

# Why voting is important



Australia is a democracy

# Why voting is important

## How to deliver

Students know what democracy is. They may have experienced it from their home country.

Your task here is getting students to understand what Australian democracy is and why it is important to vote.

### Steps

- Take students through the content.
- Use a question and answer style to encourage participation.

## Content

### *Why is voting important in Australia?*

Because Australia is a democracy. We vote for people who make laws and decide on services for us. That is why voting is very important.

## Key electoral concepts

- Understanding democracy
- Importance of voting
- Legislation and laws

# Three levels of government

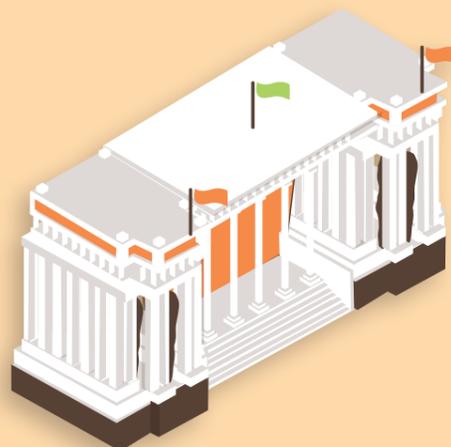
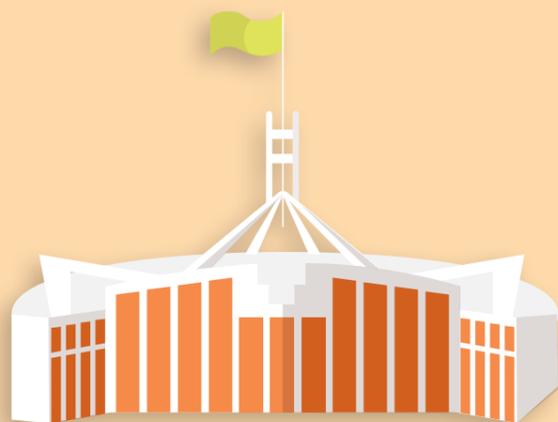
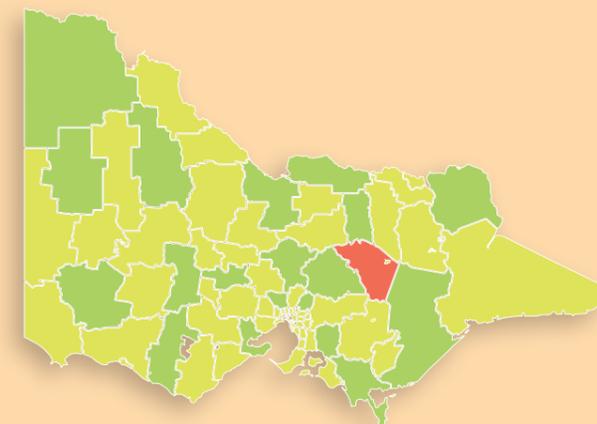
Federal



State



Local



# Three levels of government

## How to deliver

While taking students through the content make sure they understand the difference between Federal, State and Local.

### Steps

- Take students through the content.
- Use question and answer style to encourage participation.

## Content

*How many levels of government are there in Australia?*

In Australia, there are three levels of government: Federal, State and local.

## Key electoral concepts

- Three levels of government
- Federal
- State
- Local Government is also known as local council

# Federal Government

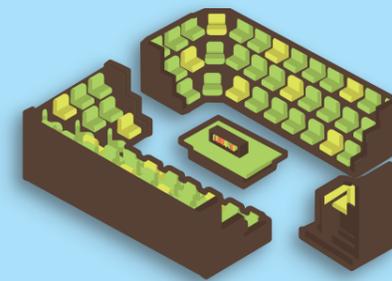
## Parliament of Australia



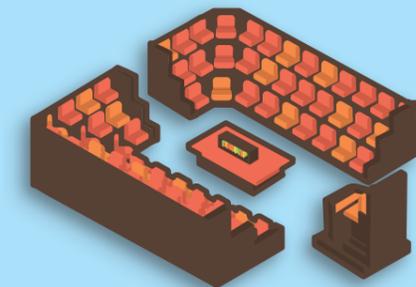
## Prime Minister



## House of Representatives Lower House



## Senate Upper House



# Federal Government

## How to deliver

In this activity students learn to identify services provided by the Federal Government.

Through this process, students should consider why it is important to vote in a Federal election.

### Steps

- Place all the government services cards out. Ask students to identify and match services provided by the Federal Government.

## Content

### *How do they differ?*

This is Australia's Parliament House. It has two houses: House of Representatives or Lower House and Senate or Upper House.

The Federal Government is in Canberra.

It makes decisions for all of Australia.

For example: immigration, tax, Centrelink, Medicare and defence.

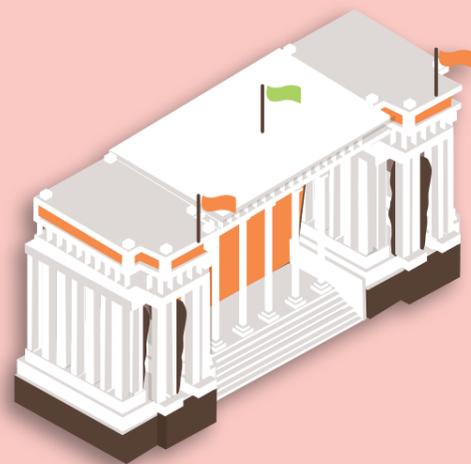
The leader of the Federal Government is the Prime Minister.

## Key electoral concepts

- Federal Government
- Federal Parliament
- Parliament House
- House of Representatives or Lower House
- Senate or Upper House
- Prime Minister

# State Government

Parliament of Victoria



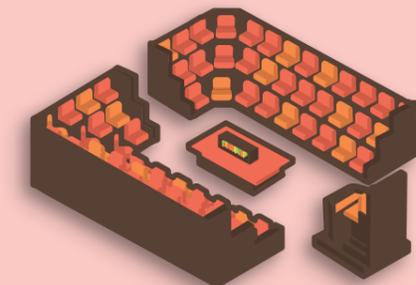
Premier



Legislative Assembly  
Lower House



Legislative Council  
Upper House



# State Government

## How to deliver

In this activity students learn to identify services provided by the State Government.

Through this process, students should consider why it is important to vote in a State election.

### Steps

- From the remaining government services cards, ask students to identify services provided by the State Government.

## Content

### *What about the State Government?*

This is Parliament House Victoria.

It also has two houses: Legislative Assembly or Lower House and Legislative Council or Upper House.

The Victorian Government is in Melbourne.

It makes decisions for the State of Victoria. For example: schools, hospitals, public transport, housing and police.

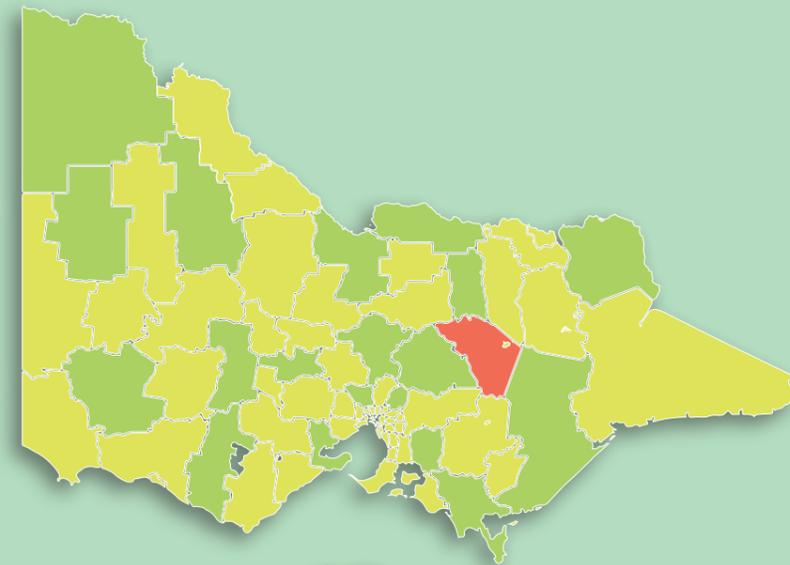
The leader of the State Government is the Premier.

## Key electoral concepts

- State Government
- Victorian Parliament
- Parliament House
- Premier
- Legislative Assembly or Lower House
- Legislative Council or Upper House

# Local Government

Local Council



Mayor



# Local Government

## How to deliver

In this activity students learn to identify services provided by Local Government.

Through this process, students should consider why it is important to vote in a local council election.

### Steps

- From the remaining government services cards ask students to identify if they are all local government services. Ask students to do a final review of where they have placed all the cards and move any they believe are in the wrong place.
- Then review all the cards and explain any that are in the wrong government level section.

## Content

### *And Local Government?*

Local Government or local council.

You vote in the council area in which you live. Local councils make decisions about local issues.

Councils look after rubbish collection, parks, community centres, childcare, parking, libraries, swimming pools, youth centres, cultural festivals and other services.

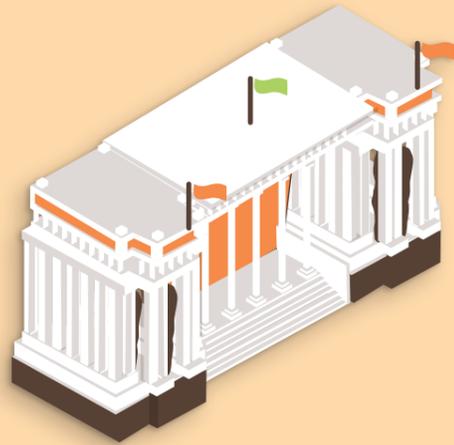
The leader of your local council is the Mayor.

## Key electoral concepts

- Local government
- Local council
- Mayor

# What does the VEC do?

Runs elections



State



Local

Looks after electoral roll

**Enrol to vote or update your details**

You can complete this form online today at [www.vec.vic.gov.au](http://www.vec.vic.gov.au)  
For more information call 1300 805 478

**You can use this form to:**

- enrol to vote
- change your residential or postal address, and/or
- change your name on the electoral roll for federal, state and local government elections in Victoria

**Returning your form**

**Post** Victorian Electoral Commission  
Reply paid 66506  
MELBOURNE VIC 8001  
(No stamp is needed if posted in Australia)

**Fax** 03 9277 7126

**Email** [elector@vec.vic.gov.au](mailto:elector@vec.vic.gov.au)

**In person** To any VEC or AEC office

AEC Australian Electoral Commission | Victorian Electoral Commission VEC

Teaches people how to vote correctly



# What does the VEC do?

## How to deliver

Some students may have never heard of the VEC. It is important that students understand the VEC is independent of government.

### Steps

- Take students through the content.
- Use question and answer style to encourage participation.
- Show students what an enrolment form looks like – ask ‘Have you enrolled to vote?’

## Content

### *What does the Victorian Electoral Commission do?*

The VEC is an independent organisation. We are not a government department. We run State and Local Government elections, and other community polls. We teach people how to vote correctly. We also look after the electoral roll.

### *What is the electoral roll?*

It is a list of Australian citizens aged 18 and over who have enrolled to vote. It shows their name and current address.

## Key electoral concepts

- Victorian Electoral Commission
- Independent
- Elections
- Electoral roll

# Who can enrol and vote?

Over 18 years



Australian Citizen



Enrolled

A thumbnail of a form titled "Enrol to vote or update your details". The form includes the following text:

You can complete this form online today at [www.vec.vic.gov.au](http://www.vec.vic.gov.au)  
For more information call 1300 805 478

**You can use this form to:**

- enrol to vote
- change your residential or postal address, and/or
- change your name on the electoral roll for federal, state and local government elections in Victoria

**Returning your form**

**Post** Victorian Electoral Commission  
Reply paid 66506  
MELBOURNE VIC 8001  
(No stamp is needed if posted in Australia)

**Fax** 03 9277 7126

**Email** [elector@vec.vic.gov.au](mailto:elector@vec.vic.gov.au)

**In person** To any VEC or AEC office

Logos for AEC (Australian Electoral Commission) and VEC (Victorian Electoral Commission) are at the bottom.

# Who can enrol and vote?

## How to deliver

While taking students through the content make sure they understand the difference between Federal, State and Local Government.

### Steps

- Take students through the content.
- Use question and answer style to encourage participation.

## Content

### *Who can vote in Australia?*

All Australian citizens aged 18 and over must enrol and must vote at every Federal, State and local council election.

Non-citizens who pay council rates can enrol to vote at council elections only. This is a special rule.

Are you enrolled to vote?

**No.**

Are you an Australian citizen and over 18 years old?

**Yes. I am. How do I enrol?**

You can get an enrolment form from a post office, fill it in and send it to the VEC. If you want help to fill in a form, please ring us on 131 832 or on an interpreter line 9209 0112. You can also get one from our website:

[vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au)

**Thank you for the information. I will get an enrolment form after this conversation.**

**What happens if I move house?**

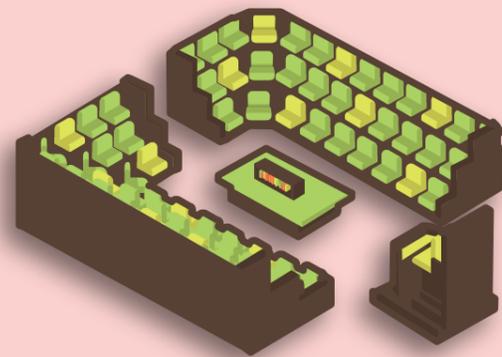
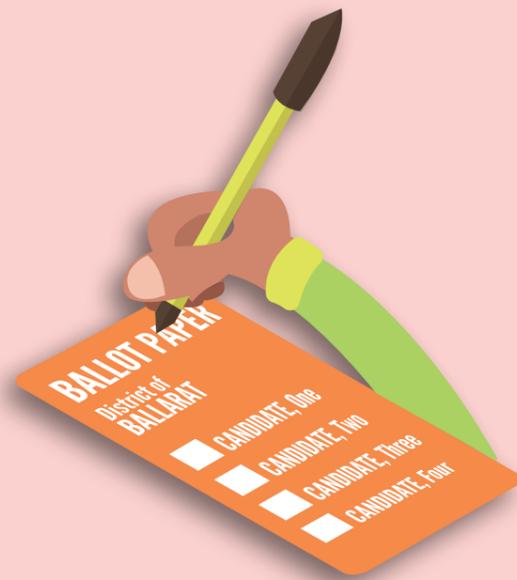
It is very important that you let us know if you move to a new place or change your name. You can use an enrolment form to update your details and send it to us.

## Key electoral concepts

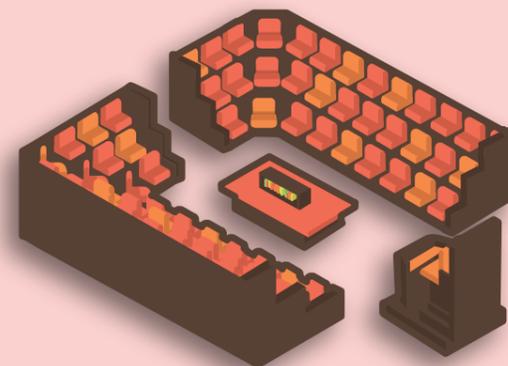
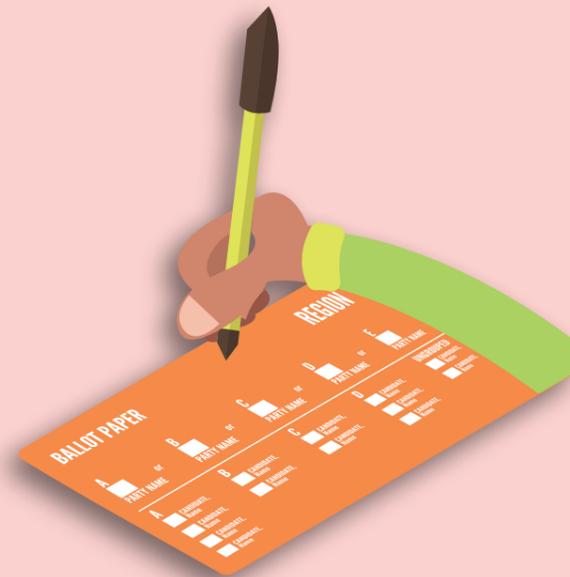
- Three levels of government
- Federal
- State
- Local Government is also known as local council

# How do I vote?

Lower House



Upper House



Ballot box



# How do I vote?

## How to deliver

This is an optional activity. The VEC can teach your students how to vote. However, you can teach your students using this information.

### Steps

- Demonstrate how to complete Lower House and Upper House ballot papers.
- Check if students understand.
- Distribute ballot papers and pens.
- Ask students to complete the ballot papers.
- Go around the room to see if students know what to do.
- Give them about 2 minutes, then check if they have finished.
- Collect ballot papers and check if the students have voted correctly.

## Content

### *How do I vote?*

In Australia, we use numbers when voting. Let's look at how to vote in **Victorian State elections**. You get two **ballot papers**: a smaller one for the Lower House and a bigger one for the Upper House.

To vote for the Lower House write 1 next to the name of the **candidate** you would most like to win the election. Then write 2 for the candidate you like second, 3 for the one you like third and so on, until every box is numbered.

To vote for the Upper House you can vote **above-the-line** or **below-the-line**.

To vote above-the-line pick one party who you want to win and write the number 1 in a box next to the party's name above the black line.

To vote below-the-line you need to pick at least five candidates.

Write the number 1 in the box next to the candidate you would most like to win the election. Then write 2 for the candidate you like second, 3 for the one you like third, 4 for the one you like fourth and 5 for the one you like fifth. You can number more candidates if you wish but you must choose at least five candidates.

### *Can the VEC teach us how to vote?*

Yes, we can. Please contact us. We can come to you and teach your community how to vote.

### *Do I have to vote if I am overseas when there is an election?*

You are encouraged to vote, but you will not be fined if you do not vote. Please keep your tickets to show us that you were overseas.

## Key electoral concepts

- Use numbers when voting
- Victorian State election – two ballot papers:
  - » Lower House (smaller ballot paper)
  - » Upper House (bigger ballot paper)
- People are encouraged to vote, but they will not be fined if they do not vote while overseas. They will receive a please explain letter. The VEC advises people to keep their travel documents to show that they were overseas.
- Candidates