

Constitutional Referendums

1901 – 1999

Subject	Date of Referendums	States in which majority of electors voted in favour	Percentage of voters in favour
Senate Elections	12.12.1906	All	82.65
Finance	13.4.1910	Qld, WA, Tas	49.04
State Debts	13.4.1910	All but NSW	54.95
Legislative Powers	26.4.1911	WA	39.42
Monopolies	26.4.1911	WA	39.89
Trade & Commerce	31.5.1913	Qld, SA, WA	49.38
Corporations	31.5.1913	Qld, SA, WA	49.33
Industrial Matters	31.5.1913	Qld, SA, WA,	49.33
Railway Disputes	31.5.1913	Qld, SA, WA	49.13
Trusts	31.5.1913	Qld, SA, WA	49.78
Nationalisation of Monopolies	31.5.1913	Qld, SA, WA	49.33
Legislative Powers	13.12.1919	Vic, Qld, WA	49.65
Nationalisation of Monopolies	13.12.1919	Vic, Qld, WA	48.64
Industry & Commerce	4.9.1926	NSW, Qld	43.50
Essential Services	4.9.1926	NSW, Qld	42.80
State Debts	17.11.1928	All	74.30
Aviation	6.3.1937	Vic, Qld	53.56
Marketing	6.3.1937	None	36.26
Post-War Reconstruction & Democratic Rights	19.8.1944	SA, WA	45.99
Social Services	28.9.1946	All	54.39
Organised Marketing of Primary Products	28.9.1946	NSW, Vic, WA	50.57
Industrial Employment	28.9.1946	NSW, Vic, WA	50.30
Rent & Prices	29.5.1948	None	40.66
Power to deal with Communists & Communism	22.9.1951	Qld, WA, Tas	49.44
Parliament	27.5.1967	NSW	40.25
Aborigines	27.5.1967	All	90.77
Prices	8.12.1973	None	43.81
Incomes	8.12.1973	None	34.42
Simultaneous Elections	18.5.1974	NSW	48.30
Mode of Altering the Constitution	18.5.1974	NSW	47.99
Democratic Elections	18.5.1974	NSW	47.20
Local Government Bodies	18.5.1974	NSW	46.85
Simultaneous Elections	21.5.1977	NSW, Vic, SA	62.20
Senate Casual Vacancies	21.5.1977	All	73.32
Territory Voting in Referendums	21.5.1977	All	77.72
Retirement of Judges	21.5.1977	All	80.10
Terms of Senators	1.12.1984	NSW, Vic	50.64
Interchange of powers	1.12.1984	None	47.06
Parliamentary Terms	3.9.1988	None	32.91
Fair Elections	3.9.1988	None	37.59
Local Government	3.9.1988	None	33.61
Rights and Freedoms	3.9.1988	None	30.79
Republic	6.11.1999	None	45.13
Preamble	6.11.1999	None	39.34

Constitutional Referendums

Australian citizens vote in referendums to approve or reject proposed changes to the Australian Constitution.

The Constitution can only be changed by this process.

To become law, each proposed change to the Constitution must be approved by a 'double majority' of electors voting for the proposed changes. That is:

- a national majority of electors from all States and Territories; and
- a majority of electors in a majority of the States (ie at least four of the six states).

The votes of people living in any of Australia's internal or external territories only count towards the national majority.

Before a referendum can be held a Bill must be passed by both Houses of Parliament or passed twice in either the House of Representatives or the Senate.

A referendum must be held no sooner than 2 months and no later than 6 months if the Bill is passed by both Houses. The Governor-General may put the proposal to electors if the Bill is passed by only one House.

In the four weeks after the Bill is passed, the "yes" case is prepared by Members and Senators who voted for the proposed changes. The "no" case is prepared by those Members and Senators who voted against the proposed changes. The Australian Electoral Commission organises the printing and posting to every elector of a 'Yes' case and a 'No' case if an authorised case is provided to the AEC within four weeks following the passage of the Bill through the House or Houses of Parliament. The 'Yes' case is required to be authorised by the Members and Senators who voted for the proposed changes. The 'No' case is required to be authorised by those Members and Senators who voted against those changes.

The Governor-General issues a writ for a referendum which must be held on a Saturday. Sometimes they are held in conjunction with ordinary elections but sometimes they are held separately.

There are usually several proposed changes on a referendum ballot paper.

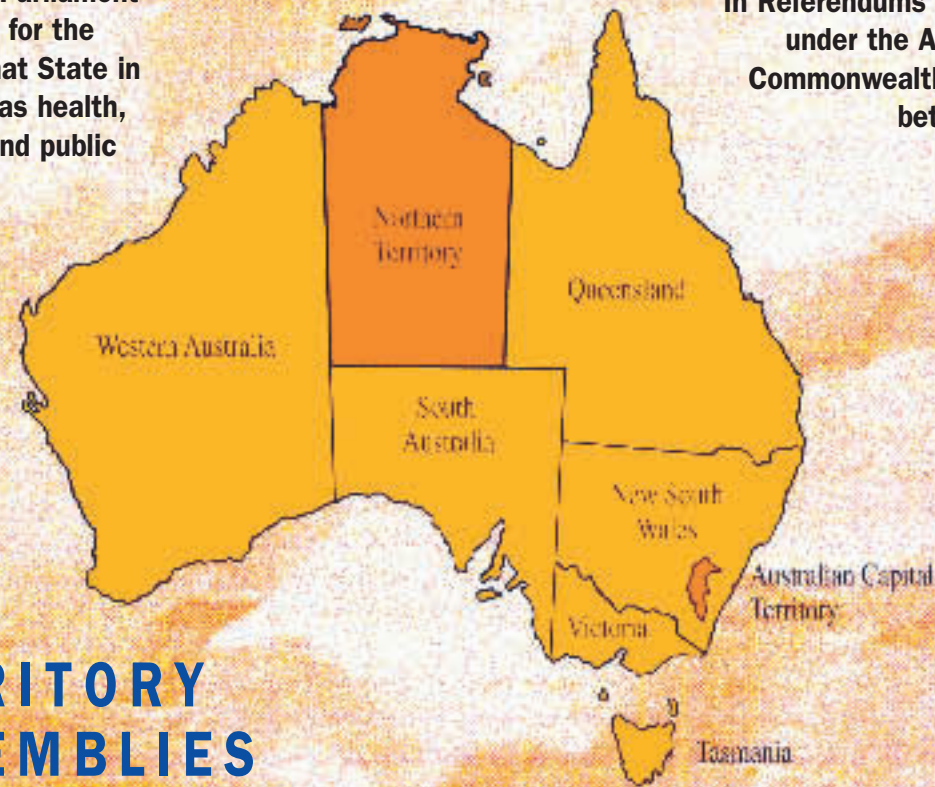
Electors show they agree with a proposed change by writing "yes" in the appropriate square. If they do not agree with a proposed change they write "no" in the appropriate square.

Since Federation there have been 44 proposals for constitutional change put to Australian electors but only 8 have been approved.

A U S T R A L I A

STATE PARLIAMENTS

Each State Parliament makes laws for the people of that State in areas such as health, education and public transport.



TERRITORY ASSEMBLIES

Each Territory Legislative Assembly makes laws for the people of that Territory in areas such as health, education and public transport.

A Federal Nation

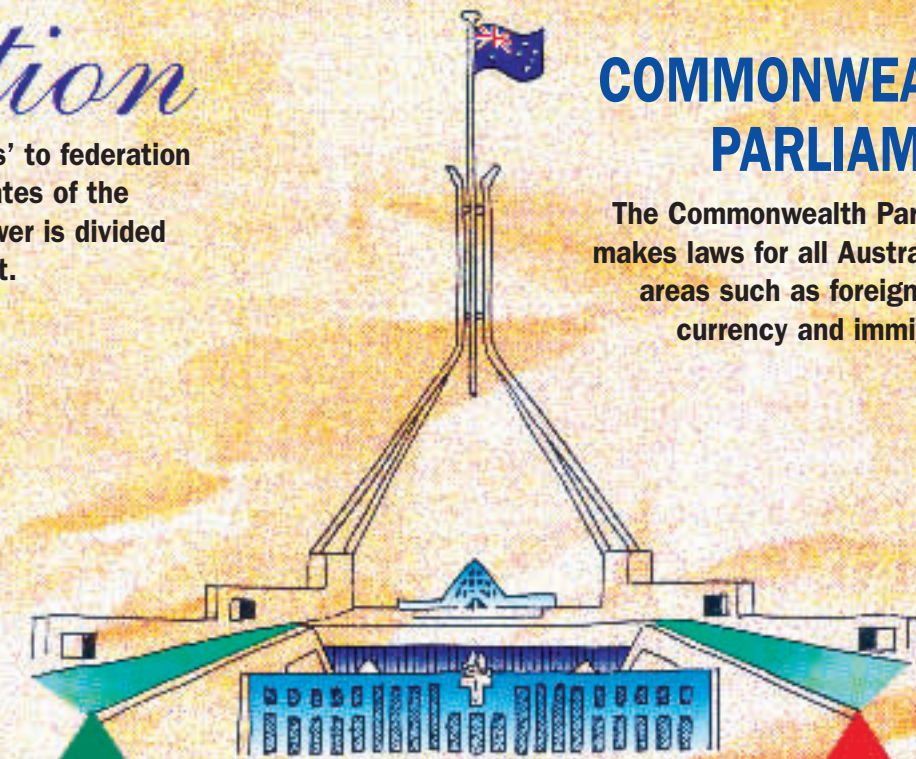
In Referendums held in the 1890's the people of the six colonies voted 'Yes' to federation under the Australian Constitution. The six colonies became the six States of the Commonwealth of Australia. Australia is a federal nation. Law-making power is divided between State Parliaments and the Commonwealth Parliament.



By voting in referendums the people of the six States and two Territories decide whether to accept or reject proposed changes to the Australian Constitution.

THE COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENT

The Commonwealth Parliament makes laws for all Australians in areas such as foreign affairs, currency and immigration.



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The Commonwealth Parliament meets in Canberra. It consists of two Houses.

SENATE



Western Australian Parliament
Perth
2 Houses:
Legislative Assembly
Legislative Council

South Australian Parliament
2 Houses:
House of Assembly
Legislative Council



Victorian Parliament
Melbourne
2 Houses:
Legislative Assembly
Legislative Council

New South Wales Parliament
Sydney
2 Houses:
Legislative Assembly
Legislative Council



Northern Territory Legislative Assembly
Darwin
1 House:
Legislative Assembly

Queensland Parliament
Brisbane
1 House:
Legislative Assembly



Tasmanian Parliament
Hobart
2 Houses:
House of Assembly
Legislative Council

Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly
Canberra
1 House:
Legislative Assembly

