

# The Australian Curriculum

<b>Subjects</b>	7–10 Civics and Citizenship
<b>Year levels</b>	Year 7, Year 8, Year 9 and Year 10
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# The Australian Curriculum Humanities and Social Sciences

# Humanities and Social Sciences

## Overview

### Introduction

The humanities and social sciences are the study of human behaviour and interaction in social, cultural, environmental, economic and political contexts. The humanities and social sciences have a historical and contemporary focus, from personal to global contexts, and consider challenges for the future.

In the Australian Curriculum, the Humanities and Social Sciences learning area includes a study of history, geography, civics and citizenship and economics and business.

Through studying Humanities and Social Sciences, students will develop the ability to question, think critically, solve problems, communicate effectively, make decisions and adapt to change. Thinking about and responding to issues requires an understanding of the key historical, geographical, political, economic and societal factors involved, and how these different factors interrelate.

The Humanities and Social Science subjects in the Australian Curriculum provide a broad understanding of the world in which we live, and how people can participate as active and informed citizens with high-level skills needed for the 21st century.

### Key ideas

Through their learning in each subject or sub-strand, students develop knowledge and understanding relating to broader enduring ideas that underpin the Humanities and Social Sciences in the Australian Curriculum, which are represented in varying ways across the subjects. The key ideas are outlined below:

#### Who we are, who came before us, and traditions and values that have shaped societies

Students explore their own identity, Australia's heritage and cultural diversity, and Australia's identity as a nation in the world. They examine the significance of traditions and shared values within society.

#### How societies and economies operate and how they are changing over time

Students learn about Australian society and other societies in the world, both past and present; and how they function socially, culturally, economically and politically. Students examine developments that have resulted in or are bringing about change.

#### The ways people, places, ideas and events are perceived and connected

Students are provided with opportunities to explore different perceptions of people, places, ideas and events. They develop an understanding of the interdependent nature of the world and the interrelationships within and between the natural environment, human communities and economies. They explore how people, ideas and events are connected over time and increasingly interconnected across local, national, regional and global contexts.

#### How people exercise their responsibilities, participate in society and make informed decisions

Students examine how individuals and groups have participated in and contributed to society past and present. They examine the rights and responsibilities of individuals and groups over time and in different contexts. They develop an understanding of the need to make decisions, the importance of ethical considerations and being informed when making decisions, the processes for decision-making and the implications of decisions that are made for individuals, society, the economy and the environment.

Click on a segment of the diagram to access subject- or sub-strand-specific illustrations.

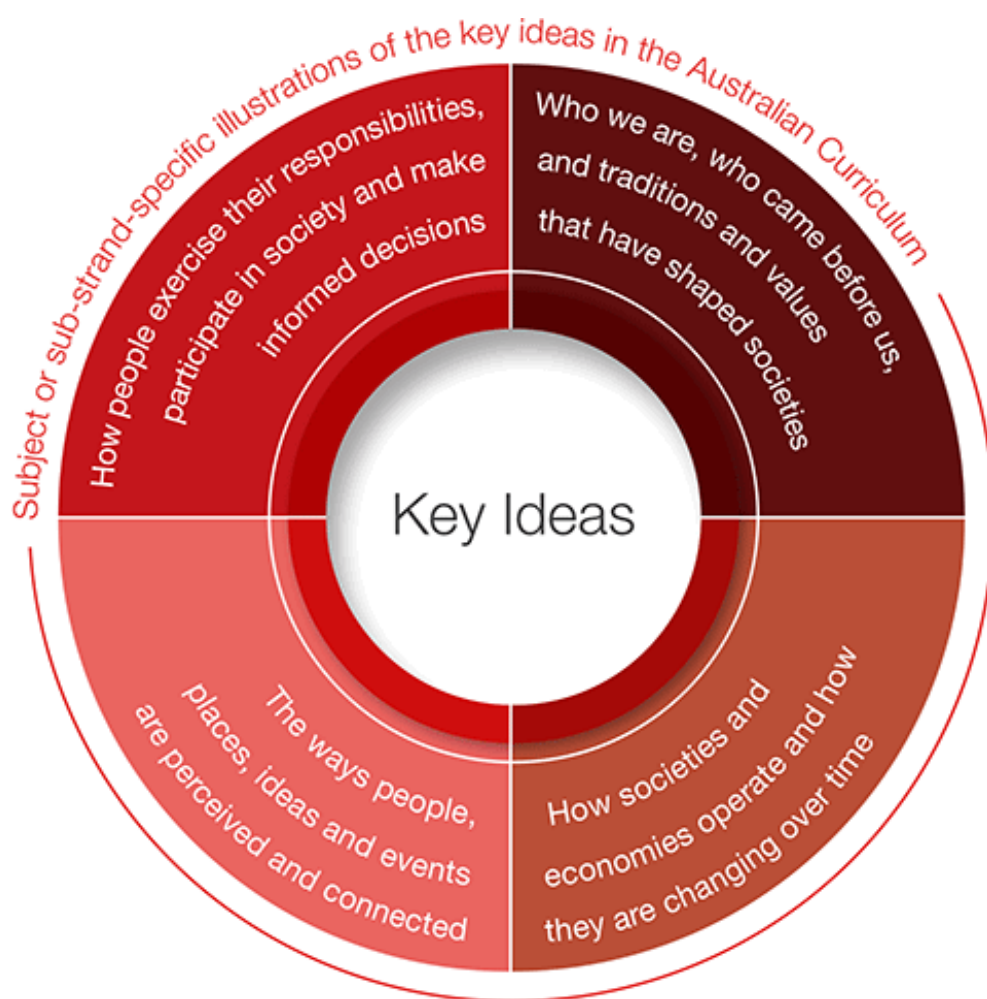


Figure 1: Subject or sub-strand-specific illustrations of the key ideas in the Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum

## Who we are, who came before us, and traditions and values that have shaped societies

### History

- Family, local and Australian history; and celebrations and commemoration
- The longevity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' histories and cultures
- The legacy of Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome

### Geography

- The influence of culture on the organisation of places, and their representations
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' special connections to Country/Place
- The role of people's environmental worldviews in shaping societies

### Civics and Citizenship

- The influence of social media in shaping identities and attitudes to diversity
- The shared values of Australian Citizenship
- The values that underpin Australia's system of government (including British and American influences and a Christian heritage)

## Economics and Business

- The contribution of work to people's sense of identity
- The 'market system' as a defining feature of Australia's economy
- Influences on consumer and financial choices

## How societies and economics operate and how they are changing over time

### History

- The social structure of ancient societies and their legacy
- The impact of the significant periods on societies (Industrial Revolution, Renaissance, Scientific Revolution, Enlightenment, British imperialism, nationalism and globalisation)
- The development of democracy in Australia

### Geography

- The human alteration of environments
- The role of government and non-government organisations in improving human wellbeing and planning for sustainable futures
- Migration and the increasing concentration of people in urban areas

### Civics and Citizenship

- The operation of the three levels of government and Australia's legal system in Australia
- The development of self-government in Australia
- How governments respond to social and economic change

## Economics and Business

- The influence of government on the ways markets operate in Australia
- The shifting importance of different sectors in the Australian economy
- How societies use limited resources for changing needs and wants now and in the future

## The ways people, places, ideas and events are perceived and connected

### History

- Different perspectives on the arrival of the First Fleet and the colonial presence
- The causes of and relationship between events such as World War I, World War II and the Cold War
- Global influences on Australian culture

### Geography

- People's perceptions of places and how these influence their connections to different places
- How human and natural systems are connected and interdependent
- How places in Australia are connected to other places across the world

### Civics and Citizenship

- How groups within society perceive each other and relate to one another
- The influence of global connectedness and mobility on Australian identity
- Australian's rights and responsibilities towards each other and Australia's international obligations

## Economics and Business

- The performance of the Australian economy and how this is perceived by different groups
- How participants in the global economy are interdependent
- Different ways that entrepreneurs and businesses succeed

## How people exercise their responsibilities, participate in society and make informed decisions

### History

- The development of rights in Australia for women, children, Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander Peoples and other groups
- The participation of people in human rights and environmental campaigns in Australia
- The contributions and achievements of individuals and groups to Australia's development

### Geography

- Strategies used to enhance the liveability of places
- World views about sustainability and environments and how they are expressed
- The management and planning of Australia's urban future

### Civics and Citizenship

- The role of the electoral and representative systems of government
- The participation of groups in civic life, such as social, cultural, political and religious groups
- The importance of active and informed citizenship in decision-making and the use of democratic processes

## Economics and Business

- The responsibilities of employers and employees in the workplace
- How individuals and businesses plan to achieve short- and long-term financial objectives
- The concept of opportunity cost as a means of making informed decisions about alternative uses of resources

## Structure

In the Australian Curriculum, the Humanities and Social Sciences learning area comprises five subjects: F–6/7 Humanities and Social Sciences, and Years 7–10 History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship and Economics and Business. In all five subjects, the curriculum is organised into two broad interrelated strands: knowledge and understanding, and inquiry and skills

In the F–6/7 Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum, history, geography, civics and citizenship and economics and business are presented as sub-strands of the knowledge and understanding strand. In these years, students are introduced to history and geography from Foundation Year, civics and citizenship in Year 3 and economics and business in Year 5. In Years 7–10, the curriculum is organised by subject. In Years 9 and 10, student access to Geography, Civics and Citizenship and Economics and Business will be determined by school authorities or individual schools.

Table 1: Humanities and Social Sciences in the Years F-10 curriculum

	Foundation – Year 2	Years 3–4	Years 5–6/7	Years 7–10
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<b>History</b>	Humanities and Social Sciences	Humanities and Social Sciences	Humanities and Social Sciences	History
<b>Geography</b>				Geography
<b>Civics and Citizenship</b>	N/A			Civics and Citizenship
<b>Economics and Business</b>	N/A	N/A		Economics and Business

## PDF documents

Resources and support materials for the Australian Curriculum: Humanities and Social Sciences are available as PDF documents.

F-10 HASS Key ideas - Subject sub-strand illustrations



# The Australian Curriculum Humanities and Social Sciences - 7–10 Civics and Citizenship

# 7–10 Civics and Citizenship

## Overview

### Rationale

A deep understanding of Australia's federal system of government and the liberal democratic values that underpin it is essential in enabling students to become active and informed citizens who participate in and sustain Australia's democracy.

The Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship provides students with opportunities to investigate political and legal systems, and explore the nature of citizenship, diversity and identity in contemporary society. Emphasis is placed on the federal system of government, derived from the Westminster system, and the liberal democratic values that underpin it such as freedom, equality and the rule of law. The curriculum explores how the people, as citizens, choose their governments; how the system safeguards democracy by vesting people with civic rights and responsibilities; how laws and the legal system protect people's rights; and how individuals and groups can influence civic life.

The curriculum recognises that Australia is a secular nation with a multicultural, multi-faith society and a Christian heritage, and promotes the development of inclusivity by developing students' understanding of broader values such as respect, civility, equity, justice and responsibility. It acknowledges the experiences and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their identities within contemporary Australia. While the curriculum strongly focuses on the Australian context, students also reflect on Australia's position and international obligations and the role of citizens today, both within Australian and in an interconnected world.

Through the study of civics and citizenship, students can develop skills of inquiry, values and dispositions that enable them to be active and informed citizens; to question, understand and contribute to the world in which they live. The curriculum also offers opportunities for students to develop a wide range of general skills and capabilities, including an appreciation of diverse perspectives, empathy, collaboration, negotiation, self-awareness and intercultural understanding.

The Civics and Citizenship curriculum aims to reinforce students' appreciation and understanding of what it means to be a citizen. It explores ways in which students can actively shape their lives, value their belonging in a diverse and dynamic society, and positively contribute locally, nationally, regionally and globally. As reflective, active and informed decision-makers, students will be well placed to contribute to an evolving and healthy democracy that fosters the wellbeing of Australia as a democratic nation.

### Aims

The Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship aims to ensure students develop:

- a lifelong sense of belonging to and engagement with civic life as an active and informed citizen in the context of Australia as a secular democratic nation with a dynamic, multicultural, multi-faith society and a Christian heritage
- knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the values, principles, institutions and practices of Australia's system of democratic government and law, and the role of the citizen in Australian government and society
- skills, including questioning and research; analysis, synthesis and interpretation; problem-solving and decision-making; communication and reflection, to investigate contemporary civics and citizenship issues and foster responsible participation in Australia's democracy
- the capacities and dispositions to participate in the civic life of their nation at a local, regional and global level and as individuals in a globalised world.

## Structure

The Years 7–10 Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship is organised into two interrelated strands: civics and citizenship knowledge and understanding, and civics and citizenship inquiry and skills.

### Civics and citizenship knowledge and understanding strand

The civics and citizenship knowledge and understanding strand comprises three key focus areas or sub-strands at each year level: government and democracy; laws and citizens; and citizenship, diversity and identity.

Government and democracy involves a study of Australian democracy and the key institutions, processes and roles that people play in Australia's system of government. Laws and citizens examines Australia's legal system, the creation of laws and the rights and legal obligations of Australian citizens. Citizenship, diversity and identity explores the shared values of Australian citizenship, Christian traditions, the diversity of Australia as a multicultural and multi-faith society, what shapes identity, and obligations as citizens in a globalised world.

### Civics and citizenship inquiry and skills strand

The civics and citizenship inquiry and skills strand focuses on the skills of questioning and research; analysis, synthesis and interpretation; problem-solving and decision-making; and communication and reflection.

Questioning and research involves students asking questions about the society in which they live. Students identify, locate and research a range of sources of information to investigate Australia's political and legal systems. Analysis, synthesis and interpretation engages students in applying critical thinking skills and developing and accounting for different points of view. Problem-solving and decision-making involves students working collaboratively, negotiating and developing strategies to resolve issues, and planning for action. In communication and reflection, students present ideas, viewpoints and arguments based on evidence about civics and citizenship topics and issues using subject-specific language, and reflect on their cultural identity, motivations, values and behaviours.

Civics and citizenship skills are described in bands of schooling at two-year intervals.

### Relationship between the strands

The two strands are to be integrated in the development of a teaching and learning program. The knowledge and understanding strand provides the content focus through which particular skills are to be developed.

### Key inquiry questions

Each year level includes key questions which provide a guiding framework for developing students' civics and citizenship knowledge, understanding and skills of inquiry.

## PDF documents

Resources and support materials for the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship are available as PDF documents.

Civics and Citizenship: Sequence of content 7-10

Civics and Citizenship: Sequence of achievement 7-10

# 7–10 Civics and Citizenship

## Year 7

The Year 7 curriculum provides a study of the key features of Australia’s system of government and explores how this system aims to protect all Australians. Students examine the Australian Constitution and how its features, principles and values shape Australia’s democracy. They look at how the rights of individuals are protected through the justice system. Students also explore how Australia’s secular system of government supports a diverse society with shared values.

The civics and citizenship content at this year level involves two strands: civics and citizenship knowledge and understanding, and civics and citizenship skills. These strands are interrelated and have been developed to be taught in an integrated way, and in ways that are appropriate to specific local contexts. The order and detail in which they are taught are programming decisions.

### Key inquiry questions

A framework for developing students’ civics and citizenship knowledge, understanding and skills at this year level is provided by the followingkey questions:

- How is Australia’s system of democratic government shaped by the Constitution?
- What principles of justice help to protect the individual’s rights to justice in Australia’s system of law?
- How is Australia a diverse society and what factors contribute to a cohesive society?

## Year 7 Content Descriptions

Civics and Citizenship Knowledge and Understanding	
Government and democracy	Elaborations

The key features of government under the Australian Constitution with a focus on: the separation of powers, the roles of the Executive, the Houses of Parliament, and the division of powers (ACHCK048)



- exploring the concept of the separation of powers between the legislature, executive and judiciary and how it seeks to prevent the excessive concentration of power



- using an issue such as water management, education or health to explore the division of powers between state/territory and federal levels of government and identifying the way that conflicts between state laws and Commonwealth laws are resolved



- describing the role of the Governor-General, the different roles of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Prime Minister, ministers or the Cabinet and courts



- identifying the principles of representative and responsible government that underpin the Australian Constitution



- identifying the composition of the Legislature (the Queen, represented by the Governor-General, and the Senate and the House of Representatives), Executive (the Queen, represented by the Governor-General, Prime Minister and ministers) and Judiciary (the High Court and other federal courts)



- discussing how ministers are subject to the scrutiny of other members of the parliament led by an officially recognised opposition



The process for constitutional change through a referendum (ACHCK049)



- describing the process by which referendums to change the Australian Constitution are initiated and decided



- exploring examples of attempts to change the Australian Constitution by referendum (for example, the successful vote on the Constitution Alteration (Aboriginals) 1967 or the unsuccessful vote on the Constitution Alteration (Establishment of Republic) 1999)



- discussing the advantages and disadvantages of having a Constitution that can only be amended by referendum



## Laws and citizens

## Elaborations

How Australia's legal system aims to provide justice, including through the rule of law, presumption of innocence, burden of proof, right to a fair trial and right to legal representation (ACHCK050)



- discussing the elements of a 'fair trial', including citizens' roles as witnesses and jurors



- exploring how Australians can receive access to justice and legal representation, such as through legal aid



- discussing the meaning and importance of the rule of law, presumption of innocence, and burden of proof



## Citizenship, diversity and identity

## Elaborations

How Australia is a secular nation and a multi-faith society with a Christian heritage (ACHCK051)



- defining the terms 'secular', 'multi-faith' and 'diverse society' and discussing their relevance to Australia today



- identifying trends regarding religious observance in Australian society using the Australian Bureau of Statistics and other data sources



- exploring the diversity of spiritualities among Aboriginal and Torres Islander communities from traditional spirituality to the adoption of other religions such as Christianity and Islam



- appreciating the cultural and historical foundations of Australia's Christian heritage



How values, including freedom, respect, inclusion, civility, responsibility, compassion, equality and a 'fair go', can promote cohesion within Australian society (ACHCK052)



- identifying values shared by Australians and deciding which ones could also be considered universal values



- identifying how human rights values are consistent with Australian values



How groups, such as religious and cultural groups, express their particular identities; and how this influences their perceptions of others and vice versa (ACHCK053)



- investigating how and why different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are maintaining and developing their identities and what this means for Australia as a whole



- discussing how stereotypes are linked with people's cultural identity (for example, clothes, accent/language, media representations)



- considering how Australia's location in the Asian region influences interactions between Australians and those living in the region



- discussing how belonging to a religious or cultural group can provide a sense of belonging and how this group membership can shape an individual's identity



- identifying the different ways that cultural and religious groups express their beliefs, identity and experiences (for example, through customs, practices, symbols, language, traditions and art, and virtual communities)



## Civics and Citizenship Skills

### Questioning and research

Develop a range of questions to investigate Australia's political and legal systems (ACHCS054)



### Elaborations

- developing a key question such as 'How does the law protect all individuals?' and related questions to inform the investigation (for example, 'What is the presumption of innocence?')



- considering current events to generate ideas for research



Identify, gather and sort information and ideas from a range of sources (ACHCS055)



- using a range of sources of information to show religious diversity in Australia, such as articles, graphs, charts and statistics



- categorising information under headings that are the focus for research



### Analysis, synthesis and interpretation

### Elaborations

Critically analyse information and ideas from a range of sources in relation to civics and citizenship topics and issues (ACHCS056)



- analysing how information can be used selectively to persuade citizens (for example, in a debate about a suggested constitutional change)



- evaluating data from a survey to draw conclusions about a current event or issue



## Problem-solving and decision-making

## Elaborations

Appreciate multiple perspectives and use strategies to mediate differences (ACHCS057)



- identifying the influences or circumstances that may have informed different perspectives about a civics and citizenship issue



- identifying where there is a common understanding or points of agreement in a discussion as a basis for resolving a conflict or differences



Use democratic processes to reach consensus on a course of action relating to a civics or citizenship issue and plan for that action (ACHCS058)



- developing a plan of action that incorporates a consultation process to ensure a range of views are heard and people are provided with opportunities to respond



## Communication and reflection

## Elaborations

Present evidence-based civics and citizenship arguments using subject-specific language (ACHCS059)



- using appropriate terms and concepts such as rule of law, separation of powers and secular nation



- using digital technologies and graphic displays for a specific audience, purpose and context (for example, to argue the case for a constitutional change)



Reflect on their role as a citizen in Australia's democracy (ACHCS060)



- recognising their own emotional reactions when interacting with people who are different from them



- raising awareness of different perspectives (for example, about sustainability challenges)





# 7–10 Civics and Citizenship

## **Year 7 Achievement Standard**

By the end of Year 7, students explain features of Australia's Constitution, including the process for constitutional change. They explain how Australia's legal system is based on the principle of justice. Students explain the diverse nature of Australian society and identify the importance of shared values in promoting a cohesive society.

When researching, students develop a range of questions and gather and analyse information from different sources to investigate Australia's political and legal systems. They consider different points of view on civics and citizenship issues. When planning for action, students take into account multiple perspectives to develop solutions to an issue. Students develop and present arguments on civics and citizenship issues using appropriate texts, terms and concepts. They identify ways they can be active and informed citizens.

# 7–10 Civics and Citizenship

## Year 8

The Year 8 curriculum provides a study of the responsibilities and freedoms of citizens and how Australians can actively participate in their democracy. Students consider how laws are made and the types of laws used in Australia. Students also examine what it means to be Australian by identifying the reasons for and influences that shape national identity.

The civics and citizenship content at this year level involves two strands: civics and citizenship knowledge and understanding, and civics and citizenship skills. These strands are interrelated and have been developed to be taught in an integrated way, and in ways that are appropriate to specific local contexts. The order and detail in which they are taught are programming decisions.






### Key inquiry questions

A framework for developing students' civics and citizenship knowledge, understanding and skills at this year level is provided by the following key questions:

- What are the freedoms and responsibilities of citizens in Australia's democracy?
- How are laws made and applied in Australia?
- What different perspectives are there about national identity?

## Year 8 Content Descriptions

### Civics and Citizenship Knowledge and Understanding

Government and democracy	Elaborations
The freedoms that enable active participation in Australia's democracy within the bounds of law, including freedom of speech, association, assembly, religion and movement (ACHCK061) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• explaining how each freedom supports active participation in Australia's democracy </li><li>• discussing how and why 'the bounds of law' can limit these freedoms </li><li>• considering the circumstances that can lead to dissent in a democracy </li><li>• debating how to manage situations when rights and freedoms are in conflict (for example, whether it should be a matter for parliaments or judges to resolve) </li></ul>

How citizens can participate in Australia's democracy, including use of the electoral system, contact with their elected representatives, use of lobby groups, and direct action (ACHCK062)



- comparing the effectiveness of different forms of participation in Australia's democracy
- exploring how elected representatives can advocate on behalf of citizens
- investigating examples where citizens have taken direct action such as organising a public demonstration or social media campaign
- analysing how opinion polls are conducted and the ways they are used in democratic debate
- exploring the different ways that citizens can participate in and support Australia's democracy through their working lives, such as by serving in the armed services or as a reservist, teaching, representing Australia abroad as a diplomat or aid worker, or joining the police service or the public service



#### Laws and citizens

How laws are made in Australia through parliaments (statutory law) and through the courts (common law) (ACHCK063)



#### Elaborations

- comparing some examples of statutes and common laws and the way they are made and outlining the hierarchy of these different types of laws (for example, that statutes will override the common law)
- distinguishing statutory and common law from executive law (delegated law) and identifying how the Houses of Parliament can disallow delegated legislation
- discussing examples of recent laws passed through parliaments that enact government policy



The types of law in Australia, including criminal law and civil law, and the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customary law (ACHCK064)



- explaining the difference between criminal law and civil law
- considering the significance of customary law for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples



#### Citizenship, diversity and identity

#### Elaborations

The values and beliefs of religions practised in contemporary Australia, including Christianity (ACHCK065)



- identifying Christian traditions that have influenced the development of Australian society, democracy and law



- identifying the values and beliefs of religions practised in contemporary Australia (for example, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism)



Different perspectives about Australia's national identity, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, and what it means to be Australian (ACHCK066)



- investigating representations of Australian identity evident in national day events (such as Anzac Day), and in the media and popular culture, to analyse different perspectives on the interpretation of national identity



- examining contemporary influences on the shaping of Australian national identity, such as the natural environment, immigration, attitudes to Asia and Reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and other Australians



How national identity can shape a sense of belonging in Australia's multicultural society (ACHCK067)



- examining personal stories to explore how individuals relate to national identity and how it impacts on their sense of belonging in the Australian community



- exploring the extent of ethnic diversity in Australia



## Civics and Citizenship Skills

### Questioning and research

Develop a range of questions to investigate Australia's political and legal systems (ACHCS068)



### Elaborations

- developing complex and open-ended questions to explore a civics or citizenship topic such as 'freedoms' (for example, 'What do our freedoms mean in practice?' and 'What do you consider to be the most important freedom?')



Identify, gather and sort information and ideas from a range of sources (ACHCS069)



- identifying sources offering different perspectives on an issue (for example, finding out about the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customary law)



- collating a list of different sources of information and prioritising the list based on an assessment of usefulness and reliability



### Analysis, synthesis and interpretation

### Elaborations

Critically analyse information and ideas from a range of sources in relation to civics and citizenship topics and issues (ACHCS070)



- examining language choices in a range of texts to identify purpose, audience and reliability (for example, those used by candidates in an election campaign or by a lobby group)



- using a variety of sources to develop conclusions about Australian national identity



## Problem-solving and decision-making

## Elaborations

Appreciate multiple perspectives and use strategies to mediate differences (ACHCS071)



- using empathy to appreciate the influences or circumstances that may have informed different perspectives



- recognising assumptions in their own and other people's thinking when mediating differences



- using culturally inclusive behaviours during class discussions and meetings



Use democratic processes to reach consensus on a course of action relating to a civics or citizenship issue and plan for that action (ACHCS072)



- participating in a simulation to achieve consensus (for example, a mock court case or parliamentary committee)



- working in groups to evaluate the options before deciding on any course of action (for example, to influence change relating to a current event or issue)



## Communication and reflection

## Elaborations

Present evidence-based civics and citizenship arguments using subject-specific language (ACHCS073)



- using appropriate terms and concepts such as 'freedoms', 'responsibilities', 'statutory law' and 'customary law'



- creating material for public distribution with a specific purpose and context (for example, an advertisement promoting participation in Australia's democracy)



Reflect on their role as a citizen in Australia's democracy (ACHCS074)



- considering how personal experiences and circumstances influence their identity as a citizen and how they relate to others



- considering the factors that shape the way they meet their responsibilities as a citizen (for example, where they live)



# 7–10 Civics and Citizenship

## **Year 8 Achievement Standard**

By the end of Year 8, students analyse features of Australian democracy, and explain features of Australia's democracy that enable active participation. They recognise different types of law in Australia and explain how laws are made. They identify the diverse belief systems in Australia and analyse issues about national identity and the factors that contribute to people's sense of belonging.

When researching, students develop a range of questions to investigate Australia's political and legal systems and critically analyse information gathered from different sources for relevance. They explain different points of view on civics and citizenship issues. When planning for action, students take into account multiple perspectives, use democratic processes, and develop solutions to an issue. Students develop and present reasoned arguments on civics and citizenship issues using appropriate texts, subject-specific language and concepts. They identify ways they can be active and informed citizens in different contexts.

# 7–10 Civics and Citizenship

## Year 9

The Year 9 curriculum builds students' understanding of Australia's political system and how it enables change. Students examine the ways political parties, interest groups, media and individuals influence government and decision making processes. They investigate the features and principles of Australia's court system, including its role in applying and interpreting Australian law. Students also examine global connectedness and how this is shaping contemporary Australian society.

The civics and citizenship content at this year level involves two strands: civics and citizenship knowledge and understanding, and civics and citizenship skills. These strands are interrelated and have been developed to be taught in an integrated way, and in ways that are appropriate to specific local contexts. The order and detail in which they are taught are programming decisions.








### Key inquiry questions

A framework for developing students' civics and citizenship knowledge, understanding and skills at this year level is provided by the following key questions:

- What influences shape the operation of Australia's political system?
- How does Australia's court system work in support of a democratic and just society?
- How do citizens participate in an interconnected world?

## Year 9 Content Descriptions

### Civics and Citizenship Knowledge and Understanding

Government and democracy	Elaborations
The role of political parties and independent representatives in Australia's system of government, including the formation of governments (ACHCK075) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• investigating how the contemporary party system operates in Australia's liberal democracy and how governments are formed in parliament </li><li>• discussing the meaning of key concepts such as parliamentary majority, the opposition, hung parliament, minority government </li><li>• exploring the role of the Senate and state upper Houses, and the balance of power in these Houses </li></ul>
How citizens' political choices are shaped, including the influence of the media (ACHCK076) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• examining a range of strategies used to persuade citizens' electoral choices such as public debate, media, opinion polls, advertising, interest groups and political party campaigns </li><li>• discussing how social media is used to influence people's understanding of issues </li></ul>

The process through which government policy is shaped and developed, including the role of Prime Minister and Cabinet (ACHCK103)



- investigating the development and implementation of policy and the role of the public service in Australia, including the role of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in proposing policy and the role of parliament in debating it



- identifying the role of parliament and particularly the opposition in debating policy proposed by the Executive, in authorising the government to spend public money and scrutinising the administrative actions of the government



## Laws and citizens

## Elaborations

The key features of Australia's court system and how courts apply and interpret the law, resolve disputes and make law through judgements (ACHCK077)



- creating a visual representation of the court jurisdictions in Australia



- categorising sample cases in relation to the courts in which they would be heard (for example, cases from criminal, consumer, family, human rights and environmental law)



- describing the role of a particular court (for example, a supreme court, a magistrates court or the Family Court of Australia)



- exploring how court judgements impact on the development of law (for example, the role of precedents)



The key principles of Australia's justice system, including equality before the law, independent judiciary, and right of appeal (ACHCK078)



- describing what is meant by each principle and how each works to protect citizens and contribute to a fair society



- examining factors that can undermine the application of the principles of justice (for example, bribery, coercion of witnesses, trial by media and court delays)



- examining how the media, or individuals through social media, could influence the outcome of a trial by publishing information about a defendant that could affect a jury's decision



## Citizenship, diversity and identity

## Elaborations



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How and why individuals and groups, including religious groups, participate in and contribute to civic life (ACHCK079)



- researching the work of a non-government organisation (NGO), philanthropist, community group or religious group and how and why they contribute to the Australian community



- exploring the concept of 'the common good' using examples of how religious groups participate to foster interfaith understanding or social justice



- investigating why a particular group advocates for change (for example, in relation to gender equity)



- exploring the various ways that individuals can contribute to civic life (for example, by volunteering their services to charities and service groups, becoming a Justice of the Peace, making submissions to public enquiries, attending public meetings, serving on local government bodies and providing voluntary help at schools and nursing homes)



- discussing how the Australian Honours System recognises, celebrates and says thank you to those who make a difference and serve others



- investigating how the Australian Honours System works, including the types of awards and how they are announced and presented



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The influence of a range of media, including social media, in shaping identities and attitudes to diversity (ACHCK080)



- analysing how media represent different groups in Australian society and assessing the impact those representations have on community cohesiveness



- investigating a human rights campaign that uses social media and how members of the public have engaged in the issue



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How ideas about and experiences of Australian identity are influenced by global connectedness and mobility (ACHCK081)



- examining stories of how Australian citizens' perspectives on their role in the global community have been influenced by their experiences of living and working in other countries



















































- examining forms of global connectedness such as digital technology, arts, trade, language learning, employment, travel and immigration



- debating the concepts of 'global identity' and 'global citizenship' and their implications for Australian citizens






## Civics and Citizenship Skills

Questioning and research	Elaborations
<p>Develop, select and evaluate a range of questions to investigate Australia's political and legal systems (ACHCS082)</p> <p>   </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>selecting key questions to investigate an aspect of Australia's political and legal systems (for example, the role of juries)</li> </ul> <p>    </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>posing questions which evaluate Australia's democracy such as 'how equal?', 'how representative?' and 'how accountable?'</li> </ul> <p>   </p>
<p>Identify, gather and sort information and ideas from a range of sources and reference as appropriate (ACHCS083)</p> <p> </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>developing categories for sorting information from surveys about people's views on political or legal issues</li> </ul> <p> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identifying why some information has greater accuracy and reliability than other information</li> </ul> <p> </p>
Analysis, synthesis and interpretation	Elaborations
<p>Critically evaluate information and ideas from a range of sources in relation to civics and citizenship topics and issues (ACHCS084)</p> <p> </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>exploring texts for stereotype, over-generalisation and misrepresentation (for example, how cultural groups are represented in the media)</li> </ul> <p>    </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explaining the assumptions or missing information that may affect the reliability of an opinion about an issue (for example, commentary from a traditional form of media)</li> </ul> <p>  </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>comparing and contrasting the varying policies of different political groups on an issue</li> </ul> <p>   </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>applying criteria used to make judgements in civic contexts (for example, Awards for the Order of Australian of the Year, Student Citizen of the Year) to propose candidates for the year ahead</li> </ul> <p></p>
<p>Account for different interpretations and points of view (ACHCS085)</p> <p>   </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>taking on roles for a discussion to explore various points of view about a contemporary political or social issue</li> </ul> <p>    </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>developing an evidence-based argument which recognises different interpretations (for example, about the role of social media in contemporary debates)</li> </ul> <p>    </p>
Problem-solving and decision-making	Elaborations



Recognise and consider multiple perspectives and ambiguities, and use strategies to negotiate and resolve contentious issues (ACHCS086)



- recognising that common issues may need to be seen through diverse cultural lenses  

- recognising that people will not always agree and using strategies to accommodate difference and accept compromise  

- using skills associated with the negotiation process (stating your position clearly, active listening, highlighting strengths, applying reason and logic, identifying common ground)  


Use democratic processes to reach consensus on a course of action relating to a civics or citizenship issue and plan for that action (ACHCS087)





- considering the most appropriate democratic decision-making processes to reach a consensus, such as achieving an absolute majority  

- developing a plan of action using digital technologies that incorporates democratic decision-making processes  


## Communication and reflection

## Elaborations



Present evidence-based civics and citizenship arguments using subject-specific language (ACHCS088)



- using appropriate terms and concepts such as jurisdictions, parliamentary majority and mandate  

- using digital technologies to present an evidence-based argument for persuading an audience to a point of view  


Reflect on their role as a citizen in Australian, regional and global contexts (ACHCS089)



- considering Australian, regional and global futures and how students might contribute as active and informed citizens  

- considering how digital technologies enables them to engage with a global community  


# 7–10 Civics and Citizenship

## Year 9 Achievement Standard

By the end of Year 9, students evaluate features of Australia's political system, and identify and analyse the influences on people's political choices. They explain the key principles of Australia's system of justice and analyse the role of Australia's court system. They analyse a range of factors that influence identities and attitudes to diversity. They reflect on how groups participate and contribute to civic life.

When researching, students analyse a range of questions to investigate Australia's political and legal systems and critically analyse information gathered from different sources for relevance and reliability. They compare and account for different interpretations and points of view on civics and citizenship issues. When planning for action, students take into account multiple perspectives, use democratic processes, and negotiate solutions to an issue. Students develop and present evidence-based arguments on civics and citizenship issues using appropriate texts, subject-specific language and concepts. They analyse ways they can be active and informed citizens in different contexts.

# 7–10 Civics and Citizenship

## Year 10

The Year 10 curriculum develops student understanding of Australia's system of government through comparison with another system of government in the Asian region. Students examine Australia's roles and responsibilities within the international context, such as its involvement with the United Nations. Students also study the purpose and work of the High Court. They investigate the values and practices that enable a democratic society to be sustained.

The civics and citizenship content at this year level involves two strands: civics and citizenship knowledge and understanding, and civics and citizenship skills. These strands are interrelated and have been developed to be taught in an integrated way, and in ways that are appropriate to specific local contexts. The order and detail in which they are taught are programming decisions.

### Key inquiry questions

A framework for developing students' civics and citizenship knowledge, understanding and skills at this year level is provided by the following key questions:

- How is Australia's democracy defined and shaped by the global context?
- How are government policies shaped by Australia's international legal obligations?
- What are the features of a resilient democracy?

## Year 10 Content Descriptions

### Civics and Citizenship Knowledge and Understanding

#### Government and democracy

The key features and values of Australia's system of government compared with at least ONE other system of government in the Asia region (ACHCK090)



#### Elaborations

- categorising the key features of Australia's system of government (for example, democratic elections and the separation of powers) and comparing and contrasting these to the key features found in another country in the Asia region, such as Japan, India or Indonesia



- interviewing people with connections to a country in the Asia region to compare the values they associate with the system of government in that country with those of Australia



The Australian Government's role and responsibilities at a global level, for example provision of foreign aid, peacekeeping, participation in international organisations and the United Nations (ACHCK091)



- exploring the types of participation that Australia has in the Asia region and internationally (for example, exchange programs, peacekeeping, election monitoring, health programs, disaster management)



- investigating Australia's involvement with the United Nations (for example, representation in the organisation and adherence to conventions and declarations that Australia has ratified)



#### Laws and citizens

#### Elaborations

The role of the High Court, including in interpreting the Constitution (ACHCK092)



- examining the jurisdiction of the High Court



- exploring an example of a High Court judgement in interpreting and applying Australian law, such as the Mabo decision or the construction of the Hindmarsh Island Bridge



How Australia's international legal obligations shape Australian law and government policies, including in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (ACHCK093)



- listing some of the international agreements Australia has ratified and identifying examples of how each one might shape government policies and laws (for example, the protection of World Heritage areas)



- researching the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples



- identifying how international conventions and declarations have shaped Australian government policies with regard to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples



- recognising that the obligations in international treaties only take domestic effect in Australia if they are implemented by statute, whether by the Commonwealth or state parliaments



## Citizenship, diversity and identity

## Elaborations

The challenges to and ways of sustaining a resilient democracy and cohesive society (ACHCK094)



- exploring the concept of 'cohesive society' using examples from contemporary events in Australia or in other countries to identify factors that support cohesiveness



- considering threats to Australian democracy and other democracies, such as the influence of vested interests, organised crime, corruption and lawlessness
















































- identifying the safeguards that protect Australia's democratic system and society, including shared values and the right to dissent within the bounds of the law



- investigating processes by which individuals and groups resolve differences in Australian communities (for example, negotiation, mediation and reconciliation)



## Civics and Citizenship Skills

Questioning and research	Elaborations
<p>Develop, select and evaluate a range of questions to investigate Australia's political and legal systems (ACHCS095)</p> <p>   </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>developing and evaluating a set of questions that provide a comprehensive framework for research (for example, in relation to how systems of government might differ and how democratic they are)</li> </ul> <p> </p>
<p>Identify, gather and sort information and ideas from a range of sources and reference as appropriate (ACHCS096)</p> <p> </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conducting an opinion poll using information technologies and analysing the results</li> <li>referencing a range of sources using an appropriate referencing system</li> </ul> <p>  </p> <p> </p>
Analysis, synthesis and interpretation	Elaborations
<p>Critically evaluate information and ideas from a range of sources in relation to civics and citizenship topics and issues (ACHCS097)</p> <p> </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>developing and using criteria to evaluate the suitability of data in an investigation about Australia's international involvements</li> <li>critically analysing published material relevant to civics and citizenship topics and issues to assess reliability and purpose (for example, NGO fundraising material or a government information campaign)</li> </ul> <p> </p> <p>   </p>
<p>Account for different interpretations and points of view (ACHCS098)</p> <p>   </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identifying the values, motivations and contexts which underpin different interpretations about civics and citizenship topics and issues</li> <li>developing an evidence-based argument that includes a rebuttal of an alternative point of view (for example, about Australia's commitment to its international legal obligations)</li> </ul> <p>   </p> <p>   </p>
Problem-solving and decision-making	Elaborations
<p>Recognise and consider multiple perspectives and ambiguities, and use strategies to negotiate and resolve contentious issues (ACHCS099)</p> <p>   </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identifying civics and citizenship topics and issues that may involve dissent, uncertainty or be open to interpretation and debate (for example, international views on whaling and money laundering)</li> <li>using skills associated with the negotiation process (seeking to understand other views, applying reason and logic, building on common ground, isolating areas of difficulty, and recording agreements reached)</li> </ul> <p>   </p> <p>   </p>

Use democratic processes to reach consensus on a course of action relating to a civics or citizenship issue and plan for that action (ACHCS100)



- developing a plan for action that takes into account challenges, opportunities, risks and strategies to respond to a civics and citizenship issue



- using democratic processes to decide on criteria that can be used to evaluate plans for action to addresses a civics and citizenship issue



## Communication and reflection

## Elaborations

Present evidence-based civics and citizenship arguments using subject-specific language (ACHCS101)



- using appropriate terms and concepts such as conventions, international law, cohesive society and global citizen



- using a range of relevant evidence to persuade an audience to a point of view about how to sustain a resilient democracy



Reflect on their role as a citizen in Australian, regional and global contexts (ACHCS102)



- considering and identifying the qualities of a citizen in a contemporary, successful democracy



- discussing the implications of living in an interconnected world and what this could mean for active and informed citizenship





# 7–10 Civics and Citizenship

## Year 10 Achievement Standard

By the end of Year 10, students compare and evaluate the key features and values of systems of government, and analyse the Australian Government's global roles and responsibilities. They analyse the role of the High Court and explain how Australia's international legal obligations influence law and government policy. Students evaluate a range of factors that sustain democratic societies.

When researching, students evaluate a range of questions to investigate Australia's political and legal systems and critically analyse information gathered from different sources for relevance, reliability and omission. They account for and evaluate different interpretations and points of view on civics and citizenship issues. When planning for action, students take account of multiple perspectives and ambiguities, use democratic processes, and negotiate solutions to an issue. Students develop and present evidenced-based arguments incorporating different points of view on civics and citizenship issues. They use appropriate texts, subject-specific language and concepts. They evaluate ways they can be active and informed citizens in different contexts.

# 7–10 Civics and Citizenship

## Glossary

### **absolute majority**

The minimum number of votes required, which is more than half of all votes, that is, 50 per cent plus one, to make a democratic decision by a group.

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### **active citizenship**

Engagement and informed participation in the civic and political activities of society at local, state, national, regional and global levels. It contrasts with 'passive citizenship' where *citizens* participate only minimally to meet their basic individual responsibilities including voting and paying taxes.

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### **Australian democracy**

A system of government grounded in liberal democratic values and a belief in civic engagement. It includes a written *constitution*, a well-established representative parliamentary process based on the *Westminster system*, and a *constitutional monarch*.

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### **Australian Government, the**

The national government of the Commonwealth of Australia, which is also known as the federal government or the Commonwealth Government. It was established by the *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act* at the time of Federation.

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### **burden of proof**

An obligation to prove what is alleged. In criminal cases, this obligation rests on prosecution, which must prove its case beyond reasonable doubt. In civil cases, it rests on a plaintiff, who must prove his or her case on the balance of probabilities. Sometimes, however, this burden shifts, for example, where a defendant raises particular defences.

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### **Cabinet, the**

The *Cabinet* consists of the most senior ministers, including the Prime Minister. The *Cabinet's* role is to make major policy decisions, including decisions about spending, appointments and introducing legislation.

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## **citizen**

A person who holds *citizenship* of a polity, such as a country, and who is a member of a political community that grants certain rights and privileges to its citizens, and in return expects them to act responsibly such as to obey their country's *laws*. Also see *global citizens*.

---

## **citizenship**

A legal status granted by birth or naturalisation to *citizens* involving certain *rights* (for example, protection; passport; voting) *and responsibilities* (for example, obey the *law*, vote, defend the country). A modern sense incorporates three components: civil (*rights and responsibilities*); political (participation and representation); and social (social virtues and community involvement).

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## **civic life**

A participation one has within a community or communities as distinct from private and family life.

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## **civics**

A identifiable body of knowledge, skills and understandings relating to the organisation and working of society. It refers to a nation's political and social heritage, democratic processes, government, public administration and legal system.

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## **civil society organisation**

A *non-government organisation (NGO)* in public life, which expresses interests and values of its members. NGOs or *civil society organisations* are considered important to sustaining healthy democracies as they build social capital.

'Civil society' is also frequently used to refer to a society where civility is common in *citizen* behaviour and public discourse.

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## **civility**

Habits of people that display courtesy, politeness and formal regard for others. These behaviours contribute to society's effective functioning.

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## **common good**

A term that is popularly understood as sharing of resources among a community for the benefit of that community as a whole. The *common good* is often seen as a utilitarian ideal representing the greatest possible good for the greatest possible number of individuals as opposed to the private good for individuals or sections of society.

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## **common law**

A body of English *law* traditionally based on custom and court decisions. Also known as case law or precedent, it is law developed by judges through decisions of earlier courts and an understanding of current context. Also see *statute (statutory law)*.

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## **constitution**

A set of fundamental principles on which a state or other organisation (such as a club) is governed. Usually, this takes the form of a written legal document setting out specific powers for a government or governing of that entity.

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## **constitutional monarchy**

A form of monarchy in which a monarch acts as a country's head of state according to *law* as required by the *constitution* and that in exercising his or her discretionary powers, the monarch as head of state acts on advice of responsible ministers, excluding exceptional circumstances.

---

## **conventions**

Unwritten rules of political procedure based on traditional, established practices that are widely accepted. Australia's political system has adopted many of the unwritten conventions of the British *Westminster system*. Conventions may defy the *Constitution*; for example, the procedure for the appointment of Australia's *Governor-General*.

---

## **customary law**

Acknowledged behaviour by individuals and groups, which recognise benefits of behaving in accordance with other individuals' expectations and customs. In the Australian Curriculum, this refers to the customary *law* of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples; however, in Australia, customary *law* is subject to constitutional and common *law*. Also see *common law* and *statute (statutory law)*.

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## **democracy**

A system of government where power is vested in the people, who may exercise it directly or through elected representatives, and who may remove and replace their political leaders and government in free and fair regular elections.

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## **direct action**

People participating in person and directly on issues they seek to change, within the bounds of the *law*.

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## disposition

An intention to act or behave in a way that is influenced by knowledge, skills and values acquired as a *citizen*.

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## division of powers

Vesting of powers within different levels of government. Under the Australian *Constitution*, the Commonwealth Government was vested with specific powers while the states retained general powers. In practice, the distribution of powers has become increasingly centralised over time.

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## electors

People who have the right to participate in an election and chose to do so.

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## executive

Also known as the Crown or the government. An institution that develops and implements policies and administers the *law* in Australia. It comprises the *Governor-General* (or Governor at the state level), the *ministry* and the public service.

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## Executive Council

A constitutional mechanism for providing ministerial advice to the *Governor-General*. The *Executive Council*, which is comprised of ministers and presided over by the *Governor-General* (or Governor, at the state level) meets to advise the *Governor-General* or Governor to approve decisions that have been made by *Cabinet*. Once approved, decisions are given effect by the public service.

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## federalism

A principle of government, which defines a relationship between the central government at the national level and its constituent units at the regional, state or local levels. In Australia, federalism is the *division of powers* between the federal government and the states and territories.

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## global citizen

A person who understands their *rights and responsibilities* at a global level; that is, one's *identity* transcends geography or political borders, and *rights and responsibilities* are derived from being human. However, these *rights and responsibilities* do not have legal authority or sanctions of those conferred by a nation.

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## **governance**

A process and rules by which decisions are made and implemented within entities such as national and state governments, corporations and other organisations.

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### **Governor-General**

A representative of a monarch at the federal level in Australia. The *Governor-General* exercises most of the monarch's powers in relation to Australia at the federal level, while state governors exercise those powers with respect to the Australian states. Other powers are conferred upon the *Governor-General* by the *Constitution* and *statutes*. In exercising his or her powers, the *Governor-General* is bound by convention to act on an advice of his or her responsible ministers, except in relation to matters such as appointment and dismissal of the Prime Minister.

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## **human rights**

Rights that come from being human. That is, the basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled, often held to include the right to life and liberty, freedom of thought and expression, and equality before the *law*.

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## **identity**

A person's conception and expression of their individuality or association with a group. In this curriculum, *identity* refers to a person's sense of belonging to a group, culture or to a state or nation, a region or the world. It is a feeling one shares with a group of people, regardless of one's *citizenship* status.

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## **law**

A system of rules that a particular country or community recognises as regulating the actions of its members and which it may enforce by an imposition of penalties and sanctions.

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## **liberal democracy**

An approach to political arrangements and a set of values that a political system should combine majority rule by the people with the protection of the political, legal and social rights of individuals and minority groups.

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## **mandate**

A political doctrine that derives its meaning from political philosophy, political behaviour and political morality, not from *constitutions* or other *laws*. It concerns the implied approval to act in a particular way on a public issue given by the electorate to its representative or government.

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## media

Forms of communication between a source and receivers including television, radio, print media and the internet, as well as forms of social media. The term usually refers to mass media and the ability of media to inform and influence people. *Media* are key players in democracies where *citizens* need to be informed, influenced and open to a diversity of views.

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## ministry

A *ministry* consists of all those members of parliament chosen by the Prime Minister to serve as members of the *executive* arm of government and to administer government departments.

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## multicultural

A preservation of different cultures or cultural identities within a unified society such as a state or nation.

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## multi-faith

A society or organisation characterised by support for, or free activity of, religions, within the bounds of the *law*.

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## non-government organisation (NGO)

A group that is organised at a local, national or international level around a common interest and on a non-profit, voluntary basis. NGOs mostly operate independently of a government, but may be funded by a government and still maintain their independence.

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## parliamentary democracy

A system of government in which *executive* is formed from, and responsible to, a parliament, and a head of government (for example, the Prime Minister) is different from a head of state (for example, the Queen).

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## preferential voting

A system of *voting* to rank candidates in order of preference. It is necessary for a winning candidate to achieve an *absolute majority* (50 per cent plus one). If no candidate achieves an absolute majority, a candidate with the fewest number of first preferences is excluded from the count, and his or her votes are distributed among the remaining candidates according to second preferences. This process is continued until one candidate achieves an *absolute majority*. It is the dominant form of *voting* in Australian politics (as compared with simple majority systems of *voting*).

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## proportional representation

A representation of parties, groups or individuals in a legislature in proportion to a number of votes they receive in an election. In Australia, *proportional representation* describes the way candidates are elected in multi-member electorates such as the Senate.

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## referendum

A principle or practice of referring measures proposed or passed by a legislative body to a vote of electorate for approval or rejection. In Australia, a *referendum* is a vote of the Australian *electors* on a proposed change to the *Constitution* by the Commonwealth Parliament that must be approved by a majority of the aggregate of all voters from each state and territory, and also by a majority of voters in a majority (four) of the six states.

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## representative democracy

A system of government in which *electors* choose representatives to a parliament to make *laws* on their behalf.

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## rights and responsibilities

Entitlements and obligations that are associated with living in Australia. *Rights and responsibilities* are a cornerstone of modern democracies. While all people in Australia enjoy certain rights (for example, freedom of speech), there are also responsibilities (for example, paying taxes, jury service). *Citizens* also have the right to vote and the responsibility of *voting* at elections.

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## rule

A requirement to behave in a particular way; a set of explicit or understood regulations or principles governing conduct or procedure within a particular area of activity, for example, school *rules*, rules of cricket. Rules are usually developed and set by people who have the power and authority to create and enforce them.

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## rule of law

A legal principle that decisions by government are made according to established principles and that all *citizens* are subject to the *law* and equal before the *law*. Embedded within the rule of *law* is the idea that people accept and follow, but also change as needed, *laws* as agreed by a political process and upheld by independent courts.

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## secular

Relating to worldly rather than religion; things that are not regarded as religious, spiritual or sacred. For example, a secular society is one governed by people's *laws* through parliament rather than by religious *laws*.

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## separation of powers

A doctrine that the three arms of government – the *executive*, the legislature (parliament) and the judiciary – are separate and independent, with powers that act as a check and balance on each other. In Australia, the separation between the *executive* and the legislature is weak because the *executive* is drawn from the legislature, but the separation between the judiciary and the other two arms of government is strong and is enforced by courts.

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## social sustainability

An idea that current generations promote social inclusion, cohesion and accountability so that future generations should be able to have the same or greater access to social resources as the current generations.

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## statute (statutory law)

In Australia, a *statute* is a written *law*, also known as an act of parliament or legislation, which commences as a bill, is passed by the parliament and has received royal assent (by the *Governor-General* or a governor, or, in very rare cases, directly by the monarch). A *statute* may commence upon royal assent, or a specified date, or upon a date declared in a proclamation. Also see *common law*.

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## voting

A means of formally expressing opinion or choice on an issue or electing a representative. The term is frequently understood in relation to government as a formal expression of preference for a candidate for office or for a proposed resolution of an issue within a parliament.

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## Westminster system

A system of parliamentary government, also known as responsible government, which evolved in England and was adopted in its colonies, including Australia. It is based on the principle that the *executive* government is responsible to the people through the parliament. The *executive* government is formed by those who command the support of the lower House of Parliament. Ministers, including the Prime Minister, are members of a House of Parliament and are accountable to it. There is a separate, largely ceremonial, head of state, an independent public service and an independent judiciary that applies the *rule of law*.

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