

Three tiers of government

- 3 tiers (levels) of government
 - Federal
 - State
 - Local (Municipal)

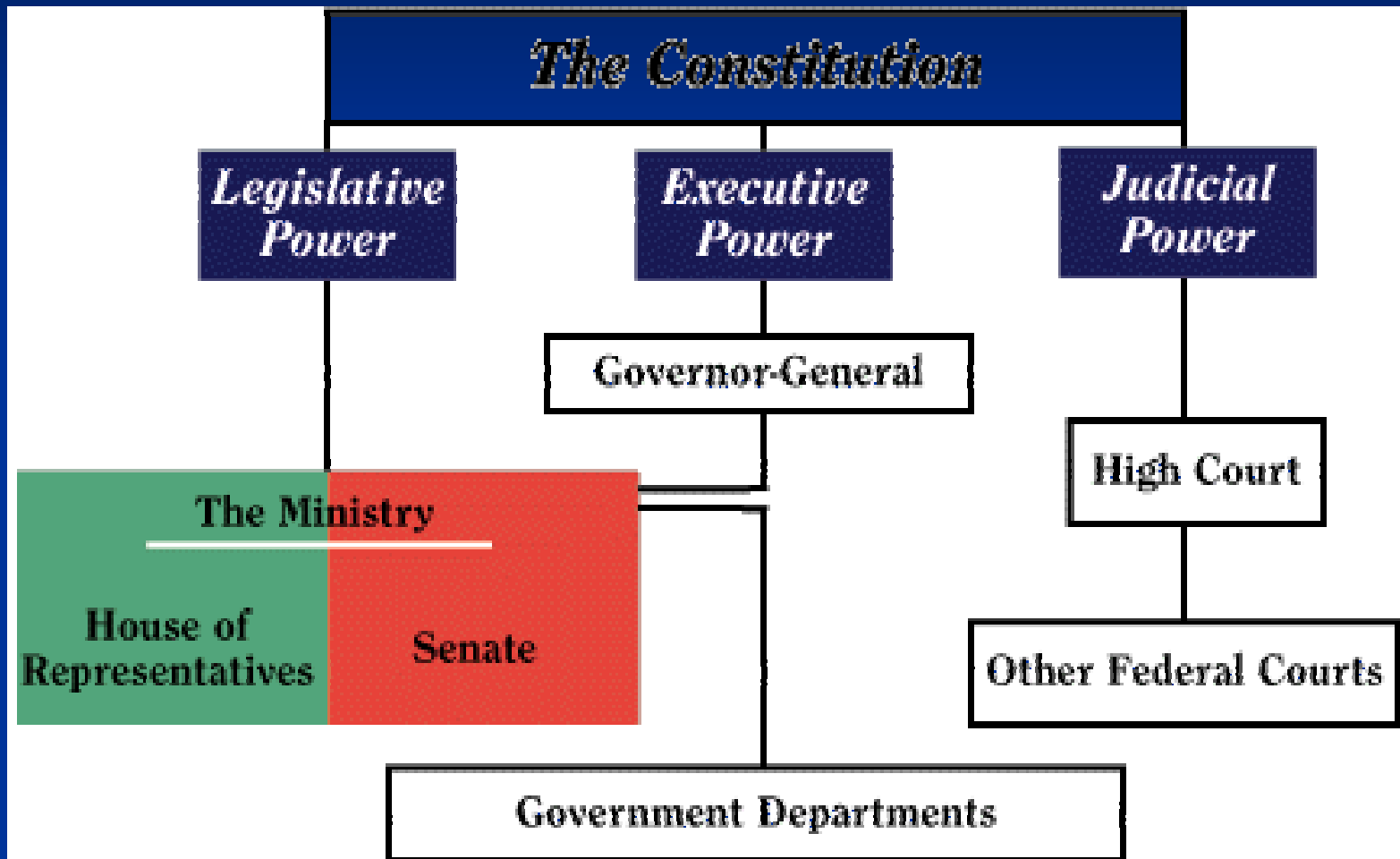
Overview

- 1901: 6 Australian colonies federated Commonwealth of Australia
- State and commonwealth systems from British Westminster system with US features
- 822 elected MPs = 224 federal and 598 State/Territory
(1999 figures)
- Legislative power of Commonwealth vested in Parliament of the Commonwealth (Queen through the GG, Senate and House of Representatives)
- State and Federal parliaments bicameral (except Queensland)

Federal: structure

- **Upper House** : Senate (76 seats)
- Senate= 12 senators from each State & 2 each Territories, elected every 6 years except Territory every 3 years (except in double dissolution)
- **Lower House**: House of Representatives
- Twice as Senate, 150 members elected every 3 years
- Members House of Representatives single-member electorates based on population appr. 80,000 votes
- **Executive Government** = System of Cabinet or 'responsible' Government, Westminster tradition, command majority in HR

Federal System of Government separation of 3 powers



Federal: areas

federal government has constitutional jurisdiction/responsibility for the following areas.

DEFENCE:

- maintain an Army, Navy and Air Force;
- develop policy about defending Australia.

SOCIAL SECURITY:

- provide money to needy Australians eg. retired, disabled and unemployed people;
- provide money to families with children.

IMMIGRATION:

- make decisions about which people, including refugees, can come and live in Australia.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS:

- ensure Australia has a good relationship with other countries;
- provide assistance to countries in need.

TAXATION:

- collect money from the income of Australian residents and business;
- money raised from taxes helps pay for the services the government provides eg. defence, social security.

Other federal government responsibilities include trade, postal services, passports, control of television and radio, currency, airports and air safety.

State & Territory Government

- all State parliaments bicameral (except Queensland abolished UH in 1922)
- Lower House in NSW, Vic, Qld & WA known as **Legislative Assembly** and Upper House **Legislative Council**
- State governments responsible for powers not administered by Federal Government.

State: areas

State governments have responsibility for the following areas:

- ✓ hospitals
- ✓ schools
- ✓ public
- ✓ transport
- ✓ roads and motor registration
- ✓ police
- ✓ fire and ambulance
- ✓ national parks and wildlife
- ✓ water resources
- ✓ tourism
- ✓ agriculture
- ✓ mining and natural resources

Local

- Local government comes under jurisdiction of State Governments
- Generally include:
 - Town planning
 - Construction and maintenance of local roads
 - Streets and bridges
 - Water
 - Sewerage and drainage systems
 - Public health and sanitary services
 - Supervision of building
 - Administration of slaughtering
 - Weights & measures and other regulations
 - Development & maintenance of parks, recreational grounds, swimming pools, public libraries and community centres.
- Victoria has 79 Councils
- Administered under **Local Government Act 1989** with a Local Government Charter (*Melbourne City Council has additional objectives*)

Areas of overlap

- Move towards joint-areas (collision)
- Prominent policy areas: education, health care (hospitals), infrastructure
- State-federal divide known as Commonwealth debate = powers, jurisdiction and relationship ongoing debate about the future of our political system
- COAGS= Council of Australian Governments (Premiers meeting) meet to discuss budget allocation from federal taxation revenue
- Also specialised ministerial meetings between states and federal counterparts to discuss/formulate national policy on eg. Crime, police regulations, transport etc.
- Divide accentuated during electoral circles especially when federal and/or state governments are from opposition parties (eg. Scoresby Freeway, hospital funding, public vs independent (private) school federal funding rates)

Areas of overlap

➤ Revenue/expenditure regime

- ✓ Federal government – tax (direct and indirect)
- ✓ state government collects fees, fines, licences, etc.
- ✓ Local government: rates, fines, services, etc.

NSW Premier Bob Carr flags federal government undertake direct funding of hospitals rather than provide state governments with lump-sum health budget

Further information

- Websites:
- Parliament of Australia at www.aph.gov.au
- Parliament of Victoria at www.parliament.vic.gov.au
- Election results: Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) at www.aec.gov.au
- State and Council elections and systems Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) at www.vec.vic.gov.au
- Victoria Online - local, state and federal government information and services at www.vic.gov.au
- Municipal Association of Victoria at www.mav.asn.au