

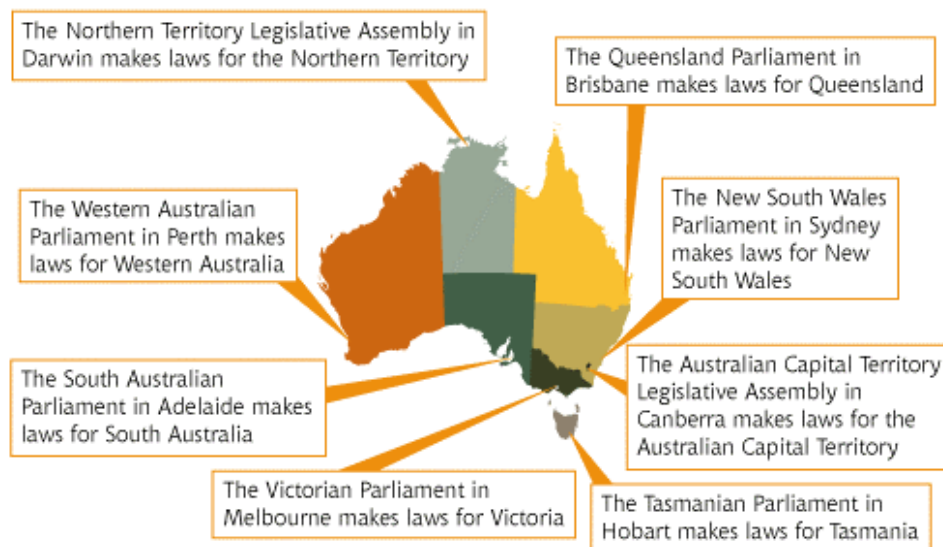
FEDERATION

In the mid 1800's Australia was essentially six separate self-governing colonies of the British Empire. Approximately 60 years after Europeans first settled on the Australian continent, these colonies each formed their first parliaments.

During the final years of the 1800's political representatives from each region met to write Australia's Constitution. When all colonies finally agreed upon the constitutional union in 1899, it was carried to London in 1900 as a Bill to be put to the British Parliament.

In 1901 the colonies officially became States of Australia. This union formed the Federation of the States of Australia – originally called the *Parliament of the Commonwealth*. Based upon the new Constitution of Australia each State transferred some of their governing powers to the Commonwealth Government.

Later in 1911, Australia's Commonwealth Government created the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory.



Source: Parliamentary Education Office
<http://www.peo.gov.au/students/library/pages/0224.html>

This Federal system rested on two Constitutional principles:

1. That Australia would be a federal nation, formed by the union of the self-governing states, in which the people of each state would elect their state parliaments to exercise state responsibilities
2. That the national legislature, the Parliament of the Commonwealth, would be bicameral consisting of two houses—one representing the people as a whole and one representing the people voting by their states—and that for any law to pass the consent of both houses would be necessary.

Australia's federal system of government consists of three branches: the Legislature (the law-making body), the Executive (the body that administers the laws), and the Judiciary (the body which interprets the law).