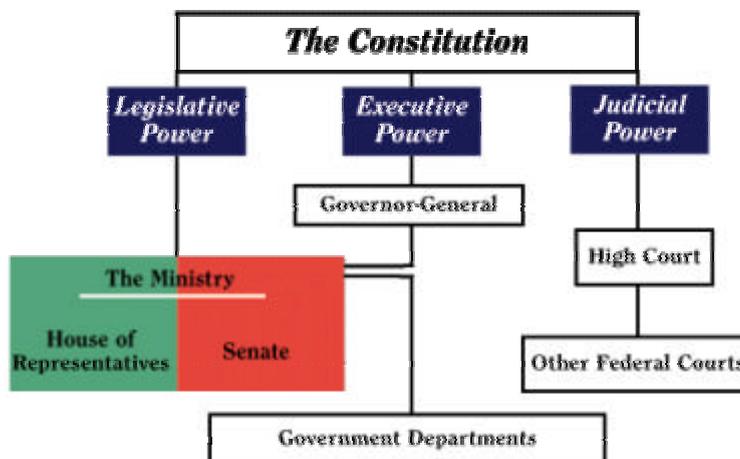


AUSTRALIA'S PARLIMENTARY PROCESS

When the Australian Constitution was passed as a British Act of Parliament in 1900 and came into force on 1 January 1901, it established a federal system of government. This system, sometimes called the *three arms of government* divides power between the Legislative Parliament, the Executive Government and the Judiciary.

This form of government, based on the United Kingdom's style of government is regarded as the Westminster System where the legislative power makes the laws, the executive power carries out and enforces the laws, and the judiciary power interprets the laws and applies them to individual cases. The separation of power aims to provide a balance and equity indecision making for the benefit of the nation's citizens.



Source: Parliamentary Education Office
<http://www.aph.gov.au/parl.htm#parlsys>

The Legislative Power consists of the House of Representatives and the Senate –all of whom are elected by the voting population. The Executive Power comprises of the Prime minister and the Cabinet of Senior Ministers. The Judicial Power – through the High court of Australia and other federal courts interprets the nations laws and makes judgements accordingly.

The Prime Minister is the elected Head of the government. The Prime ministers political party hold the majority of seats in Parliament- the Opposition holds the minority and takes on the role of scrutinising the proposals and decisions of the government.

The Cabinet is presided over by the Prime Minister and is the government's most senior policy- making body. Approximately 17 Government Ministers are in the Cabinet. Ministers are sitting members of both the House of Representatives and the Senate and are chosen for the role by the Prime Minister.

The Queen of England is the head of state in Australia. The Queen's powers are decreed in Australia's Constitution. The Governor-General represents the Queen in Australia. The Governor General acts on behalf of the Queen at ceremonial functions and special occasions of national interest, has executive powers in the Acts of Parliament and in some circumstances has the power to dissolve the House of Representatives.