

CIVIC SPOTLIGHT 2022 - Feb 2022

# Australia's Democratic System of Government

## What is democracy?<sup>1</sup>

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.



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

Images sources from [peo.gov.au](https://peo.gov.au)