	Outside capital cities, but with a majority of enrolment in major provincial cities
Rural:	Outside capital cities, and without a majority of enrolment in major provincial cities

Identifying and analysing

Provide students with a copy of **BLM 5** and a copy of the aggregated student data.

Use the questions on **BLM 5** as the basis for discussion with students about their own findings and the findings of other students.

Discuss with students the correlations found in the data.

For example, how does the size of an electorate correlate with the other characteristics such as enrolment, demographic rating, products and industries, and seat status?

Where students offer generalisations, encourage them to use the spreadsheet or table to come up with evidence and examples.

For example: 'Electorates with the largest size (area) have the demographic rating "Rural". This can be seen in the electorates of X, Y and Z.'

Presenting findings

Place students in small groups to develop and present a poster, an electronic presentation or a report to inform an audience about the characteristics of their electorate and other Australian electorates.

Reports should discuss each of the characteristics on the database. Students should sort information on the database to provide evidence for their report and they should provide examples of particular electorates in their presentations, as well as charts, images and diagrams if appropriate.



Fig 25: Schools and other public buildings are used as polling places on election day

ACTIVITY 2

Redistributions

FOCUS QUESTIONS

What is a redistribution?

When do redistributions occur?

How do redistributions contribute to fair and equal representation?

RESOURCES

- **BLM 6** Federal redistributions
- **Redistributions**
- **Animation Counting Your Vote**



Gathering information

Ask students to provide reasons why the enrolment in electorates might change over time. A useful way to approach this is to ask students about population changes in the state or territory, and in their local area. For example, have there been any new housing estates or apartment complexes in the inner city areas or has there been a decline in rural populations? Why might these changes have occurred?

Ask students to suggest reasons why it might be important for a democratic electoral system to have enrolments in electorates with approximately equal populations.

Provide students with a copy of **BLM 6**.

Divide students into groups where they can read and discuss the BLM and access computers to obtain further information from the AEC website. Their task is to explain to the rest of the class:

- > the conditions under which a redistribution occurs
- > the process of redistribution, including determining the quota
- > the factors the redistribution committee takes into account
- > the ways that the public can take part in this process.



Fig 26: Polling official checking for the voter's name on the electoral roll for his division

Identifying and analysing

Have student groups report back to the class.

Discuss with students:

- > rules covering redistributions
- > meanings of the factors that redistributions must take into account, for example: What is meant by 'community of interest'?
- > ways that people can have input into the process.

Presenting findings

Ask students to imagine that there has been a significant population increase (or decrease) in their electorate and a redistribution has been announced. This means that part of their electorate boundaries will be redrawn.

Have students prepare a newspaper article (which includes a map of their electorate) for the general public, to explain the goals of the redistribution and how redistributions contribute to a fair and representative electoral system. The article should also clarify the process of redistribution and invite input from local people.

ACTIVITY 3

Issues

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- What issues might concern people in our electorate?
- What issues might concern people in different types of electorates?
- What issues might affect the way that people vote?

RESOURCES

- **BLM 7** Electorate issues
- **Division Profiles**
- Farm on Line: www.farmonline.com.au (portal for rural newspapers)
- Newspapers: www.onlinenewspapers.com

Gathering information

Using the AEC website, download a range of division profiles for two electorates as per the following demographic ratings: inner metropolitan, outer metropolitan, provincial and rural. Students may choose to concentrate on electorates in their state or territory or choose any electorates Australia-wide.

Provide copies of these profiles to students in groups. Have them look at the demographic rating and products and industries in these electorates. For each type of electorate ask students to hypothesise about the issues that might affect the way that people in these electorates might vote. For example, a rural electorate with a dairy industry might be interested in the price of water, or an outer metropolitan electorate might be interested in home loan interest rates.

Have students report back on their hypotheses.

List their suggestions on four charts labelled 'Inner metropolitan', 'Outer metropolitan', 'Provincial' and 'Rural'.

Ask students in pairs or groups to test their hypotheses by researching issues in the local newspapers of one of these electorates.

Each group should collect and analyse four newspaper articles and record them in **BLM 7**.

Identifying and analysing

Have student groups report on their findings to the class and discuss:

- > What issues are important in each of the electorate demographic categories?
- > What issues do different electorate types have in common and what issues are different?
- > What issues might be important in determining the ways that people vote in each of these electorates?

Presenting findings

Have students present their findings in a feature newspaper article or report. Ask them to consider an audience and purpose for their writing.



Fig 27: Voters' interests can be determined by their location and the communities in which they live

Going further

RESOURCES

- **BLM 8** Voting issues survey

Have students develop a questionnaire and interview some members of their community about their voting habits and the issues that affect the way they vote in elections.

Develop, with the class, a common class survey sheet for students to use.

Decide the best way of conducting this research with the class. Students may be more comfortable conducting interviews in pairs. (Face-to-face interviews are ideal but there may be opportunities for telephone or email interviews as well.) Talk with students about the ways they can locate interviewees and the protocols of interviewing – such as politeness, guarantees of anonymity, and so on.

Inform parents or other members of the community about this activity through the school newsletter. Provide students with a proforma letter from the school that will enable them to approach members of the community and which outlines the purpose of the research and guarantees the anonymity of the interviewee. Offer to provide participants with the results of the survey.

Data analysis generated by the interview could include:

- > age and voting interests
- > gender and voting interests
- > occupation and voting interests
- > background and voting interests
- > party affiliation and voting interests
- > location in the electorate and voting interests
- > analysis of the most important issues for voters in your community
- > interest in politics and voting in your local community.



Fig 28: Voters' interests can be determined by their age, gender and occupation

Consider having the class compile their combined results into a class booklet. This could be used as the basis for:

- > an article for the local newspaper or school newsletter
- > a presentation to the senior students at the school
- > a presentation to the local council
- > a presentation to your local Member of Parliament.

Students could focus on the following questions:

- > What issues are most important in our electorate?
- > Do issues differ with gender, age and occupational background? What is the nature of these differences?
- > What should be the most important considerations for a person seeking to represent your electorate?
- > Are political parties important to voters?

Alternatively use the survey sheets (**BLM 8**) to conduct the interviews.

Hypothetical – student election

ONE VOTE, ONE VALUE

Imagine that each class at your year level is allowed to elect one representative to your school's representative student body. There are three classes at your level in the school. Each class will elect one representative.

Class A has 24 students, Class B has 15 students and Class C has 26 students.

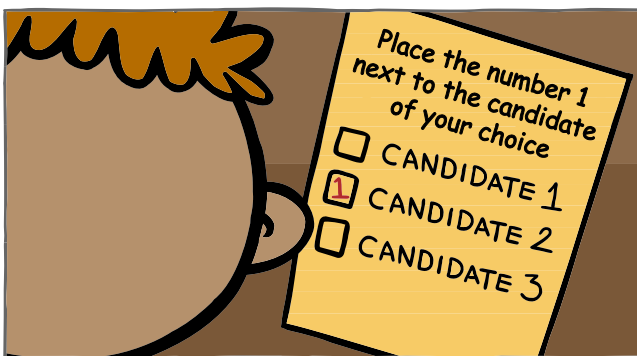
Discuss and record your answers:

- > In which class is each student's vote worth the most?
- > In which class is each student's vote worth the least?
- > How might the school rearrange the vote at your year level to ensure that each student's vote is worth the same?
- > Write down a definition of what 'one vote, one value' means.
- > Why might this be important when electing representatives?

Imagine that Class A, Class B and Class C each adopt different methods of electing their representatives.

CLASS A: FIRST PAST THE POST AND SECRET BALLOT

There are three students in Class A who want to be elected as the class representative. They use a voting method called first past the post. In this voting system the candidate who gets the most votes is elected. All members of the class are given a ballot paper with each candidate's name on it. They are asked to put number 1 next to the name of the candidate they wish to represent them. They are also given the opportunity to vote privately. That is, there is no opportunity for any other student to see how anyone votes. (This is called a secret ballot.)



The results of the election are:

John	6 votes
Gabriella	7 votes
Huyn	11 votes
Total	24 votes

- > Which candidate has been elected?
- > How many students voted in favour of that candidate?
How many students voted against that candidate?
- > Does the elected person have the support of an **absolute majority** (more than 50%) of the class?
- > Why do you think this is called a **first past the post** method of voting?

CLASS B: HANDS UP AND FIRST PAST THE POST

The students in Class B decide to use a different method. They also have three candidates who wish to represent the class but instead of secret ballot they vote in public by a show of hands. This means that the whole class knows who each individual voted for.

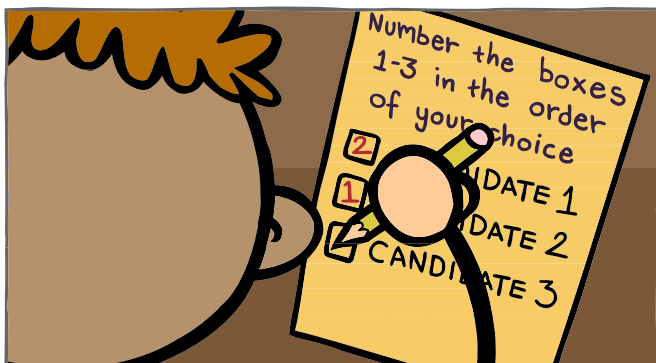
- > What are the advantages and disadvantages of this method of voting?

Hypothetical – student election

CLASS C: FULL PREFERENTIAL VOTING AND SECRET BALLOT

Class C also has three student candidates for the election but has decided to use another voting method. The aim of the election is to get a class representative who is most preferred by an absolute majority (more than 50%) of the class.

Class C is asked to number the three candidates in order of preference (1, 2, 3) on the ballot paper. This is called a full preferential voting system. Class C students are also given the opportunity to vote in private (called a secret ballot).



- > How many votes would a candidate in Class C need to get in order to have absolute majority support in the class?

The results of the election are:

First preference count

Susan	8 votes
David	11 votes
Frank	7 votes
Total	26 votes

None of the students has received an absolute majority (more than 50% of the formal vote or 14 votes).

As Frank has the fewest votes, he is excluded from the count and, according to the order of the preferences on the ballot papers, his votes are distributed to the other candidates. The candidates who were listed second (numbered 2 on the ballots) receive the votes. Once this distribution of preferences is complete, the totals for the remaining two candidates can be determined. If one voter who originally voted for Frank indicated David as their second preference, then David's tally of votes would increase to 12. If six voters who originally voted for Frank put Susan second, then Susan would receive a total of 14 votes. The final count would look like this:

Final count

Susan	8 votes + 6 votes = 14 votes
David	11 votes + 1 vote = 12 votes
Total	26 votes

Susan has now received an absolute majority (more than 50%) of the votes. We call her the 'most preferred' candidate and she is elected.

Discussion

- > Compare the different results of the elections in Class A (first past the post) and Class C (preferential voting).
- > Which class, A, B or C, is represented more fairly?
- > How does the voting system used affect the outcome of the election?
- > What are the advantages and disadvantages of each of these voting systems?
- > Is one voting system fairer than the other?

Young people and the vote

WHY VOTE?

The following comments come from a four-year national investigation led by a team of researchers from the University of Sydney and the Australian National University working in partnership with the Australian Electoral Commission. The research was funded by the Australian Research Council. The survey was commissioned to determine why young people do not enrol to vote. In 2004, approximately 82% of young Australians (17–25 years of age) were on the electoral roll compared with 95% of other Australians.

Voting YES

‘So I can have a say in the current government.’

‘Because unless you vote, you cannot say you have no influence! You can try to have an influence by voting.’

‘Because I think it’s really important that we all get our say, because we’re voting for who will run our country.’

‘Because I will. Everybody needs to vote. If you don’t vote, you don’t have the right to complain about the government.’

Voting NO

‘Because the government doesn’t affect my day-to-day life. Therefore, I don’t care who gets elected.’

‘Because if it isn’t required by me, then I wouldn’t bother finding out about it. I would leave it to those who know and are passionate about it.’

‘Why would you do anything you don’t like if you didn’t have to?’

‘Waste of a Saturday, time consuming, and I am too lazy. Although I would vote on important issues, such as becoming a republic.’

(Source: Print, M, Saha, L & Edwards, K, *Youth Electoral Study, Report 1*, 2004. Available on the AEC website).



Making it count. A young person lodging a vote

Young people and the vote

The voting age?

The voting age in Australia was lowered from 21 years to 18 years in 1973. Some people argue that it is time to lower the voting age again – to 16.

There are examples overseas for lowering the voting age. Brazil and Nicaragua have a voting age of 16, as do Germany and Austria for some local elections. Our neighbours in East Timor and Indonesia have a voting age of 17. The Isle of Man has decided to lower the voting age to 16. Also, a Member of the British Parliament has backed the idea of reducing the voting age to 16.

Two minor parties in Australia, the Greens and the Australian Democrats, have supported the idea of lowering the voting age in recent times.

A vote for 16 year olds say the Greens

The Greens say 16 and 17 year olds should be able to vote in Victorian elections, and that they will work to introduce optional voting for 16 and 17 year olds.

At the launch of the Victorian Greens Youth Policy, Youth Spokesperson Jim Reiher said: 'One of our key policies is for optional voting in State elections for 16 and 17 year olds. We don't want to make voting compulsory from a younger age, but we want teenagers to build an interest in politics and become involved in the political process.'

The Greens are committed to giving young people a real voice in Victorian politics. The Greens have nine candidates 25 years or under.

'Youth do get a raw deal in too many areas,' said Jim Reiher. 'We must face up to this and unlike the old parties, the Greens will actually do something about it.'

'The old parties say a lot about what they will do for youth,' said Jim Reiher. 'The trouble is, that once the men and women from the old parties get their seats in Parliament House the promises seem to quickly disappear.'

(Source: www.vic.greens.org.au>Media>Media Releases 2006> A Vote for 16 Year Olds Say the Greens 13/11/2006)

16 is too young to vote

Lowering the voting age to 16 will not encourage young people to enrol to vote. Sixteen year olds are too immature and too distracted by adolescent interests to become responsible and informed voters. They are still growing up and need more time to learn about the world before they take on the responsibility of voting.

Such learning must come from life experience, not formal education. Theoretical knowledge does not always translate to good practice. We already teach students about healthy eating but Australian youth suffer soaring levels of obesity.

Furthermore, just because some rights are acquired at 16 does not mean that other, unrelated, rights should be. We do not ask 16 year olds to serve in the defence forces or on juries, and we do not allow them to gamble or purchase alcohol and tobacco. Appropriately, different ages apply to different rights and that is the way it should remain.

(Source: Adapted from a contribution (Geoff) to the Bartlett Diaries: www.andrewbartlett.com/blog/?p=150)

Voting for the House of Representatives and the Senate

Voting for the House of Representatives

When voting for the House of Representatives electors are choosing one person to represent their electorate (or electoral division) in the parliament. Each state and territory is divided into electorates, which contain as near as possible equal numbers of electors.

The House of Representatives uses the full preferential voting system and requires successful candidates to gain more than 50% of the formal votes. Candidates are listed on the ballot paper along with the names of their political parties. Some candidates do not belong to any political party and are known as independents. House of Representatives ballot papers are green.

The order of candidates on the ballot paper is determined by a double random draw. The first draw gives each candidate a number and the second draw determines the order in which each candidate appears on the ballot paper.

Political parties and individual candidates usually provide a 'How to Vote Card' which advises voters about how to direct their preferences (or order their votes on the ballot paper).

Voters fill in a ballot paper by writing the number 1 in the box next to the candidate of their first preference, number 2 next to their second preference, and so on until all the boxes are numbered in the order of choice.

To be elected a candidate in each electorate must receive an absolute majority (more than 50%) of the formal vote.

A sample ballot paper for the House of Representatives

FROM THE MARGIN

MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT

The party or coalition of parties which wins the majority of seats (electorates) forms the government in the House of Representatives.

A formal vote is a ballot paper that has been correctly filled in. It means it will be counted. An informal ballot paper is an incorrectly marked ballot paper; it will not be counted.

Voting for the Senate

When voting for the Senate, electors are choosing a group of candidates to represent their state or territory (12 per state or two per territory). The state and territory borders are the electorate boundaries.

The Senate also uses a full preferential voting system but voters have a choice of two ways to express their preferences. Senate ballot papers are white and are divided into two sections by a black line. The top of the ballot paper shows the parties or groups that are standing for election whereas the bottom half of the ballot paper lists the individual candidates. Electors can vote either above the line or below the line.

If electors vote above the line, they need to number at least 6 boxes from 1 to 6. By voting above the line, preferences will be distributed in the order that the candidates appear below the line for the party or group chosen.

Preferences will first be distributed to the candidates in the party or group of the voter's first choice, then to candidates in the party or group of voter's second choice and so on, until all preferences have been distributed.

Voting for the House of Representatives and the Senate

Senate Ballot Paper
State – Election of 12 Senators

You may vote in one of two ways

Either

Above the line
By numbering at least **6** of these boxes in the order of your choice (with number 1 as your first choice).

Or

Below the line
By numbering at least **12** of these boxes in the order of your choice (with number 1 as your first choice).

Columns A-G:

- Column A: PARTY
- Column B: PARTY
- Column C: PARTY
- Column D: PARTY
- Column E: PARTY
- Column F: PARTY
- Column G: PARTY

Below the line columns:

- Column 1: PARTY
- Column 2: PARTY
- Column 3: PARTY
- Column 4: PARTY
- Column 5: PARTY
- Column 6: PARTY
- Column 7: UNGROUPED

Below the line boxes (for each party/group):

- SURNAME
- Given Names
- PARTY

UNGROUPED boxes:

- SURNAME
- Given Names
- INDEPENDENT

SAMPLE

A sample ballot paper for the Australian Senate

If the elector votes below the line, they need to number at least 12 boxes from 1 to 12. By voting below the line preferences will be distributed to the individual candidates as numbered on the ballot paper, in the order of the voter's choice.

The order in which the party or group names appear on the top of ballot paper is determined by a double random draw, as for the House of Representatives. The order of the candidate names listed below the line is provided to the AEC by the parties from which they belong.

To count the vote, the Senate uses a proportional representation system.

To be elected a candidate must receive a quota (proportion) of the vote, which is determined by dividing the number of formal ballot papers by one more than the number of vacancies to be filled and adding 1 to the result.

$$\frac{\text{Number of formal votes}}{\text{Number of vacancies} + 1} + 1 = \text{quota}$$

Above-the-line voting was introduced in 1984. It led to a marked reduction in the level of informal voting in the Senate (see table below).

LEVEL OF INFORMAL VOTING IN THE SENATE											
1949	1983	1984	1990	1993	1996	1998	2001	2004	2007	2010	2013
10.8%	9.9%	4.7%	3.4%	2.6%	3.5%	3.2%	3.9%	3.8%	2.5%	3.8%	3.0%

(Sources: Jaensch, Dean, *Elections!: How and Why Australia Votes*, Allen and Unwin, 1995, p 88; *Electoral Pocketbook*, Australian Electoral Commission, 2007, p 56, 2010, p 60, 2013, p 49)

States' and Territories' voting systems

State/Territory	Houses of Parliament	Voting systems
Australian Capital Territory Population: 387 000 Federal Capital Territory was first established in 1911 on land given up by NSW. It became the Australian Capital Territory in 1938 and achieved self-government in 1988.	Legislative Assembly	Optional preferential voting Proportional representation count (Hare-Clarke system)
New South Wales Population: 7.54 million The oldest State in Australia with the oldest parliament. Had a Westminster-style government by 1856.	Legislative Council Legislative Assembly	Partial preferential voting Proportional representation count Optional preferential voting
Northern Territory Population: 246 000 Fully elected Legislative Assembly in 1974. Self-government in 1978.	Legislative Assembly	Full preferential voting
Queensland Population: 4.74 million First Queensland Parliament, 1860. The only State Parliament with one House. Its Upper House was abolished in 1922.	Legislative Assembly	Full preferential voting
South Australia Population: 1.69 million Settled by Europeans in 1836 and was a settlement without convicts.	Legislative Council House of Assembly	Full preferential – ticket voting above the line Proportional representation count Full preferential voting
Tasmania Population: 515 000 Became a separate colony from NSW in 1825. Named Tasmania in 1856.	Legislative Council House of Assembly	Partial preferential voting Partial preferential voting Proportional representation count (Hare-Clarke system)
Victoria Population: 5.87 million Became a separate colony from NSW in 1851. The first Commonwealth Parliament met in Melbourne in 1901 and continued to sit there until 1927.	Legislative Council Legislative Assembly	Partial preferential voting Proportional representation count Full preferential voting
Western Australia Population: 2.59 million First settled in 1829. The last colony to join the Federation of Australia.	Legislative Council Legislative Assembly	Full preferential voting Proportional representation count – single transferable vote and ticket voting Full preferential voting

(Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS): www.abs.gov.au, September 2014)

Analysing the data

SIZE OF ELECTORATES

How does the size (area) of our school's electorate compare with that of other electorates in our state or territory and electorates in other states and territories?

What differences or similarities exist?

What are the correlations between the size (area) of electorates and:

- > enrolment?
- > demographic rating?
- > products and industries?

Suggest reasons for these correlations.

ENROLMENT

How does the enrolment of our school's electorate compare with that of other electorates in our state or territory and those in other states and territories?

What is the extent of the variation?

DEMOGRAPHIC RATING

What is the demographic rating of our electorate?

How does it compare with that of other electorates in Australia with the same demographic rating?

Do electorates with the same demographic rating have other characteristics in common (such as size, enrolment, products and industries, and seat status)?

PRODUCTS AND INDUSTRIES

What products and industries are important in our electorate?

How do they compare with those of other electorates in Australia with the same demographic rating?

Do electorates with similar products and industries have other characteristics in common?

SEAT STATUS

What is the seat status of our electorate?

How does it compare with that of other electorates in Australia with the same seat status?

Do electorates with a similar seat status have other characteristics in common?

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

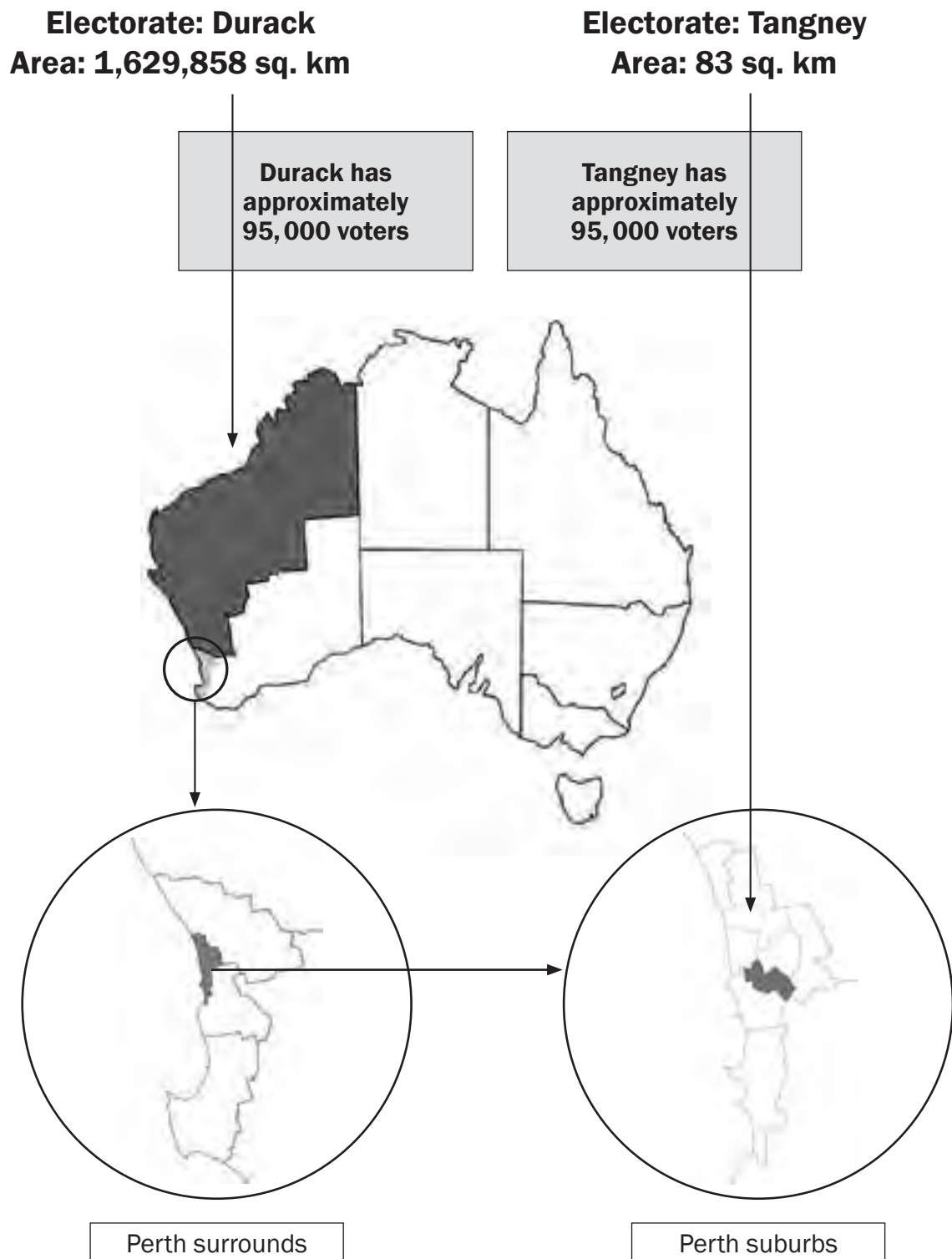
What considerations appear to be taken into account when drawing electoral boundaries?

What built and natural boundaries define electorates?

What are the characteristics of electorates where there are no discernible built and natural boundaries?

Federal redistributions

A redistribution is the redrawing of electoral boundaries for a division to ensure that there are, as near as possible, equal numbers of electors in each division for a state or territory.



Federal redistributions

Until 1983 a redistribution of seats in the Australian electoral system was a decision for the party in government.

Since 1983 a redistribution occurs in a state or territory when:

- > it has been seven years since the previous redistribution in that state or territory.
- > there is a change in the number of members to which a state or territory is entitled. This occurs when there has been a greater relative population increase or decrease than occurs in another state or territory.
- > more than one-third of the divisions within a state vary from the average divisional enrolment for that state by more than 10% for three consecutive months.

THE PROCESS

A Redistribution Committee is appointed in the state or territory where a redistribution is to occur.

Individuals and groups in the community are encouraged to make suggestions to this committee.

The Electoral Commissioner calculates the average number of electors for each division.

This is called a quota. It is worked out according to the following formula:

$$\text{Quota} = \frac{\text{Number of people enrolled in the state or territory}}{\text{Number of members of the house of representatives to which the state or territory is entitled}}$$

When a redistribution takes place, the enrolments in a division must not vary more than 10% from the average number of electors. The aim is for enrolments to be within 3.5% of the average enrolment, three and a half years after the redistribution.

Factors the Redistribution Committee takes into account

The Redistribution Committee has a map drawn showing proposed new divisional boundaries.

Factors taken into account include:

- > the quota
- > community of interest
- > geographical features
- > means of communication and travel.

During a redistribution, maps are put on display for public comment and people may object to the proposed boundaries.

Any written objections and comments made by the public along with evidence presented at public inquiries must be considered by an augmented Electoral Commission. When the boundaries are finally decided by the augmented Electoral Commission, new maps are prepared.

The final decision of the augmented Electoral Commission cannot be appealed.

Electorate issues

Electorate name	Newspaper name	Date	Issue	Arguments for and against

Voting issues survey

Student name/s: _____

Place, date and time of interview: _____

Interviewee number: _____

The respondent

Gender (circle): M F

Age group: 18–25 26–35 36–45

46–55 56–65 66–75 75+

Occupation: _____

Questions

1 The following issues have been nominated by our class as important issues that affect the way people vote. Could you please indicate their importance to you by placing a number from 1 (for very important) to 5 (for unimportant) next to each issue.

Issues

- ☐ Health ☐ Education
- ☐ Economic issues (such as interest rates)
- ☐ Immigration issues ☐ Employment

2 What other issues would you regard as important in influencing the way you vote?

3 Would you describe yourself as generally interested in community affairs?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Thank you for participating in our research.

Student name/s: _____

Place, date and time of interview: _____

Interviewee number: _____

The respondent

Gender (circle): M F

Age group: 18–25 26–35 36–45

46–55 56–65 66–75 75+

Occupation: _____

Questions

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Issues

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- ☐ Immigration issues ☐ Employment

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3 Would you describe yourself as generally interested in community affairs?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Thank you for participating in our research.

TOPICS AND INVESTIGATIONS

The voice of a vote in a world of change

During the 20th century vast changes occurred in attitudes towards human rights – the right to equality for all citizens and the right of nations to determine their own futures.

At the turn of the 20th century Australia regarded itself as a ‘white’ society and ignored the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the development of its Constitution. At the same time in the international arena, many African, Pacific and Asian nations were ruled by European nations which denied citizens’ rights in their colonial possessions.

Over the course of the 20th century most of these European colonies gained their independence. An example close to Australia was the former Portuguese colony of East Timor. After centuries of colonial rule the Portuguese government finally left East Timor in 1975.

The voice of a vote in a world of change explores the importance of the democratic vote.

The topic contains two investigations:

How did Indigenous Australians achieve civic rights?

How did East Timor take the first steps to democracy?

Introductory activity

Explain to students that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was drawn up after World War II when there was international horror at the gross abuses of human rights under Nazism as well as concern for the future of former European colonies seeking independence and self-determination. Australia was one of the founding members of the United Nations, and one of the original signatories to the Declaration.

The Declaration is available on the United Nations website www.un.org/en.

Provide students with a copy of the Declaration either in print or online.

Have all students read the preamble to the Declaration then meet in groups to discuss and report on the following questions:

- > What are human rights and what is ‘universal’ about them?
- > What is the purpose of the Declaration, as outlined in the preamble?
- > The preamble introduces the words ‘dignity’, ‘justice’ and ‘equality’. What do these three words signify in your own lives?

- > What are our responsibilities towards our rights? Is this the same as our responsibilities towards the rights of others?
- > How can we make sure our rights are respected?

Divide the listed rights in the Declaration among groups in the class. (There are 30 rights so each group could look at four or five of these.) Students should prepare a brief presentation for the rest of the class that includes:

- > an explanation of the meaning of these rights
- > examples of how these rights are upheld (or otherwise) in Australia (for example through universal suffrage or anti-discrimination laws)
- > examples of how these rights are upheld or otherwise in relation to global or international issues that they know about. (This might include global issues such as refugees, as well as issues in particular countries.)

Student groups could use the results of the class discussion to develop a working definition of human rights with an explanation of key examples of these rights.

Investigation

How did Indigenous Australians achieve civic rights?

RECOMMENDED LEVELS

UPPER SECONDARY

MIDDLE SECONDARY

LOWER SECONDARY

UPPER PRIMARY

The 1967 referendum is often considered as a symbolic acceptance of Indigenous Australians as equal citizens with non-Indigenous Australians. The referendum of 1967 gave the Commonwealth Government power to make laws for Indigenous Australians, and abolished a constitutional provision that said that they were not to be counted in the census.

However, advances in gaining the right and responsibility to vote for Indigenous Australians were made well before, and after, this historic date. In 1962 the *Commonwealth Electoral Act* was amended to provide that Indigenous Australians could enrol to vote in federal elections if they wished. Then, in 1984 compulsory enrolment and voting for Indigenous Australians came into effect.

In this investigation students engage in research about Indigenous Australians' civic rights. They also explore the importance of referendums in giving Australians a voice in creating political change.

THE INVESTIGATION AT A GLANCE

Background briefings for teacher reference	Australian Electoral Commission; Constitution; Democracy; Indigenous Australians' Rights; Referendum; Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Suggested classroom teaching time	Activity 1: A question of equal citizenship (80 minutes) Activity 2: How referendums work (80 minutes) Activity 3: An historic vote (80 minutes)
Indicators of student achievement	Understand the role of constitutional change in a democracy Understand the importance of equality in a democracy Describe the evolution of political rights for Indigenous Australians Explain the way the Australian Constitution can be changed by a referendum



Fig 29: Indigenous Australians gained the right to vote in Commonwealth elections in 1962. Compulsory enrolment and voting for Indigenous Australians came into effect in 1984

ACTIVITY 1

A question of equal citizenship

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- What civil and political rights did Indigenous Australians have before 1967?
- What key events served to change opinions about civil and political rights for Indigenous Australians?
- Why did Indigenous Australians seek to change the Australian Constitution?

RESOURCES

- **BLM 1** Commonwealth Laws against Aborigines
- The following are available from the AEC website:

Australian Electoral History:

- **Indigenous Australians and the Vote**
- **Electoral Milestones: Timeline for Indigenous Australians**
- **History of the Indigenous Vote**
- Australia's Democracy: A Short History, by John Hirst, Curriculum Corporation, Melbourne, 2002
- **Animation History of Voting**
- **Interactive The History of Voting Game**



Gathering information

Provide students with a copy of **BLM 1**. Explain that this was produced by the Aboriginal–Australian Fellowship to encourage people to sign a petition to present to the Federal Government requesting it to conduct a referendum. This was one of 94 petitions presented to the Federal Government in the 10 years prior to the 1967 referendum.

Identifying and analysing

Discuss the following questions with students:

- > What action does the writer of the petition want the readers to take?
- > What problems does the writer have with sections 51 and 127 of the Australian Constitution?

- > Why might there be reference to the United Nations in this document?
- > What is meant in this document by the term 'equal citizenship'?

Ask students to record their impressions of the document, as well as any questions they might have. These will be consulted at the conclusion of this activity.

Divide students into pairs or small groups to research the following historical circumstances and events:

- > Indigenous Australians' voting rights pre-1901
- > The *Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902*
- > State and territory control of Indigenous Australians 1901–1967
- > The Day of Mourning 1938
- > Indigenous Australians' service in World War II and voting rights 1946
- > The right to vote 1962
- > The Freedom Rides 1965
- > The Wave Hill strike 1966
- > Compulsory enrolment and voting 1984.



Fig 30: Campaigning for Indigenous Australians' rights. The Freedom Rides, 1965

The resources listed above can be supplemented by online and library resources. Ask students to consider the following questions in their research:

- > What was the nature of the inequalities suffered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?
- > How are these compatible with students' understandings of human rights and citizenship rights?
- > How would these inequalities be affected by the changes to the Constitution proposed in the 1967 referendum?

Presenting findings

Have students share their research findings with the class and discuss the rights that Indigenous Australians sought in the period up until the 1967 referendum and the ways that Indigenous Australians' rights differed from those of other Australians.

Ask students to refer again to **BLM 1**.

Using the information gathered through their research, as well as their impressions of the petition, ask students to write an explanation that would help an uninformed Australian to decide whether or not to sign this petition.

FROM THE MARGIN

DIRECT DEMOCRACY

In ancient Athens the power to make laws was given to citizens (native-born free-men, which excluded women, slaves and migrants) who directly decided on the laws governing their city state.

ACTIVITY 2

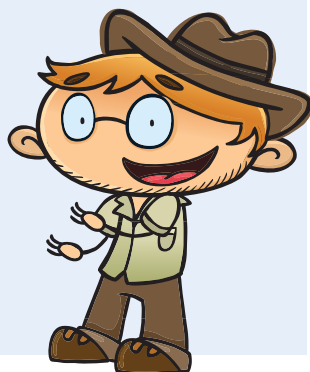
How referendums work

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- How does the Australian Constitution provide for altering the words of the Constitution?
- What role does the Commonwealth Parliament play in altering the Australian Constitution?
- What role does the Australian Electoral Commission perform?
- Who votes in referendums?

RESOURCES

- **BLM 2** The Australian Constitution – alteration process
- **Referendums**
- **Interactive Quiz 1 – Referendums** – Do you get it?



FROM THE MARGIN

VOTING DAYS

A House of Representatives election must be held every three years. By law, elections for the Commonwealth Parliament are held on a Saturday, while in the United States and the United Kingdom elections are held on weekdays and voting is not compulsory.

Gathering information

Discuss with students why the Australian Constitution (written before 1900) might need to be altered. What changes have occurred in Australian society that would not have been foreseen by those who wrote the Constitution?

Ask students in groups to use the resources listed above to research one or more of the following about the referendum process and its significance.

The areas of research are:

- > the Australian Constitution provisions in section 128 (which include the role of the Parliament and the requirement of a double majority for change to occur)
- > the role of the AEC in conducting referendums
- > voter requirements
- > the significance of referendums in changing the Australian Constitution
- > the success of the referendum process in changing the Constitution.

Have students report back on their findings to their main groups.

Identifying and analysing

After students have presented their research to their groups, ask the groups to suggest and record:

- > the reasons why Constitutional change appears difficult
- > the nature of the referendum questions that have been passed
- > the sorts of changes to the Constitution and powers of government that have resulted from successful referendums
- > the ways in which the 1967 referendum was different from other referendums held since federation.

Presenting findings

Instruct the student groups to prepare an artefact entitled *The Referendum Process: A Voter's Guide* in a format of their choice. Remind the groups to include qualifications for voting in referendums.

Alternative or additional presentations could consider the following topics:

- > Changing the Australian Constitution: Some examples of success stories
- > Changing the Australian Constitution: What issues have been most important?

ACTIVITY 3

An historic vote

FOCUS QUESTIONS

How was the 'Yes' case put to voters?
Why did the results of the referendum differ across States?
What was the significance of the referendum to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders?

RESOURCES

- **BLM 3** The case in favour
- **Referendums**
- Australian Biography: www.australianbiography.gov.au/ (Biographies of activists for Indigenous Australians' rights including Charles Perkins, Neville Bonner, Faith Bandler)
- Human Rights Commission: www.humanrights.gov.au
- **Animation History of Voting**
- **Interactive The History of Voting Game**



Fig 31: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights activist, Faith Bandler

Gathering information

Why vote 'Yes'?

Provide students with a copy of **BLM 3**.

Divide students into groups to analyse the impact of each of these sources on Australian voters. The following questions will direct their discussion:

- > How might people have responded to sources 1, 2 and 3?
- > What messages are contained in the song and the poster? How might they have appealed to voters?

Ask students to consider the arguments used in the official 'Yes' case. How might these have appealed to voters?

Unlike in other referendums, there was no official 'No' case. How might this have influenced voters?

What were the results?

Groups should use the AEC website to look at the results of the 1967 referendum. Ask students to graph the results by state and territory.

Ask them to identify electorates or states and territories where there were high 'Yes' votes and high 'No' votes, and to offer explanations for these differences.

What was the significance to the campaign's leaders?

Next have student groups analyse the significance of the referendum to those who led the campaign. Use online resources to view interviews with Chicka Dixon, Charles Perkins and Faith Bandler, as well as other print sources.

Identifying and analysing

Have student groups examine their findings.

In relation to **BLM 3** ask students to consider the arguments used in the official 'Yes' case? How do these compare with their research in Activity 1, and their 'advice to uninformed Australians'?

- > What sorts of appeals were made to the Australian voters and how might Australians respond to them today?
- > What would have been the impact on voters of the absence of an official 'No' case?

In relation to the referendum results discuss with students:

- > What was the pattern of results across Australia?
- > Which electorates had high levels of 'Yes' votes? What are the characteristics of these electorates?
- > Which electorates had high levels of 'No' votes? What might account for this?

In relation to the views of the leaders of the campaign, discuss with students:

- > What were the key issues for them in the 1967 referendum?
- > How was the 1967 referendum significant?
- > What other issues do they identify as being important for Indigenous Australians to achieve equality in Australia?

Presenting findings

Have students write an informative feature article for a general audience which analyses the significance of the 1967 referendum. Their article should include:

- > an appropriate heading
- > background information on Indigenous Australians' civil and political rights until the 1960s
- > information on the referendum process
- > analysis of the results
- > Indigenous Australians' perspectives including some key quotes
- > appropriate charts, diagrams, illustrations and photographs
- > a personal reflection on the issues
- > a bibliography of sources used.

Going further

Citizenship rights and the electoral process

Ask students to research one or more significant issues concerning Indigenous Australians' civil and political rights since 1967. These could include:

- > Land Rights issues (Mabo and Wik and contemporary cases)
- > Stolen Generations
- > Aboriginal deaths in custody
- > Reconciliation
- > Supporting informed voting among Indigenous Australians – post 1984.

Have students focus on:

- > the ways that elected parliaments have responded to these issues
- > the extent to which these issues have been resolved.

As a starting point, students could look at the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity website: www.hreoc.gov.au.

Successful referendums

Ask students to research another of the referendums using the material available on the AEC website, as well as online and library materials (the most contentious recent referendum is the Republic referendum).

The following questions could frame their research:

- > What changes were being sought to the Constitution?
- > What were the key arguments in the 'Yes' and 'No' cases?
- > What do you think of these arguments?
- > What were the views of the media at the time (if appropriate)?
- > What were the patterns of voting contained in the results – Australia-wide, by state and territory, and in individual electorates?

FROM THE MARGIN

MOBILE POLLING

Geographic remoteness is no barrier to helping electors cast their vote in a federal election. In the 2013 federal election, the AEC used road, air and sea transport to visit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their outstations, pastoral properties, small towns, tourist resorts and mine sites. A number of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were recruited to identify, interpret for and assist with the special needs of electors.



Fig 32: Australian citizens have an obligation to vote – wherever they may be

Investigation

How did East Timor take the first steps to democracy?

RECOMMENDED LEVELS

UPPER SECONDARY

MIDDLE SECONDARY

LOWER SECONDARY

UPPER PRIMARY

East Timor is one of Australia's nearest neighbours but its experience of democracy could not be more different. After centuries of Portuguese colonial rule and 25 years of Indonesian occupation the East Timorese people were finally granted the opportunity to decide their own future through a democratic vote in a 'popular consultation'. In subsequent elections in 2001 and 2002 they voted for a representative assembly and president.

In this investigation students will focus on the significance of the vote in achieving momentous change – the status of an independent sovereign nation in East Timor, the first democratic nation of the 21st century. They will research the background to East Timorese independence and consider the roles undertaken by Australians through the United Nations. In particular, they will consider the role of the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) in assisting East Timor's progress towards democratic government.

THE INVESTIGATION AT A GLANCE

Background briefings for teacher reference	Australian Electoral Commission; Democracy; International assistance – East Timor; Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Suggested classroom teaching time	Activity 1: A promise of democracy (80 minutes) Activity 2: International response (120 minutes) Activity 3: Introducing democracy: The role of the AEC (80 minutes)
Indicators of student achievement	Describe the situation in East Timor under Portuguese and Indonesian rule Explain the reasons for Australian and United Nations involvement in East Timor after 1975 Examine East Timor's progress towards democratic government and the AEC's role in that process
Related articles in Discovering Democracy Australian Reader Upper Secondary Collection	People Make Politics: Fighting for a Cause Shifting Boundaries



Fig 33: The Asia-Pacific region

ACTIVITY 1

A promise of democracy

FOCUS QUESTIONS

What was East Timor like under Portuguese and Indonesian rule?

What roles did the East Timorese resistance play in drawing world attention to the plight of East Timorese?

How have Australians been involved in East Timor?

RESOURCES

- **BLM 4** East Timor under Portuguese and Indonesian rule
- BBC News: www.bbc.co.uk/news (Asia)
- US Department of State: www.state.gov (Countries and Regions>East Asia and the Pacific>Countries and other areas>Timor-Leste)
- Nobel Prize: www.nobelprize.org
- Australian War Memorial: www.awm.gov.au (Collections>Collections search>Type in key words such as 'Sparrow Force' or 'Balibo Five')

Gathering information

Read through **BLM 4** with students. Explain that they will work in groups to further research one of the aspects of East Timorese history under the headings: Portuguese rule, Indonesian occupation, East Timorese resistance, Australian contact with East Timor.

Divide the class into small groups to research one of the key events, the results of which they will bring back to the class for explanation and discussion. Each group must provide one or more images from their research for this discussion. The resource list is a basic list of websites that can be used. Encourage students to use search engines and library resources to find further material.

Emphasise that students maintain a bibliography of resources while they are completing this research.

Identifying and analysing

After students have had an opportunity to conduct some research, bring them together to report their findings to the class, show images they have found and build a timeline of events. This could be done as a PowerPoint™ presentation, constructed on the board or drawn on a large sheet of poster paper.

Conduct a class discussion on the following:

- > What was the nature of Portuguese colonial rule?
- > What impact did Australian experiences with the East Timorese in World War II have on Australian attitudes to East Timor?
- > Why did Indonesia invade East Timor in 1975?
- > How significant was the Balibo Five incident in Indonesian–Australian relationships?

- > Why do you think Australia was the only country to recognise the Indonesian occupation?
- > What roles did key East Timorese leaders play in drawing attention to the plight of the East Timorese?

Presenting findings

Have student groups use their research findings to produce three or four slides or screens that will become part of the timeline. Each group should use key images, and brief explanations of events.

Have a class presentation where each group speaks to and explains their slides.

ACTIVITY 2

International response

FOCUS QUESTIONS

What was the purpose of the United Nations missions in East Timor?

How were Australians involved in the United Nations operations in East Timor?

What were the results of the East Timorese elections?

How did the people of East Timor respond?

RESOURCES

- **BLM 5** The United Nations in East Timor
- Australian War Memorial: www.awm.gov.au (Collections>Collections search>Type in key words such as 'INTERFET')
- East and Southeast Asia: An Annotated Directory of Internet Resources:
 - United Nations: www.un.org
 - Inside Indonesia: www.insideindonesia.org (Past Editions>Edition 61, Jan–March 2000 (East Timor special))
 - *East Timor: Birth of a Nation*: www.abc.net.au/etimor/default.htm
 - *Answered by Fire*: Online at www.youtube.com

Gathering information

Read through **BLM 5** with students. Discuss with students:

- > Why might East Timor need a high level of international support?
- > What particular needs might the people of East Timor have?
- > Why might Australia be involved in these United Nations missions?

Divide the class into groups to represent the United Nations missions outlined: UNAMET, INTERFET, UNTAET, UNMISET and UNMIT. Within their groups students will be responsible for:

- > outlining the aims of this mission
- > analysing Australian contributions to each of these missions
- > explaining the results of these missions, including election results where appropriate.

Select one or two key primary or secondary sources that explain the mission from the point of view of the East Timorese or Australian participants. These could be in the form of photographs (such as INTERFET photographs from the Australian War Memorial website), newspaper articles from the Internet or reports from East Timorese leaders.

Explain to students that they can find a range of materials, including lists of countries involved in these missions, photographs and media reports from the United Nations website. Have students contribute to a media display of newspaper articles about current issues and events.

Use audiovisual material to provide further information to students. The following are recommended:

Answered by Fire is a two-part mini-series based on the 1999 East Timor conflicts that led to East Timor's independence. Available on DVD or online at: www.youtube.com

East Timor: Birth of a Nation – This can be viewed online at www.abc.net.au/etimor/



Fig 34: Australian soldiers as part of INTERFET, about to undertake a patrol of an area between Suai and Matai, East Timor

Identifying and analysing

Allow students two or three lessons to research. Have each group report on their findings after that time. Use student reports to discuss effective ways of presenting information.

Discuss the focus questions at the beginning of this activity as well as:

- > How important was democracy to the East Timorese?
- > What difficulties are they encountering on the path to democracy?
- > What kinds of support do countries with no experience of democracy need?
- > What light can the experience of democracy in East Timor throw on Australian democracy?

Presenting findings

Have students present their findings in the form of a press conference to the class. (This could be preceded by a short videotape of a press conference as an example.)

Set up the classroom to represent a press conference: each group takes turns in presenting reports and the rest of the class members are the reporters. A volunteer should mediate the session and allocate questions from the reporters to the panel members.

Each of the groups could decide on a particular angle for their press conference such as the announcement of election results or the deployment of Australian troops. Other group members could present other aspects based on their research findings – including visual resources on a PowerPoint™ presentation.

The reporters should use the research questions to ask questions of the panel and take notes on their answers.

Have students use the material gained in this session to write a newspaper article about one of the issues discussed in the press conference.

ACTIVITY 3

Introducing democracy: The role of the AEC

FOCUS QUESTIONS

What was the AEC's role in East Timor?

What are the challenges involved in establishing democratic institutions in a country that has had no experience of democracy?

What government and electoral systems did the East Timorese adopt?

RESOURCES

- **BLM 6** Introducing democracy: The role of the AEC in East Timor
- **www.dfat.gov.au** (Countries and regions>Timor-Leste)
- Government of Timor-Leste: **timor-leste.gov**
- **AEC International Electoral Services**
- **Electoral Procedures**

Gathering information

Provide students with a copy of **BLM 6**.

Divide the class into groups and ask them to research the following:

- > What processes do people need to understand to conduct elections?
- > What skills and resources would people need to conduct democratic elections from scratch?
- > What information would be needed by East Timorese citizens to participate in democratic elections?
- > What institutions and procedures would need to be put into place to implement the requirements as outlined in the East Timorese Constitution?



Fig 35: Administering an election according to democratic ideals is crucial to elector confidence

Identifying and analysing

Discuss with students the notion of 'sustainable government':

- > What does this mean and what role did the AEC play in supporting it?
- > In what ways are elections a 'complex logistical exercise'?
- > What knowledge and skills and resources should an Electoral Administrators Course contain?
- > What sort of education program is needed to inform the public about their rights and responsibilities as outlined in the East Timorese Constitution?

Presenting findings

Have students complete one of the following scenarios:

Imagine you were developing a public education campaign to inform the East Timorese about democratic electoral processes and their rights and responsibilities in elections. Establish a series of brief key messages that would become the focus of your education campaign. Produce a poster or the text of a radio or television advertisement that will explain the key messages.

Using the extract from the East Timorese Constitution, write a report to the East Timorese minister responsible for elections. Include recommendations about:

- > the role of an electoral administration body
- > the knowledge and skills needed by people to be employed by this body
- > the public education that needs to be implemented.

Going further

Getting young Australians to enrol to vote

Students should now be familiar with the importance of the vote as an instrument of change. Discuss with them the political symbolism attached to voting, such as full membership of a community, equality, autonomy, freedom and responsive government. They should also know about different types of campaigns that encourage people to vote, and become informed voters.

Although it is compulsory for eligible citizens to enrol to vote in Australia, there is concern about low enrolment rates among young Australians. The Australian Electoral Commission estimated that for the 2004 election approximately 25% of eligible 18-year-old Australians were not enrolled to vote. Furthermore, although many young people may enrol when they are eligible, they are often highly mobile and fail to keep their enrolment current when they change their address.

At 30 September 2010, the AEC estimated that approximately 33% of eligible 18 year olds were not enrolled, an increase of 8%.

In response, the Australian Electoral Commission has created initiatives to encourage young people to enrol.

FROM THE MARGIN

ENROLLING AT YOUR ADDRESS

A person who has resided at an address continuously for more than one month is obliged to be enrolled at that address for an election.
(Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, section 99)

The Campaign – Enrolment Week

Provide students with **BLM 7** and **BLM 8**. Draw students' attention to **BLM 7** pointing out that the AEC has targeted specific youth events, but has not stated what form its message will take.

Have students work in groups of five to organise a campaign encouraging enrolment among young Australians. This should include all youth, as well as young people not in the education system. Ensure that each group member has individual responsibility for one of the sets of data from **BLM 8**. Their understanding of the data should be recorded on a 'plus, minus and interesting' chart and be communicated to the rest of the group.

Each group must produce a 'campaign centrepiece' encouraging young people to enrol to vote. This can take the form of a video, web page, billboard or television, radio or print advertisement. Teachers may choose to stop at the storyboard stage, or they may have student groups produce their artefacts. Each group's campaign should clearly demonstrate that they used information from **BLMs 7** and **8**.

Groups should develop their main message or messages using findings from the data (**BLM 7**) and the information from the AEC. They should also decide on the format of the campaign, and be aware that their target audience (young people) is diverse, and that their campaign and message should reflect this diversity (rural/metropolitan, gender, cultural background and socioeconomic status).

Allow students to present their findings at a storyboard or draft stage for class feedback, before going into full production. Depending on the formats chosen by the student groups, the cooperation of specialist teachers may be advisable. This activity may be integrated with Media, Technology or Communications learning areas. The AEC is most interested in student ideas and invites students to send in their findings and campaign suggestions.

Further research can be encouraged. Students may choose to examine the whole of the Youth Electoral Study at:

www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/Publications/youth_study/index.htm or make comparisons with young people's enrolment in comparable democracies, such as the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.

Commonwealth Laws against Aborigines

Petitioning for
constitutional change

**COMMONWEALTH LAWS
AGAINST ABORIGINES**

The Commonwealth Constitution says the Federal Parliament can make laws for
**"the people of any race
 OTHER THAN THE ABORIGINAL RACE in any State"**
(Section 51, Clause xxvi)

and

**"in reckoning the numbers of people . . .
 ABORIGINAL NATIVES SHALL NOT BE COUNTED"**
(Section 127).

EVERY STATE HAS DIFFERENT LAWS FOR ABORIGINES

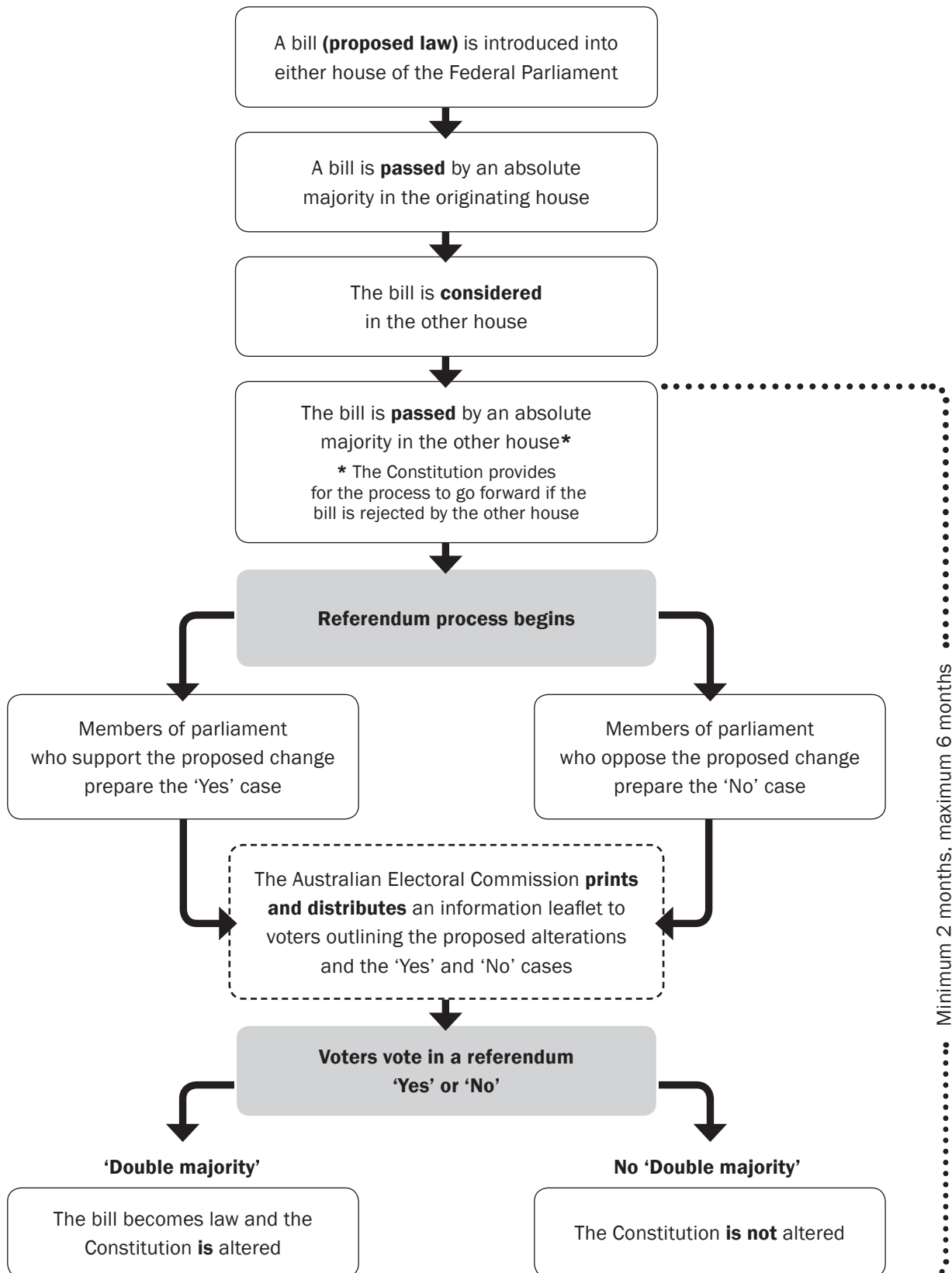
- Federal Parliament has to justify these laws to public opinion at home and abroad, and to the United Nations.
- Since N.S.W. this year ended discrimination in our State Laws, Aborigines have equal rights here but not if they travel interstate.
- CENSUS (Section 127) implies that Aborigines are not worth counting, and this is an insult to the original Australians.

***Please Sign the National Petition
 for Equal Citizenship for Aborigines***

Authorised by the Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship, G.P.O. Box 2672, Sydney

Witton Press, 12 Little Regent Street, Sydney

The Australian Constitution – alteration process



The case in favour

SOURCE 1

Vote 'Yes'

Vote 'Yes' for Aborigines, they want to be Australians too

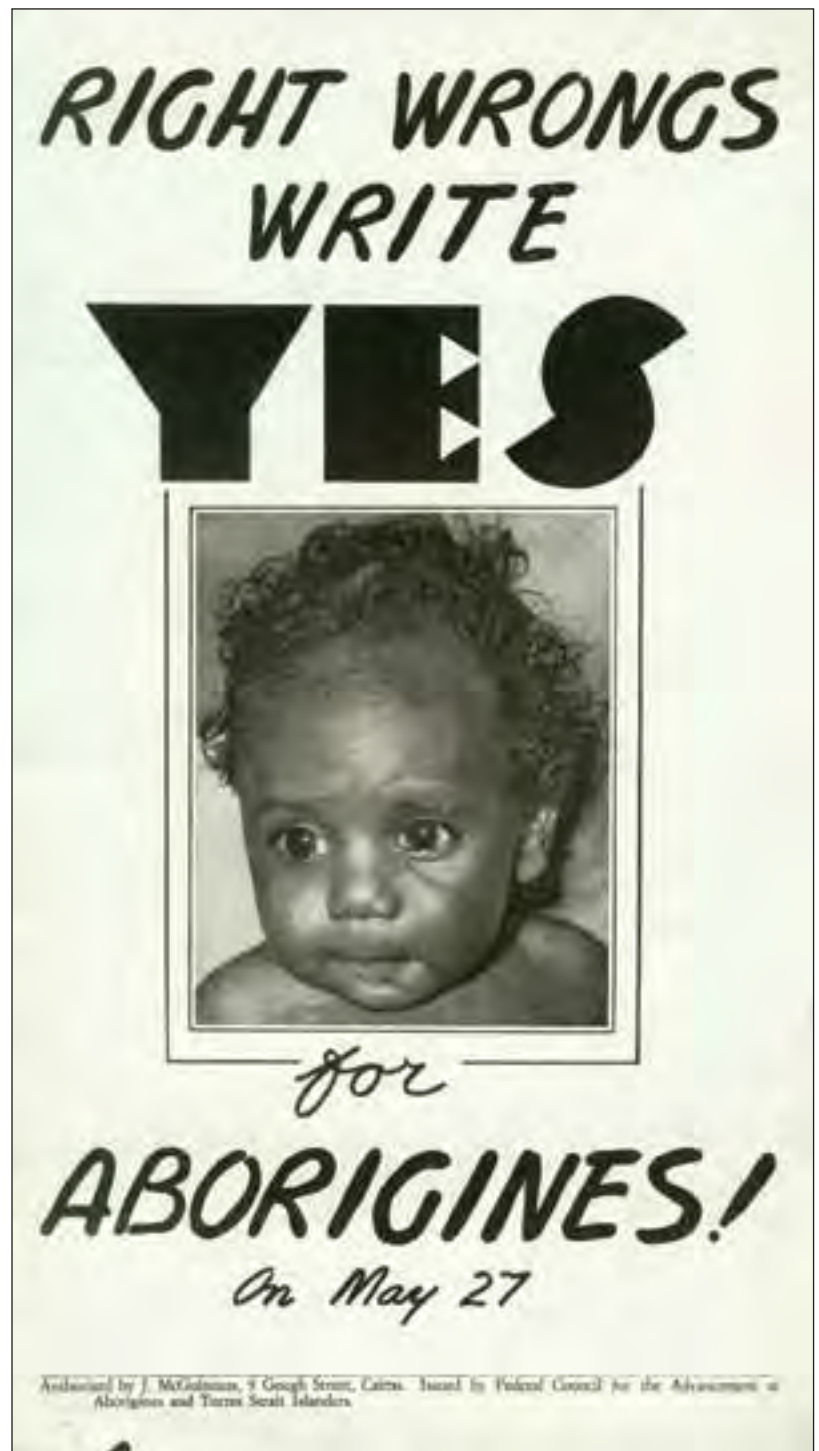
Vote 'Yes' to give them rights and freedoms like me and you

Vote 'Yes' for Aborigines, all parties say they think you should

Vote 'Yes' and show the world the true Australian brotherhood.

Words of a song sent by the Aboriginal Rights 'Vote Yes' Committee to radio stations, and *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 May 1967. (Source: The 1967 Aborigines Referendum, Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Year Book Australia* 2004)

SOURCE 2



Campaigning for constitutional change in the 1967 referendum

The case in favour

SOURCE 3

CONSTITUTION ALTERATION (ABORIGINALS) 1967

Argument in favour of the proposed law

The case for YES

The proposed alteration of this section will do two things. **First, it will remove words from our Constitution that many people think are discriminatory against the Aboriginal people.**

Second, it will make it possible for the Commonwealth Parliament to make special laws for the people of the Aboriginal race, wherever they may live, if the Parliament considers it necessary.

This cannot be done at present because, as the Constitution stands, the Commonwealth Parliament has no power, except in the Territories, to make laws with respect to people of the Aboriginal race as such.

...The Commonwealth's object will be to cooperate with the States to **ensure that together we act in the best interests of the Aboriginal people of Australia.**

The second proposed alteration is the **repeal** of section 127 of the Constitution.

That section reads:

'In reckoning the numbers of the people of the Commonwealth, or of a State or other part of the Commonwealth, aboriginal natives shall not be counted.'

Why was this provision included in the Constitution in 1900? Well, there were serious practical difficulties in counting the Aboriginals in those days. They were dispersed, and nomadic. Communications in inland Australia were poor, and frequently non-existent. Today the situation is very different and counting is practicable.

Our personal sense of justice, our commonsense, and our international reputation in a world in which racial issues are being highlighted every day, require that we get rid of this outmoded provision.

Its modern absurdity is made clear when we point out that for some years now Aboriginals have been entitled to enrol for, and vote at, federal elections. Yet section 127 prevents them from being reckoned as 'people' for the purpose of calculating our population, even for electoral purposes!

The simple truth is that section 127 is completely out of harmony with our national attitudes and modern thinking. It has no place in our Constitution in this age.

All political parties represented in the Commonwealth Parliament support these proposals ...

We urge you to vote YES to both our proposals as to Aboriginals by writing the word YES in the square on the ballot paper.

East Timor under Portuguese and Indonesian rule

1. PORTUGUESE RULE

The Portuguese presence in Timor began in the 16th century. It became a colony in 1702 with the arrival of the first governor from Lisbon. In the 18th century, the Netherlands gained a foothold in the western half of the island, and was formally granted West Timor in 1859 through the Treaty of Lisbon. After World War II, the Dutch granted independence to its former colonies and West Timor became part of Indonesia.

In 1974, after a coup which overthrew its fascist dictatorship, Portugal granted East

Timor the right to self-determination. Elections were held in March 1975. While the Apodeti Party in East Timor supported integration with Indonesia, it was the Fretlin (Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor) which won the election. As the Portuguese withdrew, Indonesia made no secret of its plan to invade East Timor. Xavier de Amaral, the first president and president of Fretlin, declared independence on 28 November 1975, hoping that Indonesia would not invade a sovereign state.



The Asia-Pacific region

2. INDONESIAN OCCUPATION

Nine days later, on 7 December 1975, Indonesia launched a combined military, naval and airborne invasion of East Timor. President Suharto of Indonesia subsequently claimed East Timor as Indonesia's 27th province in 1976.

Over the next 24 years East Timor was under military occupation. A report presented to the United Nations in 2006 estimated that from a population of 750 000, about 183 000 East Timorese were killed or died as a result of deliberate starvation between 1975 and 1999. In 1991, the massacre of 200 unarmed civilians at the Santa Cruz Cemetery in Dili and the killings and repression that followed focused international attention on East Timor.



East Timorese refugees arrive in Australia in 1975

In 1998 President Suharto was forced to resign. His successor, Dr BJ Habibie, in the midst of an economic crisis and in need of international support, proposed limited autonomy for East Timor within Indonesia. This resulted in a set of agreements between Indonesia and Portugal, signed in New York on 5 May 1999, entrusting the Secretary-General of the United Nations with organising and conducting a 'popular consultation' in order to determine whether the East Timorese people accepted or rejected a special autonomy for East Timor within the Republic of Indonesia.

East Timor under Portuguese and Indonesian rule

3. EAST TIMORESE RESISTANCE

Fretlin and the resistance army Falintil (Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor) opposed Indonesian occupation and engaged in an ongoing guerrilla war.

Xanana Gusmão, the Fretlin leader, was arrested in 1992 and sentenced to life imprisonment in Indonesia.

The East Timorese Catholic Church, under Bishop Carlos Filipe Belo, after 1983 spoke out against human rights abuses.

Jose Ramos-Horta left East Timor shortly before the Indonesian invasion to bring the country's plight to the rest of the world. He was involved in the passing of a dozen United Nations resolutions on East Timor.

In 1996, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded jointly to José Ramos-Horta and Bishop Belo.



Nobel Laureate Bishop Carlos Belo with his congregation on Christmas Eve, 1999

4. AUSTRALIAN CONTACT WITH EAST TIMOR

Australian troops known as 'Sparrow Force' fought the Japanese in East Timor during World War II, 1942–1945. Sparrow Force was supported by the Timorese population – around 70 000 of whom were killed.

In 1975, five reporters working for Channel 9 and Channel 7 in Australia were killed during Indonesian military incursions into the town of Balibo in East Timor. They came to be known as the Balibo Five.

Australia recognised the Indonesian claim to East Timor in 1978, the only country in the world to do so.

Many East Timorese sought asylum in Australia during the period of Indonesian rule.



Australian Troops in East Timor during the World War II

The United Nations in East Timor



A hard-won right: East Timorese waiting to vote in the 2001 elections

The United Nations (UN) set up UNAMET (United Nations Mission in East Timor) to organise and conduct the 'popular consultation' in 1999. The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) provided significant support to this operation, both in the planning and implementation. Timorese residents in Australia also voted. The result of the 'popular consultation' was overwhelming rejection of the proposed status of autonomy in favour of beginning a process of transition towards independence. Although voting was not compulsory, there was a very high voter turnout and 78.5% voted in favour of independence.



Australian soldiers trying to stop the violence that erupted after the 'popular consultation' vote

During and after the vote a period of great unrest occurred, including widespread murder, violence, arson and looting by pro-integration militias, at times with the support of elements of the Indonesian security forces. United Nations personnel were evacuated during the violence that followed the vote.

In view of the urgent situation, the United Nations authorised an international peacekeeping force, led by Australia. INTERFET (International Force East Timor) comprised 11 000 troops, 5 000 of them from Australia. The force, commanded by Major-General Peter Cosgrove arrived in Dili on 20 September 1999 and oversaw the withdrawal of Indonesian troops, disarming of pro-Indonesian militia and the return of refugees from West Timor.

In October the United Nations authorised the UNTAET (United Nations Transitional Authority in East Timor). This became the virtual administration of East Timor and guided East Timor to independent nationhood. The AEC, in collaboration with the UN, undertook a major program of capacity building to enhance the ability of the East Timorese to organise their own elections after independence.

The UN recognised at an early stage that an independent electoral management body was required in East Timor in order to conduct elections. At the same time UNTAET also announced the establishment of an Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), which would have exclusive electoral authority. The IEC aimed to ensure that the 2001 and 2002 elections were conducted fairly and democratically. The Australian Electoral Commission worked as part of the IEC.

In 2002 a further mission was set up by the United Nations. Called UNMISSET (United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor), it was established to provide assistance to core administrative structures critical to the viability and political stability of East Timor, to provide interim law enforcement and public security and to assist in developing the East Timor Police Service, and to contribute to the maintenance of the new country's external and internal security. Australia contributed civilian and military police to this mission.

As a result of continued civil unrest, in 2006, the United Nations established UNMIT (United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste). This mission is ongoing at the time of writing.

Introducing democracy – the role of the AEC in East Timor

‘An election is actually the most complex logistical operation which a country ever faces in peacetime because you are taking the entire adult population in the country and putting them through the process (of voting) in a single day.’

Michael Maley, AEC and also UN-appointed Commissioner of the Independent Electoral Commission, East Timor, established by UNTAET.



Voter information, East Timor elections



Michael Maley, UN-appointed Commissioner of the Independent Electoral Commission, East Timor, 2001



East Timorese being trained to administer elections

In East Timor, the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) provided massive support for the United Nations (UN) organisation of the 1999 ‘popular consultation’, including facilitating the vote for East Timorese resident in Australia and organising participation in elections in Melbourne, Sydney, Perth and Darwin. In 2001 and 2002, they supported the elections held for the new national assembly and the presidential election.

A significant challenge for East Timor, a country with no experience of democracy, was addressed by the AEC – that of providing local people with the knowledge, skills and resources in the area of electoral administration. This would allow East Timorese to organise and conduct free and fair elections so that democracy could be sustained in the absence of international assistance.

As part of its role in the Independent Electoral Commission, the AEC developed and delivered electoral education including the East Timor Electoral Administrators Course in the weeks leading up to the 30 August 2001 Constituent Assembly elections. The course provided a comprehensive introduction to every aspect of the electoral process that the East Timorese would be involved in and was instrumental in ensuring the success of those elections.

In 2002 the East Timorese adopted a Constitution for the new government mandating the importance of democratic elections.

Introducing democracy – the role of the AEC in East Timor

Extract from East Timor Constitution

Section 65

(Elections)

- 1 Elected organs of sovereignty and of local government shall be chosen by free, direct, secret, personal and regular universal suffrage.
- 2 Registration of voters shall be compulsory and officially initiated, single and universal, to be updated for each election.
- 3 Electoral campaigns shall be governed in accordance with the following principles:
 - a Freedom to canvass;
 - b Equality of opportunity and treatment for all candidacies;
 - c Impartiality towards candidacies on the part of public bodies;
 - d Transparency and supervision of electoral expenses.
- 4 Conversion of the votes into mandates shall observe the principle of proportional representation.
- 5 The electoral process shall be regulated by law.
- 6 Supervision of voters' registration and electoral acts shall be incumbent upon an independent organ, the competences, composition, organisation and functioning of which shall be established by law.

(Source: East Timor Constitution, decreed 22 March 2002)



Singing the registration song. Participants in the Electoral Administrators Course, in East Timor, demonstrate their learning through song



East Timorese election posters

AEC's Youth Enrolment Message



Background information

The Electoral Act provides for the conduct of federal elections. This means the Act provides the legal basis for the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) to conduct elections and this includes the creation and maintenance of the electoral roll. There are at present over 14 million electors on the Commonwealth electoral roll.

As the Electoral Act states, enrolling and voting are compulsory for every Australian citizen over 18 years of age. The AEC must ensure that every elector knows about and adheres to this law.

As federal elections in Australia are not held on set dates, the roll must be constantly updated in case an election is called. That means electors have two responsibilities: one, to enrol (it's the law) and two, they also have to keep their enrolment details current.

What is the AEC doing about enrolment for young people?

'O' Week

The AEC attends university campus 'O' Week activities across Australia to encourage university students to enrol to vote.

This initiative provides students with an opportunity to enrol to vote, change their address or just ask any questions about enrolling and voting.

Youth vote matters

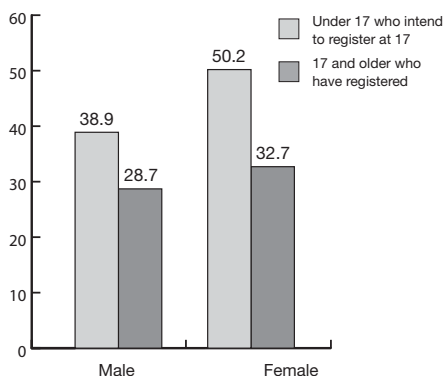
The AEC promotes its online enrolment service via a Facebook application 'Youth Votes Matter' that was launched in the lead up to the 2013 federal election.

The enrol to vote app encourages Australians, and in particular young Australians, to enrol online or update their enrolment details online and then share this with their friends and family on Facebook.

With over 12 million Australians active on Facebook, the AEC worked with Facebook and a digital agency to develop an innovative concept to connect with and engage young Australians to encourage participation in the election. Enrolling to vote can be done entirely online via a desktop, tablet or smartphone device.

Extracts from 2004 Youth Electoral Study

Figure 1: Percentage Who Have Registered, or Who Will Register on the Electoral Roll



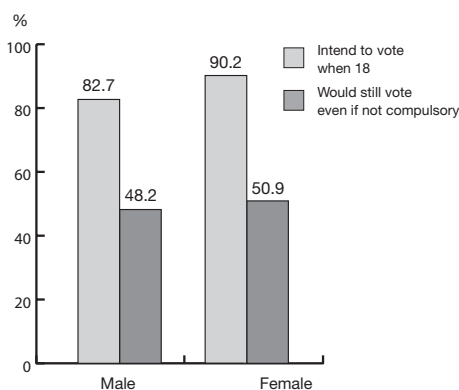
Registering on the Commonwealth electoral roll

Key Points:

- > Of the under 17 students, four out of 10 males and half of the females intended to enrol at age 17.
- > Of the 17 and over students, less than three out of 10 males and a third of the females had actually enrolled.
- > The intention to enrol for the under-17s was higher than actual enrolment for those who were 17 or older.
- > Females were higher than the male students in both intention to enrol and actual enrolment.

Awareness of enrolling at 17 is low.

Figure 2: Intend to Vote When 18, and Would Still Vote even if Non-Compulsory, by Sex



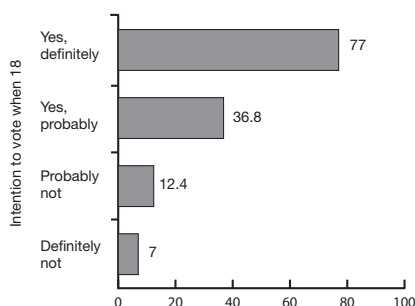
Intention to vote

The students were asked two specific questions about voting. The first was: 'Do you intend to vote in federal elections after you reach 18?' The results for all students indicate that the vast majority, 87%, either 'Definitely' or 'Probably' would vote, though there were differences for males and females, with positive responses of 82.7% and 90.2% respectively.

Key Points:

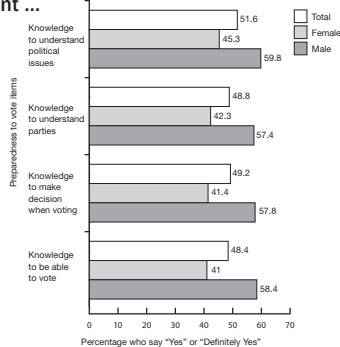
- > A little more than four out of five students say they will vote when they become 18 years old.
- > Females are more likely to say they will vote than boys.
- > Only one out of two students would vote at 18 if voting were non-compulsory.
- > Females are more likely to say they would vote, even if non-compulsory.
- > The percentage who say they would vote even when compulsory is directly related to the strength of their intention to vote at age 18.
- > Young people know that voting is compulsory at 18.

Figure 3: The Percentage Who Would Vote Even If Not Compulsory, by Intention to Vote When 18



Extracts from 2004 Youth Electoral Study

Figure 4: Students Who Think They Have Sufficient ...

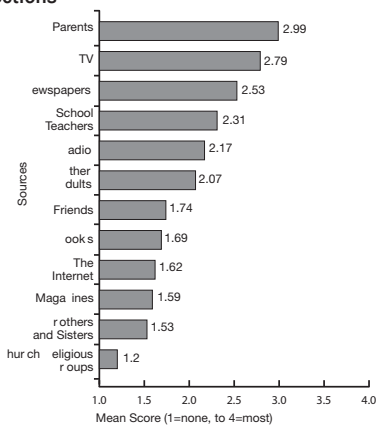


Preparedness to vote

Key Points:

- > About one in two students feel they lack the knowledge to understand the issues, the political parties, to make a decision about voting, and in general to vote.
- > Young people do not perceive themselves generally as well prepared to participate in voting.
- > Generally, young people don't understand the voting system.
- > Female students feel less prepared to vote, in terms of knowledge, than males.

Figure 5: Source of Information about Voting in Elections



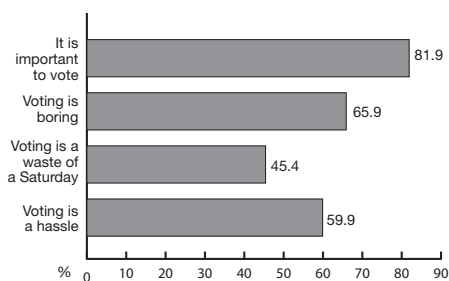
Source of information about voting in elections

If students generally do not feel well prepared to participate in voting, where do they obtain their information about voting in elections?

Key Points:

- > Parents are regarded by the students as the most important source of information about voting, followed by TV and newspapers.
- > Yet television and newspapers are regarded with skepticism.
- > Church and other religious groups are the least important source of information about voting.
- > School teachers are a moderate source of information about voting for students.
- > The Internet has little impact as an information source on voting for students.

Figure 6: Attitudes Towards the Act of Voting



Attitudes towards voting

Key Points:

- > Most (four out of five) students think that voting is important.
- > Almost two out of three students think that the act of voting is boring, and slightly more than one-half think it is a hassle.
- > Slightly less than one-half of students think that voting is a waste of a Saturday.
- > The link between a citizen's right and duty to vote is not powerful.

Youth Electoral Study

Authors: Associate Professors Murray Print, University of Sydney, Dr Larry Saha, Australian National University, and Dr Kathy Edwards, University of Sydney. Source: *Youth Electoral Study – Report 1: Enrolment and Voting*, December 2004. The full report is available at Youth Electoral Study: www.aec.gov.au/AboutAEC/Publications/youth-study/index.htm

FURTHER RESOURCES

Running an election in your school

Background information

Running an election for your class, year level or across the whole school provides the opportunity for students to participate in the democratic process of choosing representatives for a range of purposes. These can include Student Representative Council, Junior School Council, sports captains, class captains, or representatives for key meetings. Elections can also be held to decide on whole school or class excursions, camps, and specific class or year level interests.

It is important that an election is for real positions with real responsibilities. Students need to develop their understanding of an election being multifaceted – the procedural and outcome components of an election and the concept and role of representation. If the election is not for an ongoing position, authenticity of the representative role can be provided by, for example, representatives being elected to attend a meeting with an environment officer at a local council, a meeting with the school principal or year level coordinator, or attending a School Council meeting on a specific issue.

RESOURCES

- **BLM 1** Ballot paper template
- **BLM 2** Scrutiny chart
- **Interactive Voting Tool**

To ensure the integrity of the election process, staff and students must be willing to respect the outcome of the election and honour the elected representative fulfilling the agreed-to or specified role.

There are many voting systems that can be used for conducting an election in a school, including ‘first past the post’ or ‘most votes wins’ method. However, it is suggested that the **preferential voting system** with an **absolute majority** be chosen as it is the system that students will be using when they vote in federal elections.

The procedures outlined are also those that students will follow when they vote at federal elections. These procedures and formalities are designed to ensure a free and fair election.

Full preferential voting

In the full preferential voting system the elector (voter) needs to put a number in each of the squares beside the candidates’ names. An explanation of the word ‘prefer’ will help students understand this concept. The number 1 shows the elector’s first choice or preference; 2 indicates the second choice or preference, and so on. All squares must be filled in indicating the full preferences of the elector. This type of voting is called full preferential voting.

Formal voting

For a ballot paper to be considered as a formal vote, and therefore counted, all squares must be numbered according to the elector’s preferences. Other markings such as ticks and crosses render the ballot paper informal. Informal votes will not be counted in the scrutiny (count). This is because the voter’s preference intention is not clear. Also because of the importance of the secret ballot, no marks or names that could identify the elector can appear on the ballot paper. For example, if an elector signs or prints their name on the ballot paper it will be an informal ballot paper.

A ‘donkey’ vote is a term many students will know. It refers to a ballot paper that has been completed by the supposed demonstration of a preference for each candidate in the order that they appear on the ballot paper. For example, ‘1’ is placed against the candidate listed at the top of the ballot paper, ‘2’ against the second candidate, and so on. In most cases the elector has not made an intentional choice in the ordering of their preferred candidates; they have just ‘filled out’ the ballot paper. For counting votes in the scrutiny process, the ‘donkey’ vote is considered a formal ballot, so it is counted. The reason behind this lies in the fact that the order of names on the ballot are allotted by random draw so just because an elector has written sequential numbers does not necessarily mean the sequential order of the numbers was not a well-considered choice.

Absolute majority

A candidate must receive over 50% of the formal vote to be elected as a representative. This may be decided at the first count if over 50% of the vote has been gained by a candidate or as the result of further distributions of votes to second preferences, third preferences, and so on until one candidate has received more than 50%.

Scrutiny – counting the vote

The scrutiny continues until a candidate has received over 50% of the vote. This may require a full distribution of preferences to other candidates. The following example explains the process.

- > A class of 25 students vote.
- > Candidate A receives 7 first preference votes.
- > Candidate B receives 8 first preference votes.
- > Candidate C receives 6 first preference votes.
- > Candidate D receives 4 first preference votes.



Fig 36: Receiving ballot papers for student elections

Candidate B received the highest number of first preference votes and would be elected in a ‘first past the post’ electoral system (such as those of the United Kingdom, United States, Canada and India). In this count, as in Australian elections, the majority system of vote counting is used and no candidate received an absolute majority, that is 13 votes (50% of 25 is 12.5, so more than 50% of 25 is 13 or more votes). This means no candidate is elected at this point. An easy way to explain that the majority system more clearly reflects electors’ choices is that more electors did not vote for Candidate B ($7 + 6 + 4 = 17$) than did (8).

To achieve the majority, electors’ second choice candidates are then considered.

The votes from the lowest polling candidate, who is least likely to be elected and is ‘excluded’, are distributed to the other candidates, that is to candidates A, B and C in the preference order that the elector has indicated. This process continues with the lowest polling candidate, after each redistribution of preferences, having their votes distributed until one candidate has over 50% of the vote.

Candidate D’s votes are distributed according to the electors’ second preferences to the other three candidates as such: 2 to A, 1 to B and 1 to C.

Still no candidate has received over 50% of the formal vote. Candidate C, who has the lowest number of votes, is excluded and their preferences are redistributed. The six electors whose first preference was Candidate C now have their votes moved to their second preference. The second preference votes gained from Candidate D in the first distribution are included in this second distribution. This means that on one ballot paper, the elector’s third preference is now considered.

FROM THE MARGIN

INFORMAL VOTING

This does not refer to casual clothing. It’s a vote not counted in an election because it has been cast in a way that violates the rules. Using an inappropriate mark, missing a number in a full preferential system or illegibility can make a vote informal. Postal votes that arrive late or without appropriate authentication (such as an envelope signature) may also be considered invalid (informal). In the 2013 federal election, 5.9% of the votes for the House of Representatives were informal.

	1st count	Transfer vote	2nd count	Transfer vote	3rd count
Candidate A	7	2	9	4	13 (elected)
Candidate B	8	1	9	3	12
Candidate C	6	1	7 (excluded)		
Candidate D*	4 (excluded)				
Total number of votes	25		25		25

Formal votes = 25; Informal votes = 0; Absolute majority = 13 (more than 50%)

* If during the exclusion process after first preferences are distributed, there are two candidates with an equal number of least votes then a name is drawn from a hat and the name drawn is excluded from the count. If this happens at the second round for exclusion, the candidate with the least number of votes at the first preference stage is excluded.

Thus, 4 votes go to Candidate A (including one vote of Candidate D's third preference) and 3 votes to Candidate B.

Candidate A would be elected as they have received over 50% of the formal vote. Interestingly this candidate would not have been elected under a 'first past the post' system. This highlights the importance of emphasising to students to seriously consider the allocation not only of their first preference but also their subsequent ones as well. The allocation of second and third preferences decided the result of this election.

Secret ballot

The secret ballot is an important part of the Australian electoral system. It was first introduced in Australia in 1856, in the colony of Victoria. Other countries have followed this example and it is known as the 'Australian ballot' overseas. The secret ballot allows voters to make their choice in private, without pressure or intimidation.

School elections need to provide screens to ensure that voting can be secret.

Enrolment

Australia has compulsory enrolment for elections. It is important that students are enrolled to vote in the election. Class rolls based on school enrolment may be used as the qualification or students could be provided with an enrolment form to formally enrol for the election.

Candidates

Procedures for the nomination of candidates and qualifications for nomination must be made clear prior to the running of the election as any attempt to make changes after the vote will compromise the election. Nomination forms could include both student and teacher endorsement if there is concern about the calibre of candidates. Interestingly, some students given the opportunity to take on roles of responsibility actually rise to the occasion, so exclusion should be considered carefully. Often schools are concerned that nominations of candidates are motivated by popularity, or even a wish to mock the election, rather than a consideration of representatives' qualities. The election of an 'unsuitable' candidate, although not a desired outcome, can actually be instructional for all students, reinforcing the need for careful consideration in the future. At one Student Representative Council election a final year student assisting with the election was heard to comment:

'The Year sevens vote for the popular kids but they soon learn that they are not necessarily the best students for the job. The older kids vote for who will represent them best, those who take the role seriously.'

Criteria and qualifications are ultimately up to the school to decide upon, but must be clearly defined prior to the call for nominations for the election.

Students need to be aware of the purpose of the election and have a clear understanding of the expectations of the representative's role. Commitment to the number of meetings, facilitation of class/group discussions prior to representative meetings, and the knowledge that they are representing all the group rather than their own agenda need to be clearly spelt out to both nominators and potential candidates.

Compulsory voting

Australia has had compulsory voting since 1924 when the Parliament passed an amendment to the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* to make it law. In line with the running of federal elections it is important that compulsory voting is part of school elections. There are certain groups of the population who have a valid and sufficient reason for failing to vote, for example on religious grounds (such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Christian Brethren), and these students should also be allowed to be exempt from school elections.

Provision should be made for students who are going to be absent on the day of the election to cast a pre-poll vote prior to election day.

Terminology

It is important to use correct terminology when running an election in your school.

For example: You are *elected*, you do not win an election; absolute majority is over 50% of the formal vote, not 50%+1.

Other election terminology includes ballot box, ballot box guard, ballot papers, ballot paper distribution, campaign, candidates, certified list of electors, issuing tables, preferential voting, polling officials, queue

controllers, scrutineers, scrutiny. These are further elaborated upon in the 'Prior to Election Day' and 'School Election Day' sections as well as in the 'Glossary'.

PRIOR TO ELECTION DAY

To ensure a free and fair election and to assist with the smooth running of an election, you need to address the following.

The time intervals are suggestions only.

ONE MONTH PRIOR

Purpose of election

It is important to have a clear purpose for the election and ensure that the 'voters' are also clear about what they are voting for.

Are electors voting for class representatives, year representatives or a whole school election? How many representatives are to be elected?

Timeline of events

A timeline for the election will assist in the smooth running of the election and allow the school as a whole to be aware of the upcoming process. The information on these pages is a good start. Provide a copy of the timeline to all staff involved in the election process.

Announcement of the election

This could be announced at class, year level or whole school assembly, depending on who is to be involved. The purpose of the election, candidate qualifications and the timeline for processes should be outlined:

- > date for close of nominations
- > dates for campaign period
- > date of election day
- > date election result will be announced.

A request for polling officials could also be announced at this time. Polling officials must not be candidates or members of the campaigning team.

FROM THE MARGIN

SCREENS AND PENCILS

Under the *Commonwealth Electoral Act* (Section 206) voters must be provided with 'separate voting compartments and each shall be furnished with a pencil'. The voter can, however, use their own writing implement if preferred.

TWO WEEKS PRIOR

Enrolment

There should be an enrolment procedure, which will provide the official electoral roll for the election. Set a suitable deadline by which electors must enrol. This roll will be used to create the 'certified list of voters' used on Election Day.

Candidate nominations, qualifications and campaigning

The procedure and qualifications for candidate nominations need to be decided prior to the election and need to be discussed at school leadership level. A nomination form can streamline the nomination process, with accompanying qualifications outlined. If a campaigning period is to be included, it is important to have the support of staff and make necessary timetable changes or assembly time to enable the campaign to take place.

Ballot paper draw

After the nomination of candidates has been finalised, the order of their names on the ballot paper needs to be decided by a random draw, which should be conducted in public to ensure neutrality.

ONE WEEK PRIOR

Timetable of election day

A timetable for Election Day will assist in the smooth running of the election. Designating specific voting times for classes, groups and year levels will assist others to know when students are required to attend the polling place. Provide a copy of the voting timetable to all staff involved in supervising students on election day.

Election material

Print a specific number of ballot papers – at least one for each enrolled voter and some spares to replace 'spoilt' ballot papers. Use 'special' paper and keep the printed ballot papers secure until Election Day. Go to Get Voting website and use the **ballot paper generator**.

Multiple certified lists of electors (these could be copies of class rolls or year level lists) need to be printed.

Polling officials and scrutineers

Polling officials assist with running the election and counting the vote. Ensure that there are enough students to act in these roles. Organise a short training session for polling officials clearly outlining their roles on election day. Scrutineers add to the credibility of the process. Allow candidates to nominate scrutineers to oversee the process and the count. Provide students with role-play badges identifying their delegated election day roles and duties, such as polling official or scrutineer.

Election equipment

Ballot boxes, ballot box seals, polling official badges and posters are provided free to schools by the AEC Education Section. To order your election equipment pack visit the **AEC's Get Voting** website to register. Allow at least two weeks for processing and postage.

The image shows a vertical enrolment form from the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). At the top is the AEC logo and the title 'Enrol to vote or update your details'. Below this is a URL 'On continue this form online to: www.aec.gov.au' and a phone number 'For more information call 13 23 26'. A section titled 'You can use this form to:' lists three options: 'enrol to vote', 'change your residential or postal address, and/or', and 'change your name'. Below these options is a section 'Returning your form' with fields for 'Post' (Australian Electoral Commission, Party (and postal address), House of Representatives, Box 12040, Canberra ACT 2600), 'Fax' (0695 5000), 'Email' (enrolment@aec.gov.au), and 'In person' (To any AEC office). The AEC logo is at the bottom.

Fig 37: Enrolment form

Checklist: Running an election in your school

Ballot box seals

Ballot boxes (labelling will assist in identifying the class or year group)

Ballot papers

Candidate name signs

Certified list of electors

Chairs

Pencils

Polling official badges

Scrutineer badges

Tables

Voting screens

THREE DAYS PRIOR

Classroom mock election

Conduct a 'mock election' in the classroom. This will provide students with the opportunity to develop their understanding of the formalities of the voting process, and to practise actually filling out the ballot paper.

The ensuing scrutiny will enable students to understand the importance of their preference allocation and how votes are distributed. Ensure that the mock election reflects the procedures and processes outlined for a real election.

FROM THE MARGIN

IMPRISONMENT AND THE VOTE

People who are serving a sentence of three years or more for a crime committed against the laws of the Commonwealth or a State or Territory are not entitled to enrol or vote in elections for the House of Representatives or Senate.

Suggested scenarios

Scenario 1: Fruit

The class is having a barbeque lunch and a piece of fruit is being included in the lunch package. To avoid wastage, only one type of fruit will be provided. The teacher wants to know which fruit will be preferred by the class: apples, bananas, oranges or pears.

BLM 1 and **BLM 2** will assist with this scenario.

Scenario 2: Camp activity

The class is going on camp, and there is one day available for an extra activity. Members of the class have indicated they would like to go swimming, snow skiing, bushwalking and bikeriding. There is only time for one of these activities so a choice needs to be made.

ONE DAY PRIOR

The polling place

Ensure that the area chosen for the polling place is large enough to enable a good 'traffic flow' in and out of the polling place.

Allow space for electors to vote in secret. Ensure some 'structure' is used to provide privacy.

SCHOOL ELECTION DAY

Before the polling place opens

Assemble polling officials and review tasks allocated at the training session. Answer any queries regarding roles and responsibilities. Scrutineers should observe that the ballot boxes are empty before the polling official seals them.

Polling official

- 1 Open the polling place for voting to begin.
- 2 Distribute the ballot papers.

There is an official procedure for handing out ballot papers:

- a Ask the voter's name and address, check that they are on the certified list of electors and mark their name off (this could mean giving name, year level and class if school rolls are being used).
- b Ask the voter if they have voted already in today's election. If the voter answers no, the ballot paper is given to the voter.
- c Mark each ballot paper with the polling official's initials.
- d Direct the voter to the voting screens and ask them to place their ballot papers in the ballot box after filling them in.

To assist in distribution two polling officials at one table can share these duties – one official asking the questions (name, address, previous voting) and the other official initialling ballot papers, handing out ballot papers and directing voters to screens.

FROM THE MARGIN

CLOSING OF THE ROLLS

For federal elections the electoral roll closes at 8pm, 7 days after the writ for an election is issued.

Ballot box guard

This polling place official makes sure that:

- 1 no one tampers with the ballot box
- 2 all voters place their ballot paper in the correct ballot box.

Queue controllers

These polling place officials have responsibility for keeping queues orderly and directing people to ballot paper distribution points.

The voters

Voters go to the issuing table, answer the three questions asked by the polling official and then move to a voting screen to fill out their ballot papers. They follow instructions to fill out the ballot correctly and deposit their ballots in the ballot box. Remember all polling officials, candidates and scrutineers also have to vote.

FROM THE MARGIN

COOL VOTING

Penguins cannot vote, but eligible electors living and working at Australia's Antarctic research bases do! In the 2013 federal election the AEC emailed ballot papers to Antarctica. After the close of polls, the results were phoned through to the AEC's Hobart office. Voting is not compulsory for Antarctic electors because the process used cannot assure a secret ballot.

Vote counters

When the poll closes, all the polling officials count the votes. This involves: emptying the ballot box; checking to see if ballot papers are formal and removing informal ballot papers from the count; and placing ballot papers in first preference piles and counting them. In federal elections, all voters do not witness the count, but in your classroom you may prefer to do it this way as a valuable learning experience.

Scrutineers

Scrutineers are people nominated by the candidates to watch (scrutinise) the voting and counting process to ensure all procedures are followed correctly. They may not touch the ballot papers.

Other roles

Provide a small group of students with a timetable allocating voting timeframes for each class or level to vote. These students can call each group to the polling place at the appropriate time, preventing a backlog of students waiting to vote.



Fig 38: Voters, polling officials and a ballot box guard in a school election

After the close of the polling place

Assemble polling officials and scrutineers.

The scrutineers' role is to observe only.

Show them where they can stand to see clearly.

Select as many polling officials as there are candidates on the ballot paper.

Tell each polling official which candidate's votes they will be counting.

Set up a large table on which to conduct the scrutiny.

Place candidate name signs on the table in the order in which they appear on the ballot paper.

Open the ballot boxes and empty the contents on the table.

Count the votes and record on Scrutiny chart **BLM2**. The scrutiny/count is a public procedure and should be conducted in front of the voters.

Scrutiny (count) procedures

- > Check all ballot papers for formality. Put aside informal ballot papers as they are not included in the count.
- > Count the total number of formal ballot papers. This total is used to calculate the absolute majority of votes (more than 50% of formal votes).
- > Calculate the absolute majority required and record on a scrutiny chart.
- > Sort ballot papers into first preference piles, that is candidates with the number 1 in the square next to their name. (Candidate name signs will assist.)

If two candidates receive 'equal least' votes during the first distribution of preferences, for example two candidates with 20 votes each, a draw takes place. Both candidates' names are placed on a piece of paper of equal size and placed in a container. The candidate whose name is drawn becomes the candidate who is excluded from the next count and their votes are distributed to the remaining candidate(s). Explain to the group that the name taken out is 'excluded', the opposite of the usual 'winner drawn from a hat'.

- > Check piles for correct first preference allocation.
- > Count each vote one by one and record totals in the first count column on the scrutiny chart (this also provides an opportunity to check that the total number of ballots initially recorded matches the preference piles – a check for misplaced ballot papers).
- > If a candidate receives more than 50% of the formal votes on the first count, the candidate is elected and no further counting is necessary. This is a rare occurrence.

If no candidate receives an absolute majority in the first count, the counting process continues.

The next step is to begin the transfer of votes to find the candidate preferred by more than 50% of the voters. The candidate with the least number of votes is identified, and 'excluded' and crossed off the scrutiny chart. Explain that this candidate is least likely to be elected but the voters who voted for this candidate are then given their second choice candidate. The votes are transferred according to their second preference marked on each ballot paper.

Each ballot paper is looked at from the 'excluded' candidate pile and one by one they are 'transferred' to the candidate who was the voter's second choice as indicated by the number 2. Record each vote on the scrutiny chart next to the candidate's name in the transfer vote column. When all ballots have been transferred, add these transferred votes to the original vote totals to see if an absolute majority has been reached. This is the total in the second count column of the scrutiny chart. If a candidate has received more than 50% of the votes they are elected.

If no candidate has more than the majority of votes after this transfer, the next step is a repeat of the last – the candidate with the least number of votes is excluded* and their votes transferred according to preferences to the remaining candidates. This means on these ballot papers the voter's second choice needs to be identified – indicated by the number 2. Importantly, if the second candidate has already been excluded, the number 3 choice candidate is used. The vote is moved to the appropriate candidate's pile and votes are recorded on

FROM THE MARGIN

LEAST SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES

In 1832 in Great Britain, Lord Garvagh was the first person to poll no votes in a general election. FR Lees in 1860 was the last person. Candidates are now allowed to vote for themselves.

the scrutiny chart in the transfer vote column. Again votes are totalled to see if an absolute majority is achieved. At this stage, one candidate usually achieves an absolute majority. With small numbers of votes and candidates it is rare for the scrutiny to go beyond three transfer rounds.

* If there is an 'equal least' candidate at this stage, the candidate who had the least votes in the previous rounds is excluded.

Announcement of the results

This may take place at the classroom level or at school assembly, depending on the type of election. It is important not only to congratulate the elected representatives on their achievement, but also to acknowledge those who were not elected. Effective and robust democracies are dependent on active citizens who are willing to stand as candidates and give electors choice.

Plenary

Provide an opportunity for all staff, polling officials, candidates and interested participants to meet to discuss the running of the election. A simple PMI activity may assist. This enables the successes of the election to be acknowledged and provides an opportunity for any suggestions for the smooth running of further elections to be noted, providing valuable background information for your next election.

Further assistance

Contact the AEC Education Section by emailing education@aec.gov.au. Information can be obtained on the Australian Electoral Commission's website at www.aec.gov.au or by phoning 13 23 26.

Go to '**Frequently Asked Questions**' at www.aec.gov.au for more information on topics such as:

- > Elections
- > Voting
- > Enrolment
- > Electoral roll
- > Redistributions
- > Candidates

FROM THE MARGIN

IN THE MAIL

Electors who have difficulty getting to a polling place are able to apply for a postal vote. For the 2013 election 1 329 215 postal votes were issued, a 37% increase from the last election.

FURTHER RESOURCES FOR CLASSROOM ELECTIONS FROM THE AEC

Voting in Australia – classroom magazine


This colourful 22 page magazine provides a comprehensive overview of the Australian electoral system. It covers the development of our democracy in Australia, and explains how representatives are elected to the Federal Parliament.

Get Voting – website

If you are planning to conduct a school election this self-serve website offers a step-by-step guide to running an election – complete with ballot paper templates, election equipment pack and tools to support student participation.

Ballot paper template

Sample
House of Representatives
Ballot Paper



National Electoral Education Centre

Number the boxes from 1 to 4 in the order of your choice

☐ Orange

☐ Apple

☐ Pear


☐ Banana

Remember... number every box to make your vote count

SAMPLE

AEC EDUCATIONAL USE ONLY

Sample
House of Representatives
Ballot Paper



National Electoral Education Centre

Number the boxes from 1 to 4 in the order of your choice

☐ Orange

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SAMPLE

AEC EDUCATIONAL USE ONLY

Scrutiny chart – Full Preferential Voting

	1st Count	Transfer Vote	2nd Count	Transfer Vote	3rd Count
Orange					
Apple					
Pear					
Banana					
Total Number of Votes					

Formal Votes

Informal Votes

Absolute Majority 50%+

FURTHER RESOURCES

Glossary

absolute majority	In an Australian House of Representatives election, a candidate must receive more than 50% of the formal votes to be elected. This is called an absolute majority.
Australian Electoral Commission	The independent statutory authority established in 1984 to maintain and update the Commonwealth electoral roll and conduct federal elections and referendums.
ballot	A method of voting, normally in a written form.
bicameral	A parliament with two houses.
by-election	An election to fill a vacancy which has occurred between general elections.
candidate	A person who stands for election to parliament. In Australia candidates can be nominated by political parties or stand as independents.
citizen	A member of a national community who shares the same entitlements and legal status as others of that community.
coalition	A collection of individuals or parties who have come together to achieve a specific purpose. Political parties may form coalitions to advance their position in parliament.
compulsory enrolment	A legal obligation to enrol to vote at elections.
compulsory voting	A legal obligation to vote at elections.
constitution	The set of basic laws by which a country or state is governed. The Australian Constitution can only be amended through a constitutional referendum.
democracy	Government on behalf of the people by their elected representatives.
double random draw	The method of deciding the order of candidates on the ballot paper. Candidates' names are randomly selected and matched to randomly drawn numbers to determine their position on the ballot paper.
election	The choosing of representatives by the voters.
electoral division	Geographical areas containing approximately equal numbers of voters as defined for electoral purposes.
electoral roll	A list of the names and addresses of all the people who are entitled to vote in an election.
electorate	See 'electoral division'.
Federation	The unification of Australian Colonies which formed the Australian nation on 1 January 1901.
first past the post	An election in which the candidate with the most votes is elected after one round of counting. A simple majority is all that is required, as there is no requirement for an absolute majority.
formal vote	A ballot paper which has been correctly completed and accepted as valid.
franchise	The right to vote.
full preferential voting	A system of voting in which the elector is required to demonstrate a preference for each candidate on the ballot paper.

government	In Australia, the political party or coalition of parties which has won a majority of the seats in the House of Representatives forms the government.
House of Representatives	The House of Representatives (or lower house) is one of two houses of the Australian Parliament. Members of the House of Representatives (sometimes referred to as the 'people's house') are chosen directly by the people of the Commonwealth and in each state and territory the number of members elected is proportional to the number of people in that state or territory, except that at least five members must be chosen in each original state. The House of Representatives currently has 150 members.
human rights	A universally recognised, basic set of entitlements which are owed to all human beings by virtue of their humanity.
hung parliament	A term used to describe a parliament in which no political party or coalition of parties has a majority in the House of Representatives. The term is becoming more applicable to modern parliaments, as minor parties and independent candidates are increasingly holding the balance of power in minority governments.
independents	Candidates for election to parliament, or members of parliament, who do not belong to a political party.
informal vote	A ballot paper which has been incorrectly completed or not filled in at all. Informal votes are not counted towards any candidate but are set aside.
multi-member electorate	An electorate which has more than one representative. A proportional representation system usually applies.
one vote, one value	An ideal which holds that electoral systems should strive to ensure the equal worth of individual votes.
parliamentary democracy	A system of government where the people exercise their political power by electing representatives to parliament to make laws. Australia is a parliamentary democracy.
party	A group of people with similar ideas or aims, some of whose members nominate as candidates at elections in the hope that they will be elected to parliament. A political party can register with the Australian Electoral Commission for federal elections. This is to fulfil legislative requirements under the funding and disclosure provisions of the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i> and to enable party names to appear on the ballot paper.
petition	A formal grievance which is presented on behalf of its signatories by a Member of Parliament to the responsible minister.
preferential voting	A system of voting in which the voter completes the ballot paper by putting the number 1 in the box beside their first choice candidate, the number 2 beside their second choice, and so on. Partial and optional preferential voting do not require the numbering of all boxes (see full preferential voting).
proportional representation	A system of voting designed to elect representatives in proportion to the amount of support each has in the electorate.

quota	<p>The term 'quota' is used in reference to the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Senate – the proportion of votes required by a candidate to be elected. 2 Redistribution (entitlement) – the calculation used to determine the number of parliamentary representatives to which a state or territory is entitled (i.e. the number of divisions). 3 Redistribution (enrolment) – the current and projected average divisional enrolment for the state or territory.
redistribution	The redrawing of electoral boundaries for a division to ensure that there are, as near as possible, equal numbers of electors in each division for a state or territory.
referendum	A proposal to alter the Constitution put to the vote. The Australian Constitution can only be altered with the approval of a national majority of electors in states and territories and a majority of electors in a majority of states.
representative	A person who is formally empowered to act on behalf of others.
scrutineer	A candidate's nominee who witnesses the counting of the votes after polling has closed.
scrutiny	The process following the close of polling. Acceptability of votes is determined and the votes are sorted and counted to determine the outcome of the election.
seat	Another term for electoral division; used because the candidate elected then has a seat in parliament.
seat status	Prior to an election, some electorates are categorised as 'safe' or 'marginal' for certain candidates or parties, which aids predictions of election outcomes. During the counting of votes, however, a division's status may be informally declared or 'in doubt' to expedite the outcome of a general election.
secret ballot	A vote made in secret – first introduced in Victoria in 1856.
Senate	One of the two houses of Federal Parliament. It is often called the 'States' house' or House of Review, as these are two of the Senate's major functions. There are 76 senators: 12 from each of the six states and two each from the ACT and NT.
single-member electorate	An electorate for which there can only be one representative.
suffrage	The right to vote (see franchise).
vote	The formal act of an elector in an election to choose the candidate the elector most wants to be the representative for that division. Australia has a secret vote, and enforces compulsory voting.

Democracy Rules: An electoral education resource

Produced by the Education and Communications Branch, Australian Electoral Commission

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p 24 NSW Electoral Commission website; p 32 Adapted from *A century of journalism: The Sydney Morning Herald and its record of Australian life. 1831–1931*. John Fairfax & Sons Sydney, 1931; p 41 Jaensch, Dean, *Elections! How and Why Australia Votes*, Allen & Unwin 1995, p 47; p 71 Print, M, Saha L & Edwards, K 2004, *Youth Electoral Study, Report 1*, available on the AEC website; p 74 Jaensch, 1995, p 88 and Allen & Unwin *Electoral Pocketbook*, Australian Electoral Commission, 2005, p 71; p 96 The 1967 Aborigines Referendum, Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Year Book Australia 2004*; p 102 East Timor Constitution, decreed 22 March 2002; p 104–105 *Youth Electoral Study* Authors: Associate Professors Murray Print, University of Sydney, Dr Larry Saha, Australian National University, and Dr Kathy Edwards, University of Sydney.

Images:

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www.aec.gov.au

