



“Our vote
can help shape
our mob’s
future”

THREE LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

Australia has three levels of government that work together to provide Australians with the services they need. The three levels are:

- local government or councils (also called shires or municipalities)
- state or territory governments
- federal government

By voting in elections, you will choose people to represent you in each level of government to make laws and govern on your behalf. Voting is how every person can have their say.

All levels of government collect money through taxes and provide a range of services. Each level of government has its own responsibilities, although in some cases these responsibilities overlap.

Here are some examples:

LOCAL

- local road maintenance
- garbage collection
- recreation facilities

STATE/TERRITORY

- education
- transport
- health

FEDERAL

- foreign affairs
- social security
- immigration



Federal Government

A federal election is held at least every three years so Australians can vote to decide who will represent them in the federal Parliament.

The federal Parliament consists of two houses – the House of Representatives and the Senate. During a federal election, you will vote for a person to represent your area (known as an electorate) in the House of Representatives. There are 151 members in the House of Representatives in total.

The political party with a majority of members in the House of Representatives becomes the federal Government. The leader of the government is called the Prime Minister.

You will also vote for senators who will represent a whole state or territory in the Senate. There are 12 senators for every state, and two senators for each territory.

State and territory governments

State and territory governments generally have a similar structure to the federal Parliament, but only make laws and decisions for the specific state or territory. Each state, apart from Queensland, has a parliament that consists of two houses. Queensland, the Northern Territory and the Australian

Capital Territory have one house called the Legislative Assembly, instead of a Parliament.

The leader of a state government is called the Premier. The leader of a territory government is called the Chief Minister.

When a state or territory holds an election, you will vote for a person to represent you in your state parliament or in the Legislative Assembly. State and Territory elections are run by State Electoral bodies and not by the Australian Electoral Commission.

Local government

Local governments, often called city councils or shire councils, are established by state governments to look after the particular needs of a city or local community. The head of the council is the Mayor or Shire President. During local government elections, you will vote for people called councillors who form the council. Local government elections are usually run by state electoral bodies.

To enrol to vote, scan the QR code or visit aec.gov.au/enrol

