

The Australian Constitution sets out the rules for the system of government in Australia.

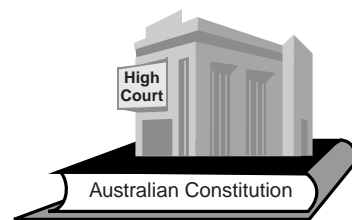
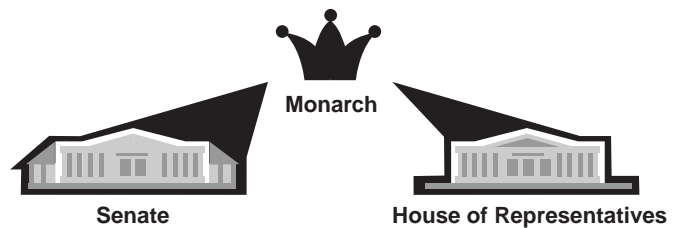
It divides powers and responsibilities between the Commonwealth Government and the state governments.

It does three important jobs:

- It creates the Commonwealth of Australia, which made the colonies into six states of the Federation. The Australian Constitution allows the states' own constitutions and parliaments to continue.
- It sets up the Commonwealth Parliament, consisting of the monarch, represented by the governor-general, the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Commonwealth Parliament makes laws for everyone in Australia. The Constitution sets out the Parliament's main powers and functions, usually described in the Constitution as 'Federal' and 'Commonwealth'. All other powers remain with the states.
- It sets up the High Court as the highest court in the land. The High Court interprets the Constitution, and judges whether laws made are in line with the Constitution if a law is challenged. The High Court is also the final court of appeal for cases heard in other courts.



Today, the territories also have their own constitutions and parliaments.



The Constitution is the supreme law for the Commonwealth of Australia. Ordinary laws can be changed if the proposed changes are passed by both Houses of Parliament. A proposed change to the Constitution must also be passed by the people of Australia in a referendum after being passed by the Parliament. If a majority of the people in a majority of the states do not pass the proposed change, the Constitution will not be changed.

