

Three Levels of Government

In Australia there are three levels of government. The Federal Government is at the top level and is responsible for running the country. The second level is the State Government. Each State of Australia has its own government. The third level is Local Government which is responsible for running cities, towns and country areas.



The **Federal Parliament** is situated in **Canberra**, the nation's capital. The Federal Parliament makes the laws which are carried out by the Federal Government. There are **two houses** of Parliament: the **House of Representatives** and the **Senate**. Members and Senators are elected by Australian voters. The **Prime Minister** is a member of the **House of Representatives** and the **leader** of the **Federal Government**. The **Constitution** allows the Federal Parliament to have more powers than either State or Local governments. The Federal Government is responsible for many services. Some of these are:



employment



telecommunications



airports



immigration/customs



defence



income/company taxes

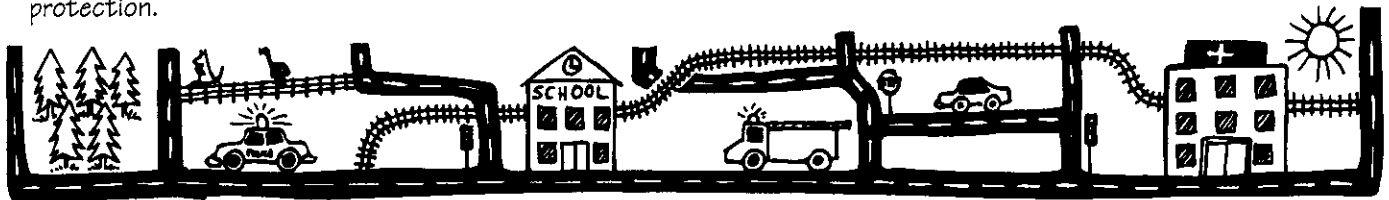


pensions/family support



radio/
television
control

Each **State** or **Territory** in Australia has its own **government, parliament and Parliament House**. Laws are made about State matters in Parliament House, which is located in each State's capital city. The leader of the State Government is the **Premier**. Each of the States, except Queensland, has two Houses of Parliament: the Upper House is called the Legislative Council and the Lower House is called the Legislative Assembly. Each Territory has only one House of Parliament. **State Governments** obtain **more than half their money** from the **Federal Government**. The rest comes from **taxes** on goods and services. The State Government is responsible for many services. Some of these are: hospitals, schools, roads, railways, forestry, fire brigade, ambulance, police, motor registration and wildlife protection.



Local councils make decisions and laws, called bylaws, on **local, town or city matters**. Local governments may be known as shires, municipalities, boroughs, towns or cities. The **leader** of the council or shire is called the **Mayor** or **Shire President**. **Local Government** pays for different services with **State and Federal grants and taxes, called rates, from land owners**. Some services that Local Governments are responsible for are: libraries, rubbish collection, buildings and permits, swimming pools, child care centres, drains and footpaths, street signs, traffic control, animal control and rate collection.