Civic Participation Community Toolkit

This toolkit has been co-designed by Western Sydney MRC and FECCA to support newly arrived and migrant groups to learn and engage with Australian democratic processes.

May 2022

Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre (MRC)

The company is a community-based non-profit organisation established to actively and directly relieve the situation of people and communities from diverse backgrounds whose social condition finds them disadvantaged. We aim to promote the principles of access and equity for diverse communities and identify and promote particular disadvantaged groups' needs to ensure that no one is left behind. Underpinning our principles are the core values for Human Rights. We all have our thoughts and ideas, should all be treated in the same way, and given the same opportunities, living in freedom and safety.

LOCATION: 108 Moore Street, Liverpool NSW 2170.
CONTACT: Tel: 02 8778 1200. Email: info@wsmrc.org.au
WEBSITE: wsmrc.org.au

Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA)

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) is the national peak body representing people from multicultural communities and their organisations across Australia. Through the membership of state, territory, and regional councils, we represent over 1500 community organisations and their members, across Australia. FECCA supports multiculturalism, community harmony, social justice and the rejection of all forms of discrimination and racism. FECCA has an elected executive committee and a professional national secretariat implementing policies and work programs on behalf of its membership and stakeholders. For more information and to read more about FECCA's policies and program, please visit our website:

LOCATION: Unit 1, Level 6, 54 Marcus Clarke Street, Canberra, ACT 2601
CONTACT: FECCA office on (02) 6282 5755, or email: admin@fecca.org.au
WEBSITE: fecca.org.au

MESSAGES FROM THE CEOs

Message from FECCA CEO:

We are pleased to partner with Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre on this important community engagement toolkit. The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) has always advocated for a strong multicultural community sector to ensure a successful and engaged multicultural Australia. Our communities know their strengths and challenges better than anyone else, and with some support from the community sector, are best placed to help their own community members. Self-advocacy is critical to ensure successful and engaged communities in Australia.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic we saw community organisations step up and provide much needed leadership to keep their communities safe. This reaffirms the need and the importance of strong partnerships between governments and grassroots community organisations.

Our role is to support and mentor the new and emerging communities in Australia to ensure they establish their organisations and set them up for success.

I am proud to present this community engagement toolkit as a great recourse for communities to better understand the Australian political landscape, to establish and run successful and sustainable community organisations, to improve participation by community members in the Australian society, and to strengthen community members to better support and advocate on behalf of their communities.

I want to commend and thank Western Sydney MRC for playing a key role in supporting refugee and multicultural communities in Western Sydney, and for their advocacy for a successful multicultural Australia.

Regards,
Mohammad Al-Khafaji - GAICD
Chief Executive Officer
Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA)

Message from Western Sydney MRC CEO:

Western Sydney MRC is proud to collaborate with the Federation of Ethnic Community Councils of Australia (FECCA) in the development and production of Civic Participation Toolkit. Both agencies have the core values to empower and engage diverse communities, and to ensure participation into mainstream local life. As a local place-based organisation operating in multicultural Western Sydney for over 40 years, we understand the importance of promoting cultural and national identity and encouraging civic participation.

We have committed to the Civic Spotlight program that actions our passion through community consultations, publishing position papers, conducting Meet the Candidate forums as well as developing resources that are easy to ready with potential for translations. This Civic Participation Toolkit is an initiative within this program.

Supporting the genuine voice of the community is part of our DNA, shared in the ways we are connected to and in our practice, none more evident than during the COVID-19 pandemic. During times of such crises, we drew upon these genuine and lasting relationships to increase the resilience in the communities we are a part of. We are proud to work in partnership with industry and community peak bodies like FECCA.

It is part of our mission and passion to ensure self-representation and participation is promoted and it remains core to our work. I thank FECCA for their continued leadership in promoting a socially cohesive and diverse Australia, and for their partnership in this initiative.

Kamalle Dabboussy
Chief Executive Officer
Western Sydney MRC

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit has been developed to provide a guide for newly arrived refugee and migrant groups to understand civic participation processes such as setting up an organisation, lobbying politicians, gaining support and fundraising, community leadership and advocacy. This toolkit also provides information on institutional processes such as the levels of government in Australia, democratic system of government, the house of representative and reference to translated materials. Most uniquely, this toolkit provides a snapshot of some of the local government areas of Westerns Sydney to highlight the unique strengths and challenges of the local CALD communities.

This toolkit is a first step in the civic participation journey for our CALD communities. Through out the toolkit there are further links and reference to relevant sources to facilitate comprehensive research.

This is not a final or static document as we will be adding to it based on communities' input, need and feedback. Please write to info@wsmrc.org.au with your suggestions and feedback.

Translated Resources

There is a variety of information in languages other than English to help people from non-English speaking backgrounds understand enrolling and voting in Australia.

Australian Electoral Commission
www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/Translated_information/

AEC Campaign Hub
https://www.aec.gov.au/election/campaign-hub/cldc.htm

Vote Talk Resources
www.votetalk.org.au/resources/

CIVIC SPOTLIGHT 2022 - Feb 2022

The Liverpool Local Government Area (LGA) Snapshot

The traditional custodians of the land are:
the Darug and Tharawal Aboriginal people.

The LGA covers 305 square kilometres & consists of 42 suburbs.

Population | 2016 - 204,3261. Projected growth: 2022 - 249,3112 / 2041 - 386,646

Federal Electorates

Liverpool LGA sits across three Federal Electorates. Werriwa (mainly), Fowler and Hughes.
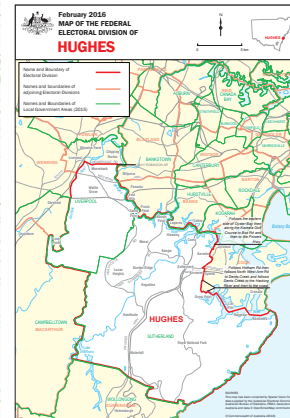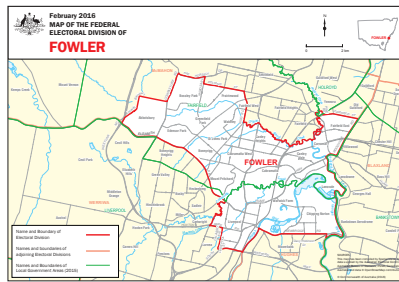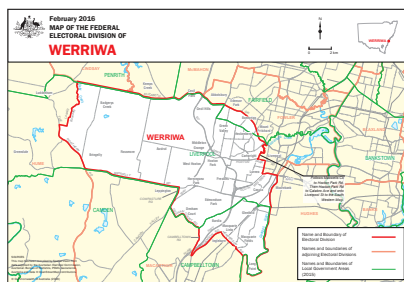
Common ancestries

Australian 13.4%
Italian 5.4%
Indian 5.2%
Lebanese 4.8%
English 11.3%

Common languages spoken at home

English 41.4%   Hindi 4.0%
Arabic 11.4%   Spanish 2.5%
Vietnamese 4.9%   Serbian 2.4%

Common occupations

Professionals 17.0%

Clerical and Administrative Workers 16.1%

Technicians and Trades Workers 14.6%,

Machinery Operators and Drivers 10.4%, and

Labourers 10.4%

Employment

In the labour market
90,672

61.5% were employed full time,
26.0% were employed part-time and
7.5% were unemployed.

Industry of employment

Industry	%
Worked in Hospitals (except Psychiatric Hospitals)	3.5%
Supermarket and Grocery Stores	2.4%
Road Freight Transport	2.2%
Takeaway Food Services	2.1%
Banking	2%

CIVIC SPOTLIGHT 2022 - Feb 2022
The Liverpool Local Government Area (LGA) Snapshot

The three most popular industry sectors were:

Health Care and Social Assistance (9,586 people or 11.4%)

Retail Trade (8,459 people or 10.1%)

Construction (8,346 people or 9.9%)

Only 30.5% of residents live and work in the area

65% live in the area, but work outside

4.5% have no fixed place of work

The median weekly personal income for people aged 15 years and over

Liverpool $584
NSW $664
Australia $662

Family Composition

Couple families with children 57.0%

Couple families without children 23.2%

One parent families 18.2%

Unpaid work

Domestic Work — 59%
Care for children — 28%
Assistance to a person with a disability — 12%
Voluntary work through an organisation or a group — 11%

Occupied private dwellings

Owned with a mortgage — 40%
Rented — 32%
Owned outright — 24.1%
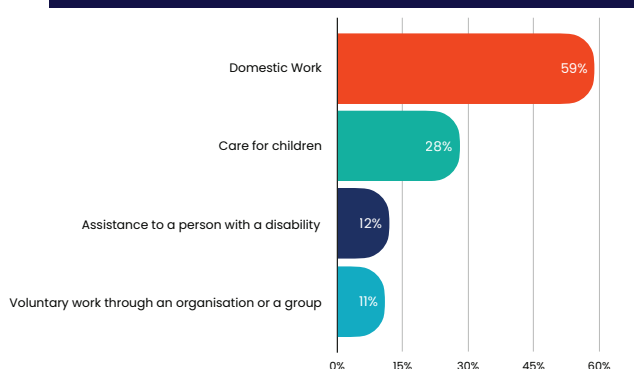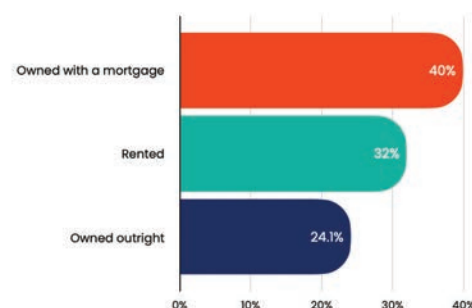
The image below is from the 2017 Liverpool Refugee Action Plan.

204,570 / 336,803
2015 2031
POPULATION GROWTH

$213m / $1.028b
2011 2016
DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS DETERMINED

REGIONAL CITY

$20b+
INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

45% under 30 YEARS | 20% over 55 YEARS
140 LANGUAGES SPOKEN
DIVERSE

SKILLED WORKFORCE

GDP $8.9 billion
2015 JOBS 74,000
2036 JOBS 115,000
STRONG ECONOMY

ACCESSIBLE

Data sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 census. Accessed February 2022.
Liverpool Refugee Action Plan 2017 - https://www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/112448/Local-Refugee-Action-Plan-2017.pdf
Icons by www.flaticon.com

WESTERN SYDNEY MRC

CIVIC SPOTLIGHT March 2022

The Fairfield Local Government Area (LGA) Snapshot

The traditional custodians of the land are: the Cabrogal clan of the Darug people.

The Fairfield LGA covers an area of 102 square km, incorporating 27 suburbs.

Population | 2016 - 198,817. Projected growth: 2022 - 211,800 / 2041 - 249,523

Federal Electorates

Fairfield LGA sits across two Federal Electorates: McMahon and Fowler
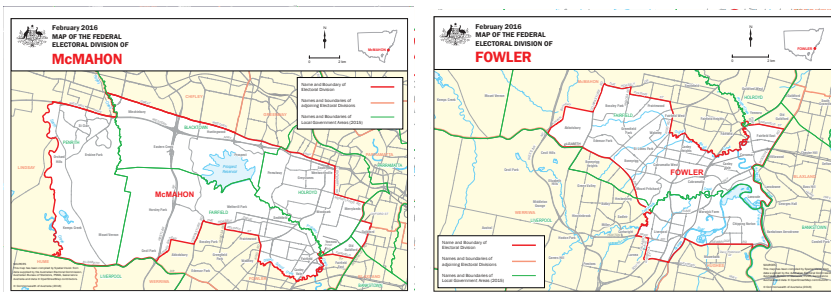
February 2016
MAP OF THE FEDERAL
ELECTORAL DIVISION OF
McMAHON

February 2016
MAP OF THE FEDERAL
ELECTORAL DIVISION OF
FOWLER

Common ancestries

Vietnamese 16.8%,
Chinese 11.4%,
Australian 7.8%,
English 6.9%
Assyrian 5.7%
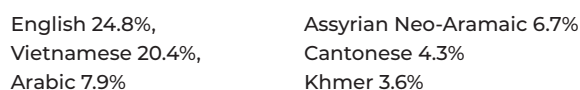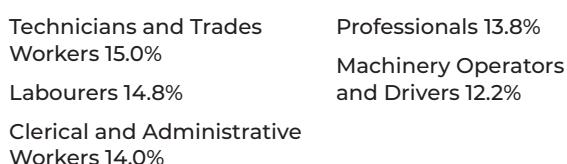
Employment

In the labour market
80,326

56.3% were employed full time,
28.2% were employed part-time and
10.5% were unemployed.
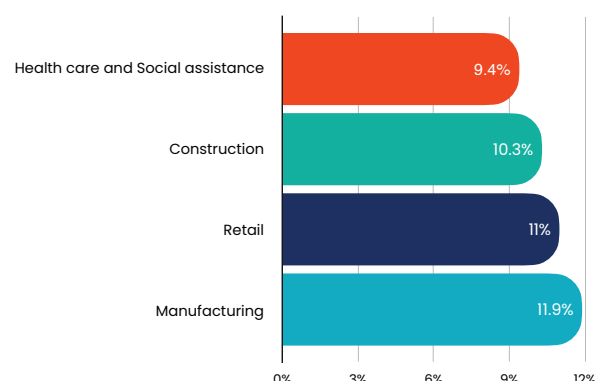
Common languages spoken at home

English 24.8%,
Vietnamese 20.4%,
Arabic 7.9%

Assyrian Neo-Aramaic 6.7%
Cantonese 4.3%
Khmer 3.6%

Industry of employment

Industry	%
Health care and Social assistance	9.4%
Construction	10.3%
Retail	11%
Manufacturing	11.9%

Common occupations

Technicians and Trades Workers 15.0%
Labourers 14.8%
Clerical and Administrative Workers 14.0%

Professionals 13.8%
Machinery Operators and Drivers 12.2%

CIVIC SPOTLIGHT March 2022

The Fairfield Local Government Area (LGA) Snapshot

The three most popular industry sectors were:

Manufacturing (8,554 people or 11.9%)

Retail Trade (7890 people or 11%)

Construction (7,403 people or 10.3%)

The median weekly personal income for people aged 15 years and over

Fairfield	$439
NSW	$664
Australia	$662

Family Composition

Couple families with children 51.2%

Couple families without children 23.3%

One parent families 23.1%

Only 30.3% of residents live and work in the area

65.4 % live in the area, but work outside

4.3% have no fixed place of work

Occupied private dwellings

- Owned with a mortgage — 28.8%
- Rented — 34.9%
- Owned outright — 32.1%

(axis: 0% 8.75% 17.5% 26.25% 35%)

Fairfield City Economic Development Strategy 2019 Update

Snapshot For Fairfield City

LAND MASS 10,160 ha OR **102km²**

27 SUBURBS

Largest Industry Manufacturing

GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT **$8.26B** Billion

LOCAL BUSINESSES **15,756**

POPULATION **209,107**

Local Jobs **75,666**

EMPLOYED RESIDENTS **83,789**

71% speak a language other than English when at home **DIVERSITY**

690,000 Nights Stayed BY INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

Unpaid work

- Domestic Work — 53.5%
- Care for children — 22.9%
- Assistance to a person with a disability — 12.6%
- Voluntary work through an organisation or a group — 8.9%

(axis: 0.0% 15.0% 30.0% 45.0% 60.0%)

WESTERN SYDNEY MRC

CIVIC SPOTLIGHT March 2022

The Canterbury-Bankstown Local Government Area (LGA) Snapshot

The traditional custodians of the land are:
the Daruk and the Eora People.

The Canterbury-Bankstown LGA covers 110.3 square km, incorporating 40 suburbs.

Population | 2020 - 380,406. Projected growth: 2022 401,017; 2036 463,311

Federal Electorates

Canterbury-Bankstown LGA sits on the Federal Electorate of Watson

February 2016
MAP OF THE FEDERAL
ELECTORAL DIVISION OF
WATSON

Common ancestries

Lebanese
12.5%

Australian
11.8%

Chinese
9.4%

English
10.2%

Vietnamese
6%

Employment

In the labour market
150,615

56.8% were employed full time,
29.8% were employed part-time and
8.2% were unemployed.
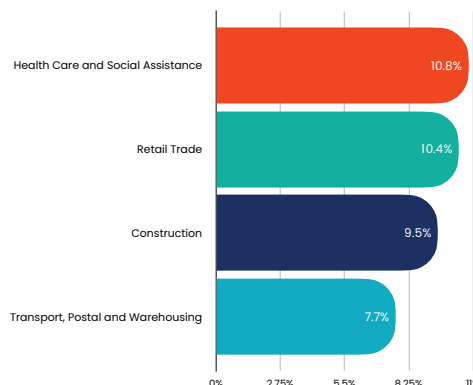
Common languages spoken at home

English 34.1%   Greek 5.4%
Arabic 17.2%   Mandarin 5.0%
Vietnamese 7.2%   Cantonese 3.9%

Industry of employment

Health Care and Social Assistance — 10.8%
Retail Trade — 10.4%
Construction — 9.5%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing — 7.7%

0%   2.75%   5.5%   8.25%   11%

Common occupations

Professionals 18.9%

Clerical and
Administrative Workers
15.1%

Technicians and Trades
Workers 14.0%

Labourers 10.6% and

Community and Personal
Service Workers 10.5%.

WESTERN SYDNEY MRC

CIVIC SPOTLIGHT March 2022

The Canterbury-Bankstown Local Government Area (LGA) Snapshot

The three most popular industry sectors were:

Health Care and Social Assistance (14,976 people or 10.8%)

Retail Trade (14,416 people or 10.4%)

Construction (13,114 people or 9.5%)

The median weekly personal income for people aged 15 years and over

Canterbury-Bankstown $502

NSW $664

Australia $662

Family Composition

Couple families with children 52.8%

Couple families without children 26.9%
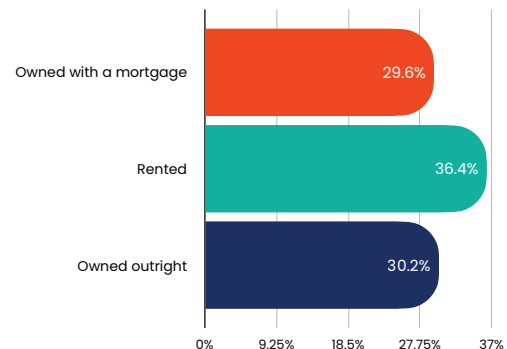
One parent families 18.2%

Only 28.5% of residents live and work in the area

66.2% live in the area, but work outside

5.3% have no fixed place of work

Occupied private dwellings

Owned with a mortgage	29.6%
Rented	36.4%
Owned outright	30.2%

0%   9.25%   18.5%   27.75%   37%
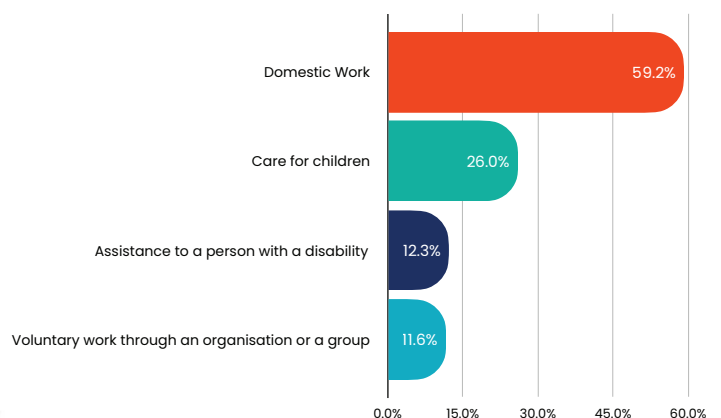
City of Canterbury Bankstown

FOUNDED IN 2016

BANKSTOWN AIRPORT

35 MEDIAN AGE

5 LEISURE & AQUATIC CENTRES

9 LIBRARIES

10,096 STREET FURNITURE

185 OPEN CARPARKS

118 SCHOOLS

432 COUNCIL BUILDINGS

75 SPORTING COMPLEXES

124,526 EMPLOYED RESIDENTS

44% BORN OVERSEAS

60% SPEAK A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH

151 BRIDGES

1,185 FOOTPATHS

1,803KM KERB & GUTTERING

1 UNIVERSITY

600 PARKS

17 TRAIN STATIONS

POPULATION IN 2016 **361,551**

907 KM ROADS

432 BUILDINGS

2 GOLF COURSES

280 PLAYGROUNDS

Unpaid work

Domestic Work	59.2%
Care for children	26.0%
Assistance to a person with a disability	12.3%
Voluntary work through an organisation or a group	11.6%

0.0%   15.0%   30.0%   45.0%   60.0%

FACTSHEET
Setting Up Your Organisation and How to Choose the Structure - Part one

Note: This resource is intended as a guide only, to assist you to think about setting up and running your organisation. We suggest that you seek expert advice and use the links provided to suit your particular circumstances.

This factsheet will cover the setting up your organisation and how to choose the structure. For a complete guide visit FECCA's website as outlined on page 2.

Organisations often start small but as more people join and the group gets bigger it becomes clear the group needs to formalise a structure to move forward. This is important if the group needs to find funding from government or other sources to achieve its aim of helping its community.

Why Incorporate?

Groups often find they need to formalise into a 'legal entity' or organisation so that they can set up a bank account, apply for funding with government or other funding bodies, and hire staff or rent offices.

One of the benefits of incorporating is that it protects its members from legal liability if something goes wrong. A person can still be held legally responsible if they have acted negligently or dishonestly, but on the whole members of an incorporated organisation have 'limited liability'.

There are many responsibilities in setting up an incorporated organisation. The organisation will have to report to government on its activities according to the requirements it is set up under, as well as to the Australian Taxation Office and other relevant bodies.

The most important questions are 'what is the purpose of the group?' and 'what are you trying to achieve?' The answers will help decide on the structure of the organisation you will form and the legal and other regulatory requirements you will need to comply with to operate your organisation.

> **ourcommunity.com.au has a simple explanation of how to decide whether you need a formal structure or not.**

Are You Unique?

Before you go ahead, it is a good idea to make sure there are not already organisations in place, within your community, that have the same or similar aims. You can also do an internet search to see if there are organisations similar to yours outside your community that you could partner with.

Some good places to search include:

Our Community
www.ourcommunity.com.au/directories/welcome

Pro Bono Australia
www.probonoaustralia.com.au/source

Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
www.acnc.gov.au/charity

Give Now
www.givenow.com.au

Structure

If your group wants to operate within your local area, or across the State or Territory where you live, an incorporated association will be the structure that most suits your group's needs.

In this circumstance, you might choose to incorporate as a national not-for-profit organisation through the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC), known as a company limited by guarantee. You may also need to register with ACNC. Each State and Territory has their own requirements for Incorporated Associations. Links to each State or Territory website that explain what you have to do to set up an Incorporated Association are on page 2.

Becoming a Charity

Charity status is only available for not- for-profit organisations that meet a number of eligibility requirements, and has a number of tax benefits for organisations and donors to the organisation.

More information on charitable status is available from the ACNC website, and the Not-for-profit Law website.

> **ACNC: www.acnc.gov.au/for-charities/start-charity/apply-now**

> **NFP Law: www.nfplaw.org.au/charity**

FACTSHEET
Setting Up Your Organisation and How to Choose the Structure - Part two

Other Structures

Other structures include charitable foundations or trusts, cooperatives, unincorporated groups, and for profit businesses. More information is available on the Not-for-profit Law website.

One possible structure that might be relevant to new community organisations is a social enterprise. Social enterprises are viable commercial businesses whose purpose is to benefit the community, rather than shareholders or individual owners. There is usually a dual structure: a not-for-profit organisation owns (or is the member of) the commercial enterprise that is set up to make a profit, to help fund the owning organization.

Social Traders: www.socialtraders.com.au/learn/

The Social Traders website has lots of information and case studies to help you understand social enterprises.

Constitution

The constitution is a set of rules for running your organisation. Depending on the structure that you decide to adopt for your organisation, it may be a legal requirement that you have a constitution. You can find out more information about constitutions on the Not-for-profit Law website.

Members and Privacy

If your organisation is an incorporated association, you will need to keep a register of members. Members may have access to the register on request. If your organisation deals with sensitive issues, such as family violence, or racism, you may be able to keep members' details private. Your State or Territory websites will have more information on how to protect members' privacy while staying within the rules.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

An AGM is a meeting held once a year that all members are invited to attend. At the meeting, you may update members on the activities of the organisation over the past year, provide a financial report, allow members to ask questions, and elect new members of your Board or Management Committee. Your organisation may be required to hold an AGM depending on any legislation or regulation that apply to you.

Insurance

In order to safeguard the Board, staff and clients of the organisation you will need to have a range of insurance policies in place. Some of these are required by law. For example, if you hire staff, you will need to have workers' compensation insurance. You will also need to have public liability insurance, and most likely professional liability insurance to safeguard individuals in your organisation from being personally liable for unintentional injury or wrong-doing on the part of your organisation. If you serve food, there will be other requirements in place. Check with your State or Local government authority for more information on these requirements.

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia has a resource on their website called *'Starting and Running your Community Organisation: A Guide.'* The guide includes:

- the Australian political, regulatory and taxation system
- setting up your organisation and how to choose the structure
- managing your organisation including governance, stakeholders, resources, insurance and reporting
- planning, monitoring and evaluating your activities
- funding and fundraising
- advocacy, marketing and ensuring your organisation maintains a high profile
- networking, partnering and collaborating with other organisations.

www.fecca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/FECCA-Starting-and-running-community-org_WEB.pdf

FACTSHEET
Lobbying politicians

Lobbying politicians is an important part of advocacy and policy change

Before lobbying politicians about an issue, you need to identify the appropriate level of government (local, state, or federal). Information about government initiatives, ministries and the responsibilities of government departments is available on government websites, government bookshops or from public libraries. More information about what level of government works on what issues can be found here: **https://www.gov.au/**

You can lobby politicians through letter writing, on the phone, and request a meeting. You can also meet with your local member. You can ask a politician to:

- **Raise your concerns in the party's decision-making forums (Cabinet, Caucus, backbench, and policy committees)**
- **Ask questions on key issues in parliament. This puts the issue on the public record**
- **Provide access to government reports and other information that may not be easy to find**

Who's who?

Ministers

Ministers are responsible for a particular area of government activity. It is generally better to target ministers rather than backbenchers because they have more influence over government policy and legislation.

Ministerial staff include private secretaries, consultants, advisers and media officers. They can provide important information about what the minister, party or government agency thinks about a particular issue. They can also influence how the minister views an issue.

Party committees

In both major parties, committees are set up to deal with some of the more important or urgent aspects of government and to advise ministers on these issues.

Public servants

Public servants play an important role in the development of public policy and legislation so it is vital to include them in your lobbying strategy.

Backbenchers

While not as influential as ministers, backbenchers are generally more approachable, especially if they are your local member. Backbenchers may help you to get access to the parliamentary party's decision-making forums. While direct access to these committees is limited, you can ask a member to present your case or allow you to attend to give a presentation.

The opposition

While oppositions generally do not make decisions, they can be useful if the government is not supporting your position. Sometimes the opposition can pressure or embarrass the government into changing its position. If you are getting nowhere with the government, consider approaching the opposition. For instance, you could ask a shadow minister to ask questions in parliament.

Ask for a meeting

You can write letters to all levels of Government and ask for meeting. If you do not hear back, make sure you call to follow up. When asking for a meeting, remember that sometimes speaking with the advisors is better than speaking with the actual politician.

At the meeting:

- Bring specific issues – case studies are good to explain the issue
- Bring relevant community members or those affected
- Bring something you can leave behind: a case example/a page with your points
- Take photos with permission to share with your community.

FACTSHEET
Writing a letter to a Senator or Member of Parliament - Part One

An introduction to letter writing

This fact sheet needs an intro. What do we write letters, how do they help, alone or together - what's the difference between a letter and a petition?

Use the tips below as a guide and s our sample letter included as a resource in our community tool kit.

Letter writing tips

- **Use the correct title -** you can check names and titles online: www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members

- **Keep it brief – 1 page or less** - the more concise and clear you can be stating the reasons you are writing / highlighting your issue is best. You can always state that further evidence or information is available on request.

- **Use your own words, make it personal** - show who you are, your passion behind your reason for writing.

- **Be polite** - engaging and communicating in a respectful and polite way will show that you are able to communicate with professionalism.

- **Include an ask** - ensure the recipient is clear about what you are asking for... money, advocacy, policy change etc.

- **Provide your contact details** - ensure that all your relevant contact details are included.

Follow up

- **Be patient -** politicians receive many letters, it may take time for acknowledgement or response

- **Follow up** – If you do not receive a response within a fortnight of your call, try again. Give the MPs office a call stating your name, organisation and the nature of your follow up - letter receipt, response etc.

More resources

Australian Refugee Action Network
www.aran.net.au/resources/letter-writing/

Contacting Minister and Members
www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/about/getinvolved/Pages/Contact-your-member.aspx

Parliaments and councils - Style Manual
www.stylemanual.gov.au/grammar-punctuation-and-conventions/titles-honours-forms-address/parliaments-and-councils

How to contact your local politician and be heard - ABC Radio Dec 2017
www.abc.net.au/news/2017-12-06/tips-for-contacting-local-politicians/9226664

FACTSHEET
Writing a letter to a Senator or
Member of Parliament, Writing a letter - Part two

<insert date>

Hon John A. Citizen MP

Parliament House

John.Citizen@aph.gov.au

Your name

Your contact details

Dear Hon. John A. Citizen MP,

Re: TOPIC OF LETTER

Start with something that grabs the reader:

- Something related to recent news, statistics or a personal experience that will draw the reader in
- Introduce yourself/your organisation
- Explain the issue and how this is relevant for you or your community
- What is your ask of the minister/senator – for example ask for a meeting to discuss/explain more, ask them to vote for or against a particular Bill, ask them to speak about the issue in Parliament, talk about the issue in media
- Finish the letter by saying that you look forward to receiving their reply. Provide your contact details so the MP/Senator can respond.

Yours faithfully,

YOUR FULL NAME

IF YOU ARE WRITING ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANISATION, IDEALLY USE YOUR LETTERHEAD
- THIS WILL CONNECT THE TOPIC AND ASK DIRECTLY TO THE ORGANISATION.

FACTSHEET
Legal and Regulatory Requirements for Organisations - Part one

Note: This resource is intended as a guide only, to assist you to think about setting up and running your organisation. We suggest that you seek expert advice and use the links provided to suit your particular circumstances.

This Fact Sheet will cover the Australian regulatory and taxation system

ACNC

All organisations need to comply with a range of government regulatory requirements, especially if you will be raising and managing money. If you wish to form a national organisation you will need to comply with a range of national laws and regulatory requirements. If you will be a not-for profit company, you may be eligible to register as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

AICD

If you wish to work at a more local level, or in a specific geographic area, it may be more appropriate to incorporate as an association. This process is covered by State and Territory legislation. The Australian Institute of Company Directors website has a useful list of links to the laws governing each State and Territory for Incorporated Associations. You may wish to seek expert advice from a lawyer or business adviser in your State or Territory.

The best place to start to work out your responsibilities as a national not-for-profit organisation is the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) page for not-for-profit organisations.

The Taxation System

Australia's tax system places several requirements on community organisations.

Criteria	Description
Your organisation is to receive more than $150,000 per year	It must **register for GST** (Australia's broad-based Goods and Services Tax) It must **apply for an Australian Business Number** (ABN) You will most likely have to **submit Business Activity Statements** (BAS) every three months (quarterly)
You are operating as an Australian company	You may be liable for corporate taxes.
You hire and pay staff	You will need to withhold **Pay As You Go (PAYG)** tax from the employees' wages and then pay those PAYG instalments to the government as part of the BAS or Income Assessment Statement (IAS) submission process every quarter You will also have to pay a superannuation contribution. The **ATO website** will have more information about this.
If you provide additional benefits for your staff, such as a car	Your organisation may be required to pay **Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT)**. If you are registered as an Australian national charity you may be exempt from some of these requirements. The **ACNC website** has more details.
Some not-for-profit organisations and charities	Eligible for a range of tax concessions and exemptions, such as exemptions from GST, Deductible Gift Recipient concessions and FBT. More information is available on the **ATO website**.

Sometimes, the ATO requires companies to submit their BAS and/or IAS statements monthly rather than quarterly. For further information and expert advice, it is recommended that organisations consult their accountant or taxation adviser to provide more information and assistance about these issues

More resources and information

More information on legal and regulatory requirements for setting up a not-for-profit community organisation can be found at:

Australian Taxation Office
https://www.ato.gov.au/Non-profit/Gettingstarted/

Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
https://www.acnc.gov.au/for-charities/startcharity/apply

More information and resources on taxation issues for your community organisation can be found at:

Australian Taxation Office
https://www.ato.gov.au/Non-profit/Australian

Government Business Portal
https://business.gov.au/planning/business-plans/starting-a-business-checklist

Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
https://www.acnc.gov.au/tools/factsheets/charity-tax-concessions

Not-for-profit Law
https://www.nfplaw.org.au/free-resources/tax-landscape

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia has a resource on their website called '***Starting and Running your Community Organisation: A Guide.***' The guide includes:

- the Australian political, regulatory and taxation system
- setting up your organisation and how to choose the structure
- managing your organisation including governance, stakeholders, resources, insurance and reporting
- planning, monitoring and evaluating your activities
- funding and fundraising
- advocacy, marketing and ensuring your organisation maintains a high profile
- networking, partnering and collaborating with other organisations.

www.fecca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/FECCA-Starting-and-running-community-org_WEB.pdf

FACTSHEET
Gaining support & fundraising

For a community organisation to work and develop efficiently, you may need to consider obtaining support in the form of office space, a place for meetings and donations of computers, videos, office furniture or fax machines.

There are different sources where you can look for and apply for grants and funding. Depending on what you are seeking funding for you can look at:

Commonwealth government

The Department of Social Services hosts and manages the Community Grants Hub where they advertise for different funding opportunities – mostly related to specific projects. Find more information here:

www.communitygrants.gov.au/

State government

For smaller projects it can be easier to find possible grants with your state government with a specific interest in what is happening in your state. For more information about opportunities at state levels, see here:

www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_ Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp2021/Quick_ Guides/ComGrants

Local government (councils)

Local governments/councils often offer smaller grants towards specific events or celebrations. Make sure you contact your local council and local business to talk about your campaign and messages. For example:

Brisbane City Council offers a community grants program to support non-profit community groups:

> **https://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/community- and-safety/grants-awards-and-sponsorships/ community-grants**

City of Parramatta offers community capacity building grants:

> **https://www.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/ community/grants/community-grants-program**

Fairfield City Council offers a variety of grants and funding opportunities throughout the year – specially to support community achievements in social, sporting, cultural, and environmental initiatives:

> **https://www.fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au/ Community/Grants-and-Funding**

Check your local council for funding and grant opportunities.

Connecting Up

Connecting Up are an Australian not-for-profit working across the country for the benefit of other not-for-profits. They provide access to the following:

- Donated & Discounted Technology
- Training Events & Webinars
- South Australia's community information directory
- Connecting Up Conference

https://www.connectingup.org/

Other opportunities

You should also check organisations working on your issues in your areas. Examples include:

Settlement Services International
Community Innovation Fund: https://www.ssi.org.au/services/ community-engagement/community-innovation-fund

Multicultural Australia
Multicultural Australia list of different funding opportunities: https://www.multiculturalaustralia.org.au/grants_list

Find more information abut different grants and available funding here:

> **https://explore.fundingcentre.com.au/tools-resources/ home#grants**

FACTSHEET
Community Leadership & Advocacy - Part one

Developing a campaign

A call for change is often called advocacy. Advocacy can take the form of a campaign with the purpose of bringing about change around a single issue. The end-result would be a change that has a positive impact on your community. When developing a campaign, you should consider the steps below:

Identify the players

- Who is interested in joining?
- Gather the people who are interested to discuss and together develop the strategies.
- Who is your target audience?
- Who are the allies and supporters?
- Can you get support from other organisations?

Identify the goals of the campaign

- Why is the campaign needed?
- What change do you want?
- What is the solution/outcomes you want to see?
- How will you prepare for the campaign - who will do what?
- Think about what resources you have including time and plan for something reasonable.

Identify and gather resources

- What financial resources are needed?
- What are possible funding sources?
- What human resources are necessary? What kinds of expertise do you have within the group?
- What other resources are required? Such as equipment.

Case Study - Advocacy Example

Example of an advocacy campaign: Proposed Changes to the Racial Discrimination Act

The Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA) was engaged in advocacy work and a campaign back in 2016 leading up to a successful result in 2017.

Issue: In 2016, the Turnbull Government suggested legislative changes to weaken section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act. As the peak advocacy body for multicultural people living in Australia, FECCA was aware of how these changes would weaken protections for Australia's migrant, refugee, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities against racial vilification. FECCA was concerned about growing hostility toward some groups, including Australia's Muslim communities.

FECCA **reached out** to stakeholders and other organisations in the sector who shared similar concerns. Organisations and stakeholders in the sector came together to discuss best strategies to make sure the proposed changes did not go through the Senate.

FECCA and other stakeholders identified Members of the Senate as well as Members of Parliament they could convince to block the changes.

Decisions were made to write letters to politicians, engage media and write submissions on the issue in partnership with other stakeholders.

While different organisations have different relationships with politicians – state and federal – a plan was developed for everyone to contact their networks with the **same message**.

The solution FECCA wanted to see was leadership among politicians and political leaders on the issue of racism. FECCA also wanted to make sure politicians were mindful of their responsibility to protect the rights of or all people in Australia, independent of their cultural, ethnic, or linguistic background.

Result: Through **working together with the same message** – for politicians to stand strong with the multicultural communities in Australia – the proposed changes to weaken section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act was **blocked in the Senate**.

In the end, more than 150 community and human rights organisations around Australia called on federal attorney general George Brandis to reconsider his intention to repeal critical aspects of the Racial Discrimination Act.

Communities working together are always stronger.

Community meetings

Meetings are an important way for your community to come together to discuss issues and make decisions about activities that are needed. Meetings also engage your community and inspire working together to reach the goal.

- Find a location – meetings should be held in a space that is comfortable and private. Libraries and community centres often have good meeting rooms.
- Plan a time and give people plenty of notice of where the meeting is to be held.
- Prepare an agenda with the items you will discuss and circulate it with the meeting notice.
- Give people time to talk and have input
- Take minutes from the meeting to share with your community organisation.

Influencing people to support your case

To be able to influence people to support your case it is important to identity and map:

- Those who already are on your side
- Those who could be on your side
- Those who make decisions.

When communicating with people:

- Prepare your message
- Make sure you are clear who you are speaking for
- Speak from what you know – use case studies and examples
- Remember: you are the expert on your community
- Find your own style.

FACTSHEET
Community Leadership & Advocacy - Part two

Conflict resolution

There may be situations where different people, different opinions and different ideas lead to conflict within your community organisation. This is very normal and can happen often when people come together with different ideas – even while working towards the same end-goal. You can experience different kinds of conflicts[1] including:

- Conflict over outcomes and expectations
- Relationship conflicts
- Process conflicts

Skills in conflict resolution is important when these situations happen. These steps may help you:

- Acknowledge the conflict – even if it may not be pleasant, it is important to talk about the conflict rather than ignoring it as this may lead to further arguments
- Communicate – open and honest communication will open for discussions about reasons for the conflict
- Listen and find a solution – make sure you listen to the person(s) who are unhappy. Listen with empathy and understanding to try and understand the reason behind the conflict and identify steps to resolve the conflict.
- Reflect on your part – think about your role in the group and possible part of the conflict. Be aware, take responsibility and move on.
- Appoint a group leader – a group leader may act as a mediator rather than having the final decision-making powers. The group leader will ensure everyone is heard.
- Take care of the relationships in the group – think of the bigger picture, the goals you are working towards and be respectful, decent, and composed.

Taking care of yourself

Being an advocate can be a demanding role and can become overwhelming. Recognise that you may not always achieve the outcome you want, despite your best efforts. This is part of the process. Not succeeding is an opportunity to learn from the situation and to develop new skills. Make sure you keep it all in perspective, remember change takes time.

- Delegate
- Involve other committee members including youth
- Take breaks
- Trust others
- Get support from other advocates, community leaders, or organisations undertaking similar work.

Learnings

You should now understand better how to:

- Communicate effectively
- Promote your message including developing a newsletter and working with the media
- Hold meetings and develop a campaign
- Influence people and lobby politicians
- Gain funding
- Develop strategic networks
- Look after yourself and keep your community together.

Useful Links

FECCA report: New and Emerging Communities in Australia Enhancing Capacity for Advocacy
www.fecca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/New-Emerging-Communities-in-Australia-Enhancing-Capacity-for-Advocacy.pdf

A Victoria focused advocacy toolkit with helpful information and explanations
www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/media/3516/advocacy-toolkit.pdf

A detailed guide, based on health but with lots of important and helpful information
https://www.phaiwa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/2019_Advocacy-in-Action-A-Toolkit-for-Public-Health-Professionals-1.pdf
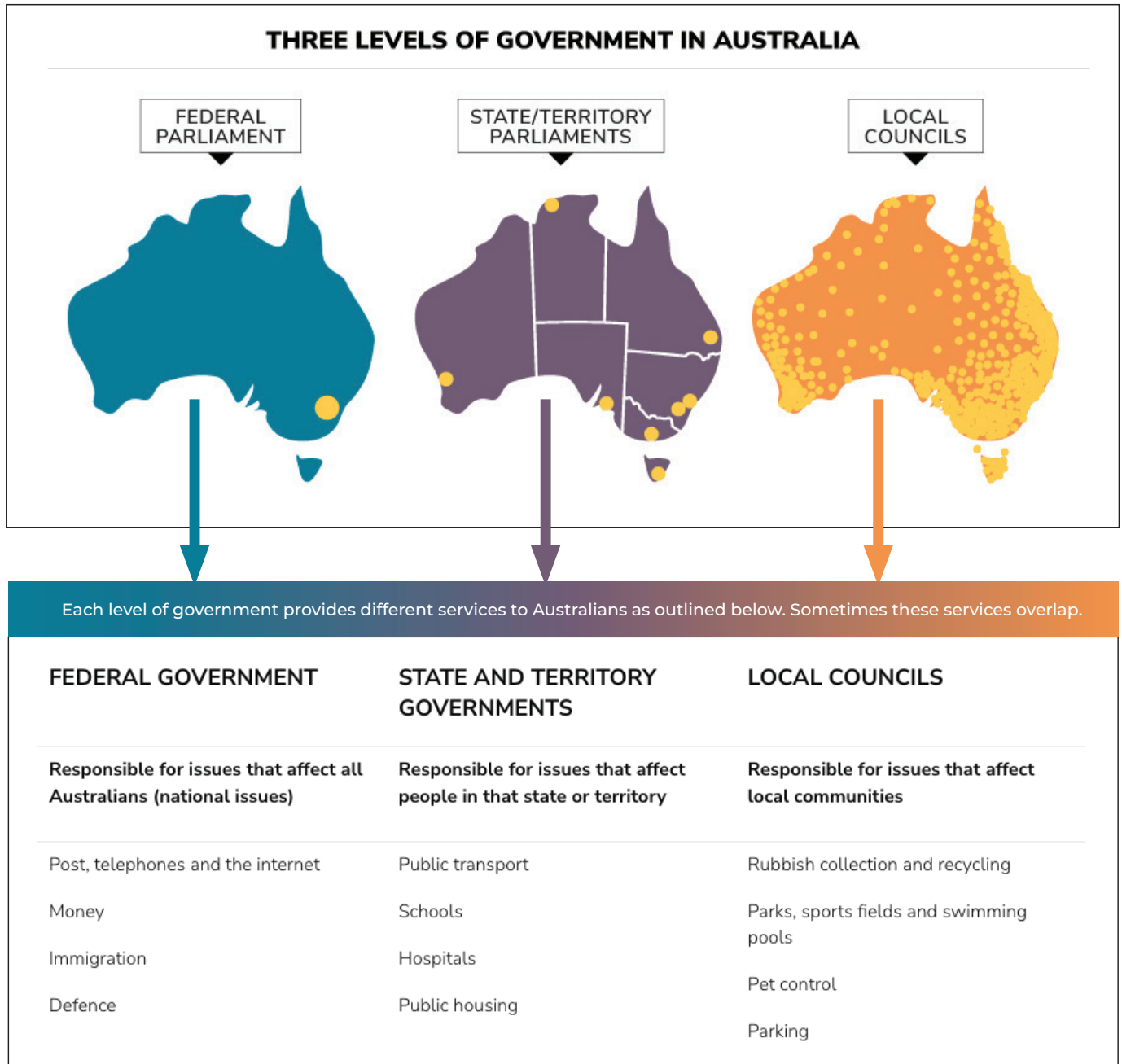
For more information on conflict resolution
www.latrobe.edu.au/mylatrobe/common-types-of-group-conflicts-and-how-to-resolve-them/ and
www.lewisholdway.com.au/how-to-resolve-a-dispute-within-your-not-for-profit-organisation/

CIVIC SPOTLIGHT 2022 - Feb 2022

The Three Levels of Government

Australia has three levels of government[1] that work together to provide us with the services we need.

THREE LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT IN AUSTRALIA

FEDERAL PARLIAMENT	STATE/TERRITORY PARLIAMENTS	LOCAL COUNCILS

Each level of government provides different services to Australians as outlined below. Sometimes these services overlap.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	STATE AND TERRITORY GOVERNMENTS	LOCAL COUNCILS
Responsible for issues that affect all Australians (national issues)	Responsible for issues that affect people in that state or territory	Responsible for issues that affect local communities
Post, telephones and the internet	Public transport	Rubbish collection and recycling
Money	Schools	Parks, sports fields and swimming pools
Immigration	Hospitals	Pet control
Defence	Public housing	Parking

Areas where both the federal parliament and state and territory parliaments can make laws include:

Education	Health	Taxation	Environment

If the federal Parliament and a state parliament make laws about the same thing but these laws don't agree, the Australian Constitution says the federal law will be followed and the state law will be removed. But often they work together to solve problems and provide Australians with the services they need. For example, the federal Parliament funds interstate and other highways, state parliaments manage major roads and local councils look after local roads.

Images sources from peo.gov.au

WESTERN SYDNEY
MRC

CIVIC SPOTLIGHT 2022 - Feb 2022
Australia's Democratic System of Government

What is democracy?[1]

Democracy means rule by the people.

The word comes from the ancient Greek words 'demos' (the people) and 'kratos' (to rule). A democratic country has a system of government in which the people have the power to participate in decision-making.

Each democracy is unique and works in different ways. In some democracies citizens help make decisions directly by voting on laws and policy proposals (direct democracy). In others, like Australia, citizens choose representatives to make decisions on their behalf (representative democracy).

Reference: 1. Parliamentary Education Office (n.d.) Democracy. https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/how-parliament-works/system-of-government/democracy/

FOUR KEY IDEAS OF AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRACY

Active and engaged citizens

Citizens have a voice and can make changes in society

An inclusive and equitable society

We work towards a society where everyone is respected and free

Free and franchised elections

We get to stand for election and choose who makes decisions on our behalf

The rule of law for both citizens and the government

Everyone is equal before the law and must follow the law

Democratic society

A democracy relies on the participation of citizens. They participate not just by voting, but by getting involved in their community. This might be by joining a charity, a political party or an environmental or community group. A democratic society is one that works towards the ideals of democracy:

Respect	Respect for individuals, and their right to make their own choices.
Tolerance	Tolerance of differences and opposing ideas.
Equity	Equity—valuing all people, and supporting them to reach their full potential.
Freedom of Speech	Each person has freedom of speech, association, movement and freedom of belief.
Justice	Justice—treating everyone fairly, in society and in court.

Images sources from peo.gov.au

WESTERN SYDNEY
MRC

The House of Representatives

The House of Representatives is a part of the Australian Parliament which also consists of the Queen (represented by the Governor-General) and the Senate. The House is also known as the lower house. Members of the House are elected by the people of Australia.

FORM GOVERNMENT

PROPOSE, DEBATE AND VOTE ON BILLS AND AMENDMENTS

DECIDE MATTERS OF NATIONAL INTEREST

EXAMINE ISSUES IN COMMITTEES

SCRUTINISE EXECUTIVE GOVERNMENT

REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF PEOPLE IN THEIR ELECTORATES

Role

The House is made up of 151 members. Each member represents one of Australia's 151 electorates. There is approximately the same number of voters in each electorate.
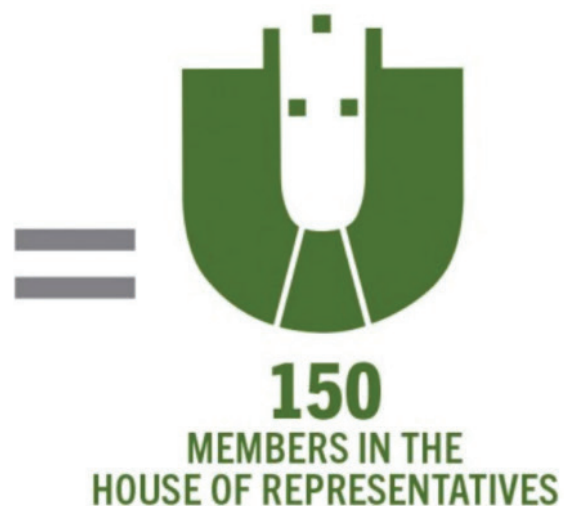
The Australian Government is formed in the House by the party, or coalition of parties, with the support of the majority of members in the House.

In the House:

- members represent the views of Australians and discuss matters of national and international importance

- national laws are made and changed by debating and voting on bills – proposed laws. A bill must be agreed to in identical form in the House and the Senate, and given Royal Assent by the Governor-General. It then becomes a law

- the work of the government is scrutinised – closely examined – especially in Question Time and through committees.

ELECTING MEMBERS TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

One member is elected from each electorate

150 ELECTORATES = 150 MEMBERS IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Vote Talk   *ECCNSW, AEC and NSWEC Collaboration 2018/2020*

Images sources from http://votetalk.org.au/materials-resources-gallery/ and peo.gov.au