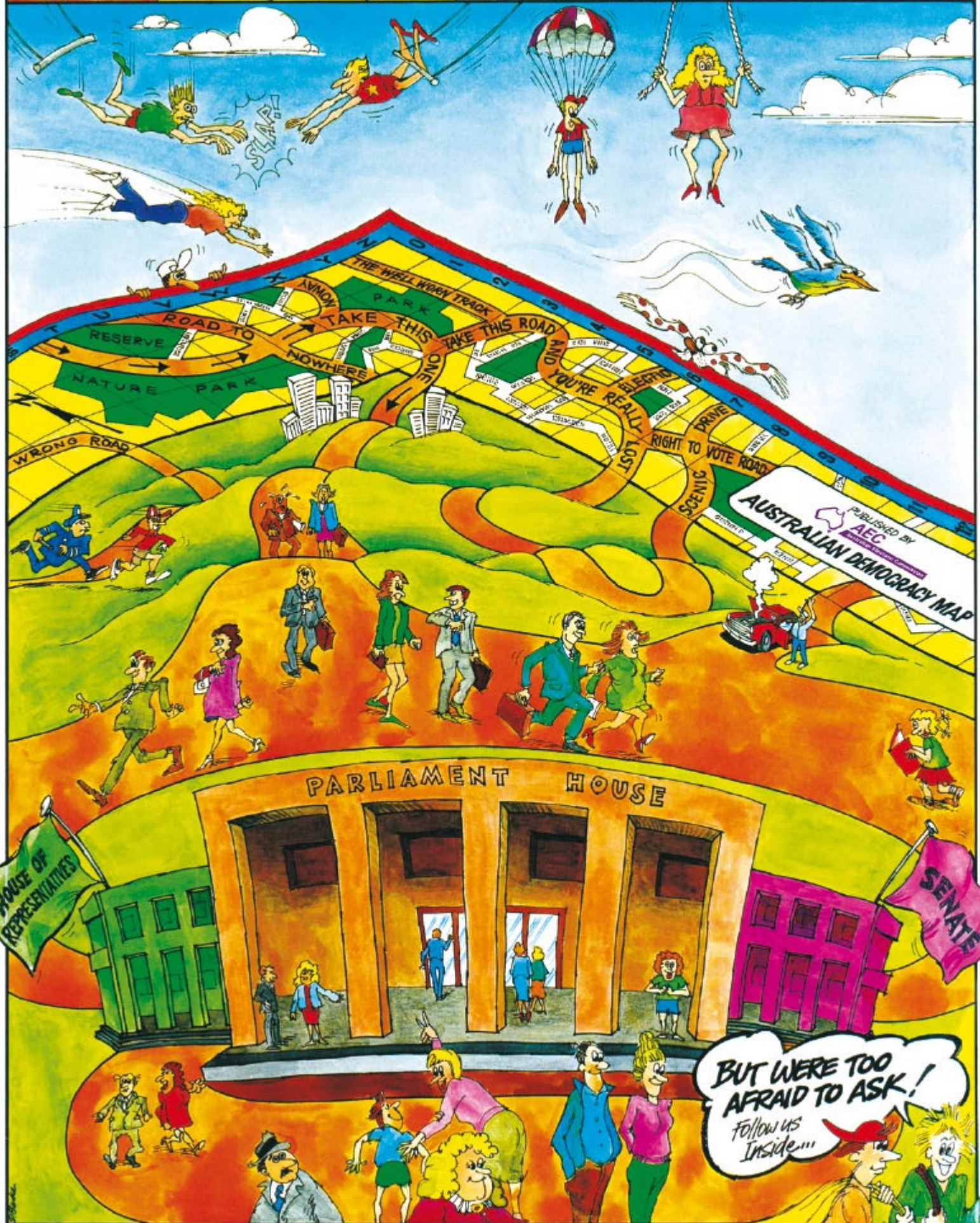


ALL YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW



PUBLISHED BY
AEC
AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION
AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRACY MAP

PARLIAMENT HOUSE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SENATE

BUT WERE TOO AFRAID TO ASK!
Follow us Inside!!!

about **AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRACY**

LET'S START FROM THE BEGINNING...



Ordigenous people have lived in Australia for at least 50 000 years. Over those years the many tribes developed rich and varied traditions and cultures.

When European settlers arrived in Australia over 200 years ago they brought with them their traditions and culture.

Many things have changed in Australia over the years. In 1788 the First Fleet arrived and a prison colony run by a governor appointed in England was established. Early free settlers had no say in the government of the colony.

However as the number of free settlers grew they demanded a greater say in their own government. The colonists firmly believed in the idea of representative democracy - the idea that the laws of a nation should be made by representatives elected by its citizens. They helped to direct the development of government in Australia.



By the 1850s transportation of convicts to most Australian colonies had ended and the demands of the independent minded settlers had begun to be met with the establishment of parliaments in most of the colonies.

The hundred years between 1788 and 1888 was also a time of fierce competition between the separate colonies who "went it alone" as if they were separate countries. However, by the 1880s it was clear that some matters really needed to be managed by a parliament which would represent the whole of Australia.

Thus the federation movement began.

It took many years of lively debate before representatives of the colonies could agree on a Constitution under which they would be happy to federate.



HOW FAR TO PARLIAMENT HOUSE?

FEDERATION



THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA was proclaimed in Centennial Park, Sydney, on January 1, 1901.
"A continent for a nation and a nation for a continent" declared Sir Edmund Barton, Australia's first Prime Minister.
The colonies had federated and were known from then on as the States of the Commonwealth.
The Commonwealth of Australia is a federal nation - the states are self-governing but together form one nation which has its own Federal Parliament.



TODAY... as Australian citizens we enjoy life in a democracy which assures each of us fair representation in our parliament.



The Constitution itself tells us in section 128 that Federal Parliament may propose a change but it must gain the agreement of the citizens of the nation and of the states before the change can be made. A referendum must be held to ask for this agreement. In a referendum electors vote "yes" or "no" to a proposed change. A change will only be made to the Constitution if a majority of electors over the whole of Australia vote "yes" AND a majority of electors in at least 4 of the 6 states also vote "yes". This is known as a double majority. Since federation the Australian people have voted in 44 referendums and have only agreed to the constitutional changes contained in 8 of them.

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT FOR THE NATION





THE AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTION

Australia's Constitution forms the legal foundation of the Commonwealth's system of government. It describes the structure, the functions and the relationships of the main parts of this system.

Sir Samuel Griffith, the main author of the Constitution, described it as "A great governmental machine to govern the general affairs of Australia."

PERHAPS HE IMAGINED HIS MACHINE LIKE THIS...

GLUG!

THE EXECUTIVE
The Governor-General, the Prime Minister and ministers form the Executive Council. It is the Executive's job to put the laws made by parliament into practice. The departments of the public service help them do this.

THE HIGH COURT
It is the High Court's job to interpret the Constitution and also to act as "referee" when serious disagreements arise between the Commonwealth and the states or between the Commonwealth and individual citizens.

WOW!

CRACK!!!

WIPE WIPE

WIPE!

ERK!

DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION



OUR ELECTED FEDERAL DECISION MAKERS FORM THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA WHICH MEETS IN PARLIAMENT HOUSE CANBERRA.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The House of Representatives is known as the "people's house". Members are elected by citizens who are grouped in electoral divisions. There are 150 members—1 for each division in Australia. Members are elected for a term of 3 years.



CHAMBER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



U usually elections are held every 3 years for the House of Representatives and territory senators. An election for half the state senators, a half-Senate election, is normally held at the same time.

IN FEDERAL PARLIAMENT



PARLIAMENT
CONSISTS OF TWO
HOUSES - THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES
AND THE
SENATE.

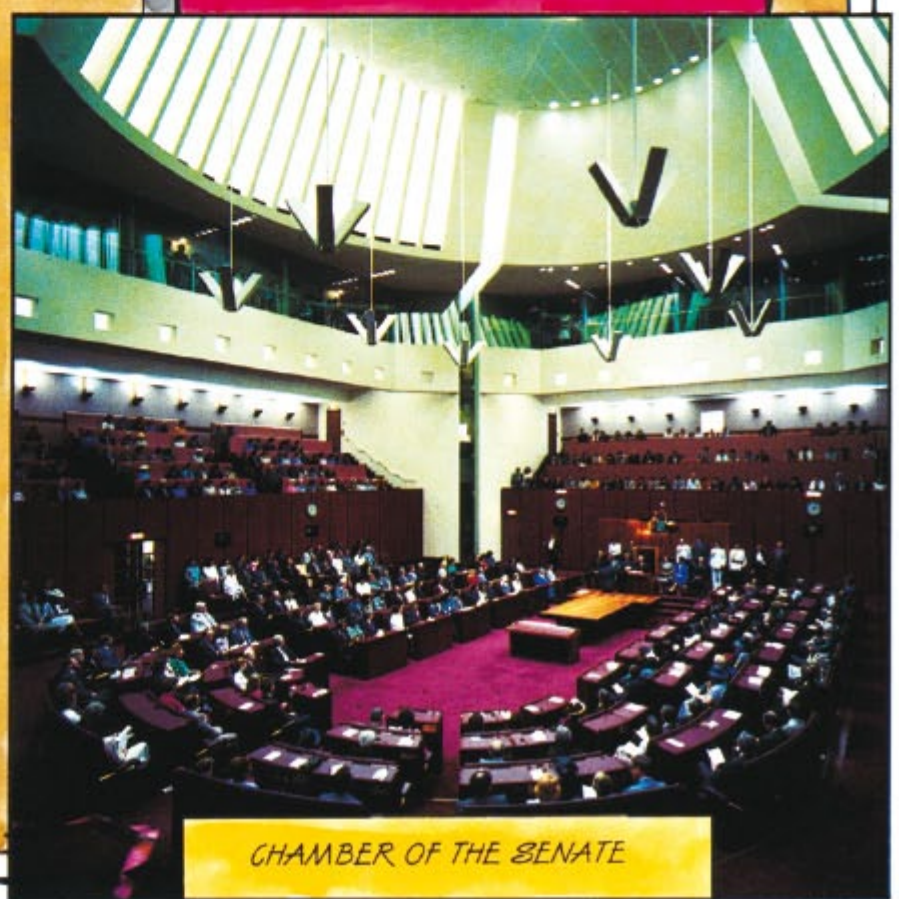


THE SENATE

The Senate is known as the "states house". Senators are elected by the citizens of the 6 states and 2 territories. There are 76 senators - 12 from each state and 2 from each territory. State senators are elected for a term of 6 years. Territory senators are elected for a term of 3 years.



If the government of the day cannot effectively guide the parliament a double dissolution may be called. This means that both houses are dissolved and the whole Senate as well as the House of Representatives must face an election.



CHAMBER OF THE SENATE

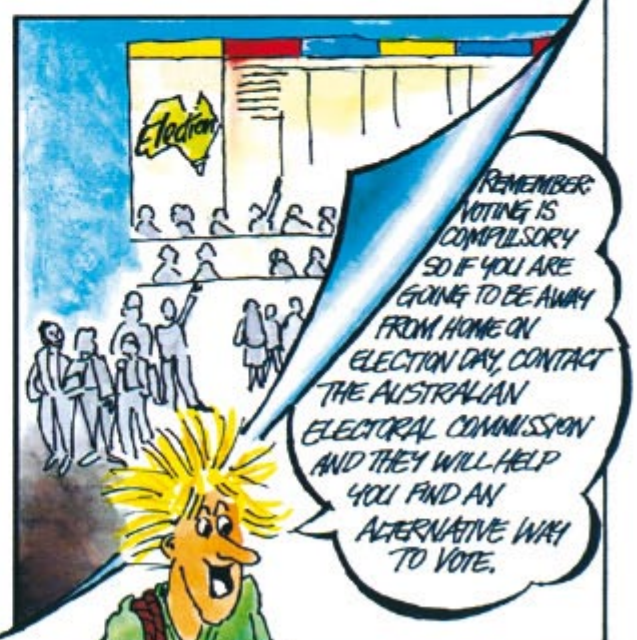
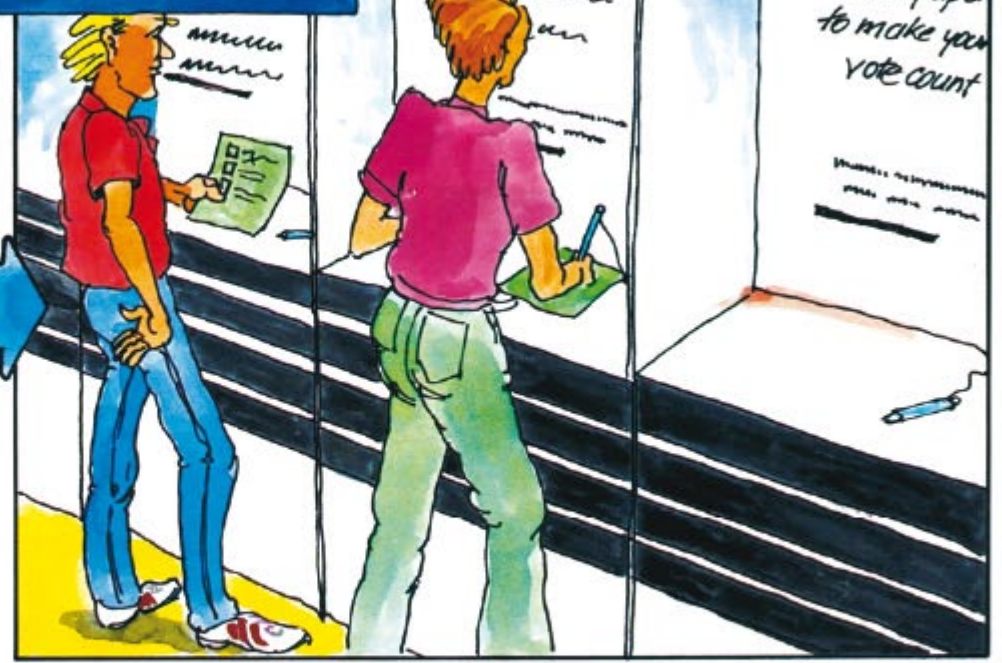


ELECTION DAY IS ALWAYS ON A SATURDAY...

VOTING COMMENCES AT 8 A.M. AND ENDS AT 6 P.M.



THE POLLING PLACE

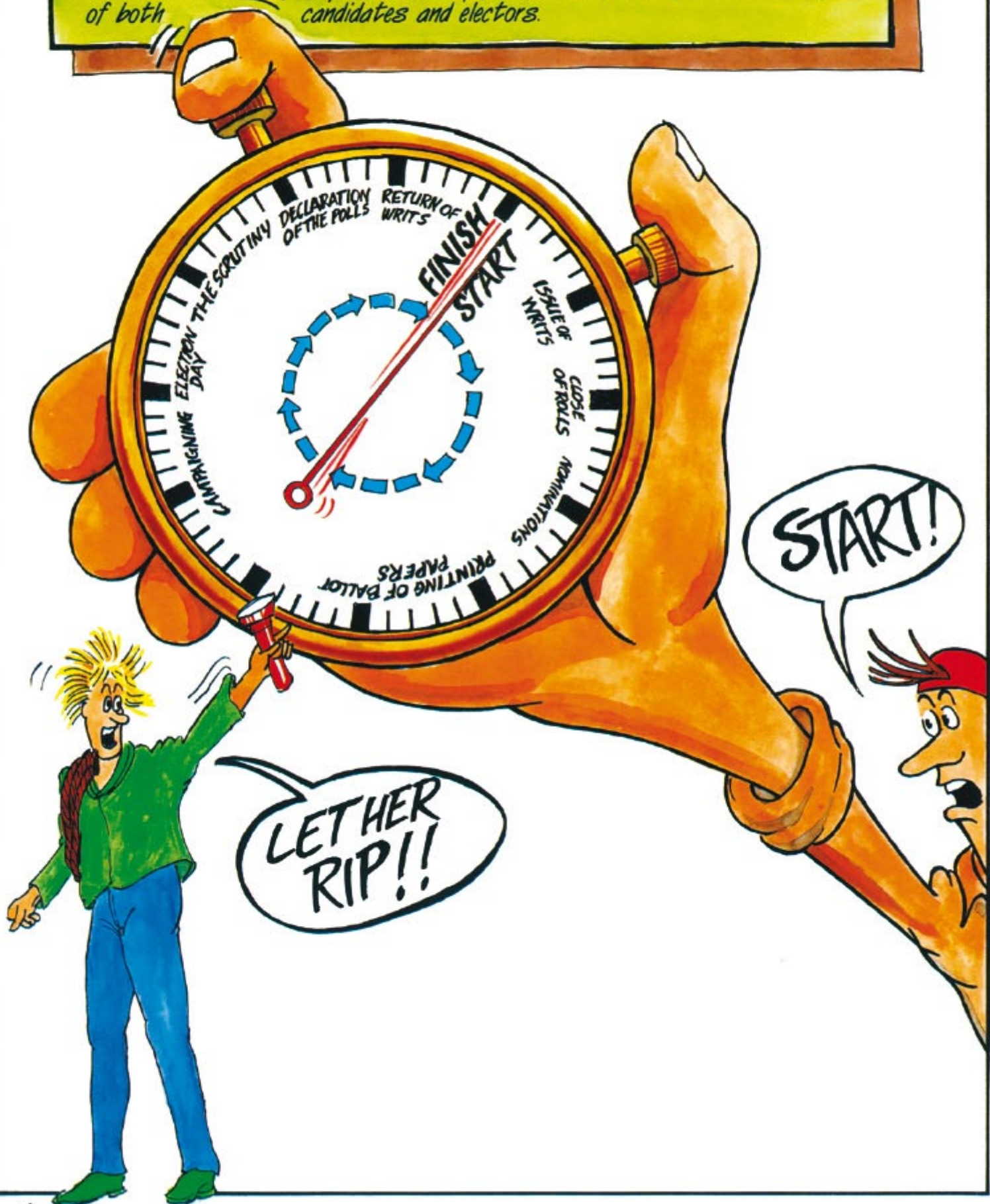


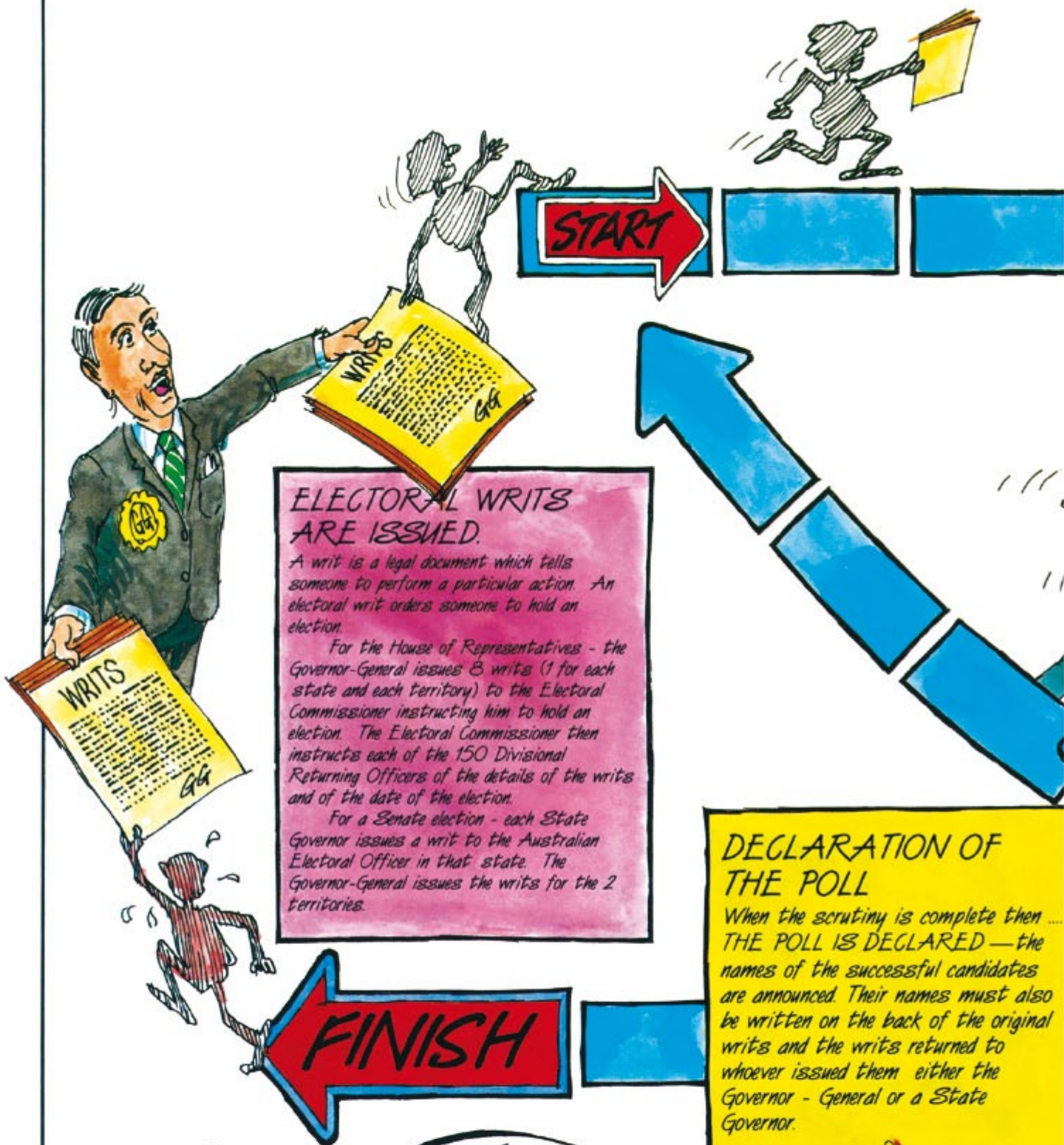
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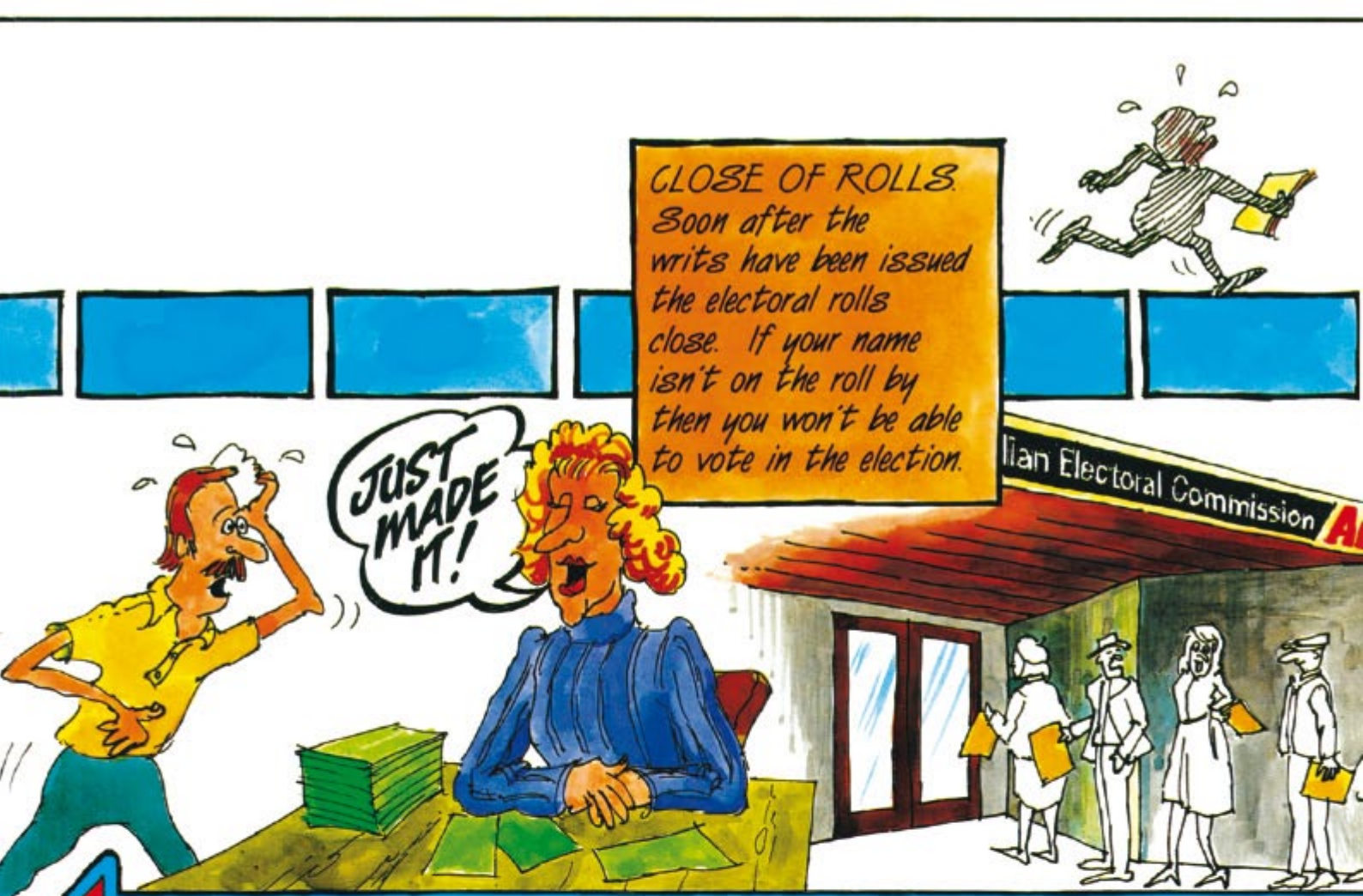
HERE ARE STAGES IN AN ELECTION

When it is time for an election there is a set order, or timetable, of events which must be kept to - there are stages in an election.

Electoral law insists that these stages be followed to make sure that the election is run fairly. This orderly procedure helps to protect the rights of both candidates and electors.







CLOSE OF ROLLS.
 Soon after the writs have been issued the electoral rolls close. If your name isn't on the roll by then you won't be able to vote in the election.

JUST MADE IT!

Australian Electoral Commission

STAGES IN AN ELECTIO



AND THE NEW MEMBER IS...

Election

<p>Mr. [Name] (Liberal Party) 51.2%</p> <p>Ms. [Name] (Labor Party) 48.8%</p>	<p>Mr. [Name] (Liberal Party) 52.1%</p> <p>Ms. [Name] (Labor Party) 47.9%</p>	<p>Mr. [Name] (Liberal Party) 50.5%</p> <p>Ms. [Name] (Labor Party) 49.5%</p>	<p>Mr. [Name] (Liberal Party) 53.0%</p> <p>Ms. [Name] (Labor Party) 47.0%</p>	<p>Mr. [Name] (Liberal Party) 49.8%</p> <p>Ms. [Name] (Labor Party) 50.2%</p>	<p>Mr. [Name] (Liberal Party) 51.5%</p> <p>Ms. [Name] (Labor Party) 48.5%</p>
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Election

NOMINATIONS

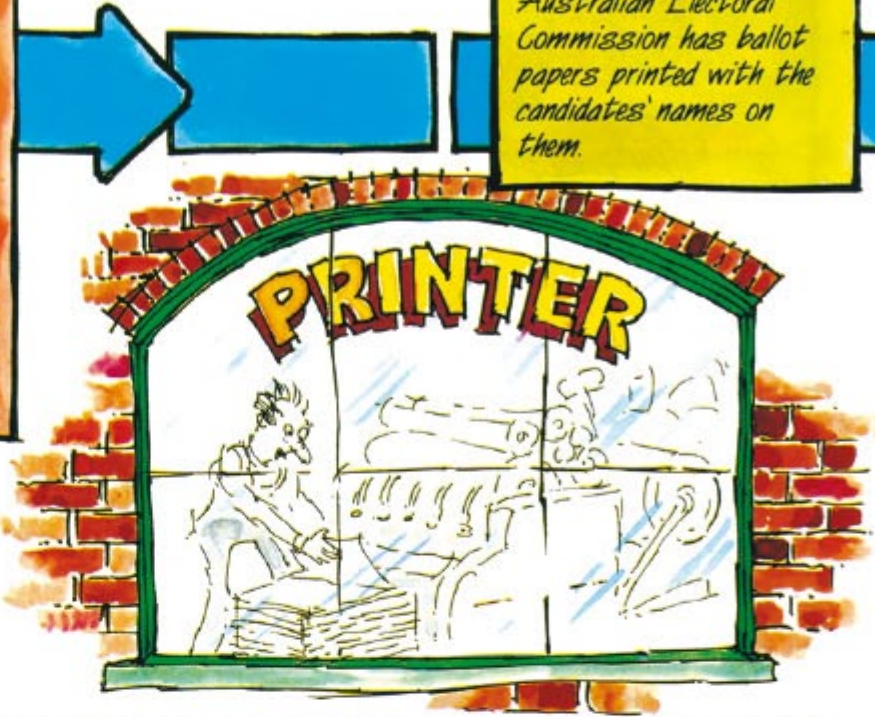
You can stand for election to parliament if you are:

- at least 18 years old
- an Australian citizen
- an elector or someone qualified to become an elector

A person who wants to be a candidate for election to parliament must first make certain they are qualified and then fill in a nomination form signed by 50 other electors. Candidates give their nomination forms and a deposit to the Australian Electoral Commission.

PRINTING OF BALLOT PAPERS

When the time set aside for nominations ends, the Australian Electoral Commission has ballot papers printed with the candidates' names on them.



ON



THE SCRUTINY

When voting finishes at 6 pm the sealed ballot boxes are opened and emptied and the counting of the votes begins. This "counting" stage is called the scrutiny.

The results of the count are sent to the Virtual Tally Room on the Australian Electoral Commission website.





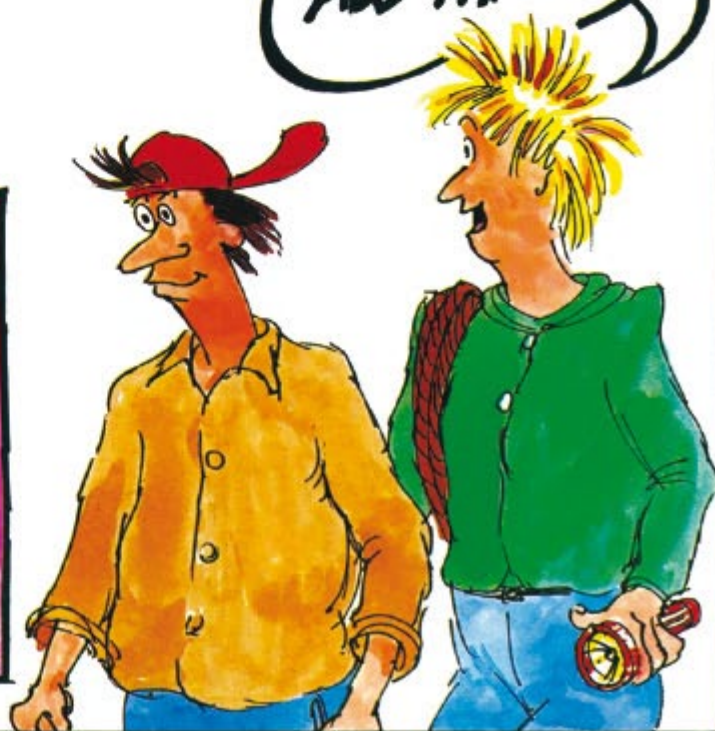
CAMPAIGNING

Once the election is announced the political parties and candidates step up their campaigns. They work very hard to inform electors of their ideas and plans for the way they would govern our country if elected. Newspapers, radio and TV around Australia report on the candidates and their election campaigns. The campaign period is very lively and helps electors to make informed, responsible decisions when they vote on election day!

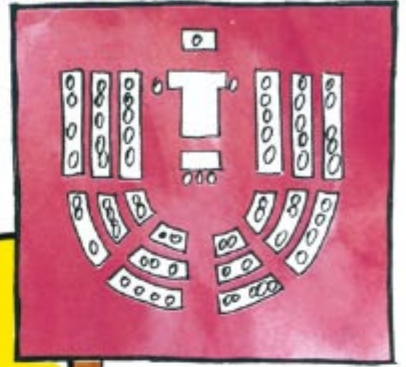
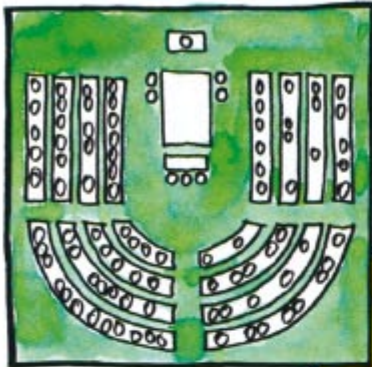


ELECTION DAY

On election day most Australian electors go to local polling places to vote. A few citizens have already voted by post because they knew that they would not be able to get to a polling place on election day.



As a result of the election PARLIAMENT IS FORMED



By taking part in an election Australian electors have chosen the men and women who will represent them in parliament. As a result of the election a new parliament is formed!



QUESTION:

Which members of parliament form the "government of the day"?



ANSWER:

The party, or coalition of parties, with a majority of members in the House of Representatives becomes the government. The leader of the government is called the Prime Minister.



THE PRIME MINISTER IS THE LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT.

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION LEADS THE OPPOSITION



The party, or coalition of parties, which opposes the government in the House of Representatives is known as the opposition and the leader of this group is called the Leader of the Opposition.

VOTING

The preferential system of voting is used for House of Representatives elections.

When you vote in an election for the House of Representatives you are helping to choose one person to represent your electoral division in that house of Federal Parliament. The House of Representatives ballot paper is green and lists the candidates' names. In the preferential system the elector needs to put a number in each of the squares beside the candidates' names. The number 1 shows the elector's first preference, 2 indicates the second preference and so on..

Ballot papers on which all the boxes have been filled in are called formal ballot papers. Only formal ballot papers are counted in deciding the winning candidate. Make your vote count - make your vote formal!

To be elected, a candidate must receive an absolute majority ie more than 50% of all the formal votes cast.

This means that a candidate must win the support of over half the electors in a division to become their representative in the House of Representatives.



COUNTING THE VOTES...

THE SCRUTINY

When voting finishes at 6 pm the first count commences at polling places.

Polling officials sort all the formal first preference votes into separate piles (under each candidate's name) which are then counted.

If when the first count is completed one candidate has gained an absolute majority (more than 50%) then that candidate is elected to represent the electors of the division in the House of Representatives.

If no candidate gains an absolute majority straight away then the candidate with the least first preference votes is eliminated and the second preference shown on this candidate's ballot papers are distributed at full vote value. This process continues until one candidate achieves an absolute majority.

EXAMPLE

DIVISION OF "OZ"

THREE CANDIDATES, RICK, DANNY AND MEGAN stand for election in the division of "OZ". After the election the ballot papers are counted and there are 60,000 formal votes. Therefore the absolute majority needed to win the seat is at least 30,001 votes (more than 50%)

AT THE
FIRST
COUNT



15 000



23 000



22 000

NOBODY has gained an absolute majority so the person with the lowest number of first preferences is eliminated. So Rick is eliminated and these ballot papers are distributed according to the second preferences marked on them.

AT THE
SECOND
COUNT



23 000
6 300
29 300

Danny gained
6 300 second
preferences.



22 000
8 700
30 700

Megan gained
8 700 second
preferences.

AS MEGAN has gained the absolute majority she becomes the elected representative for the division of "OZ"



**NOW...
RUN YOUR OWN
PREFERENTIAL ELECTION
EXERCISE!**



Imagine your class has the chance to spend a whole day away from school doing something adventurous - money's no object!

You will all be doing the same thing so we want to be sure to please more than half of you (more than 50%)

BALLOT PAPER

**NUMBER THE BOXES IN THE
ORDER OF YOUR CHOICE
FROM 1 TO 3**

CAMPING

SKIING

**WIND-
SURFING**



You will need 1 ballot paper each so photocopy as many as required of the sample below.

Remember that House of Representatives ballot papers are green so you should use green paper!

- Remember that you place the number 1 in the square beside your first preference, 2 beside your second preference and so on until you have filled in all the boxes.*
- Vote in secret.*
- Fold your ballot paper and place it in the ballot box.*

Now sort and count the votes - record your results on the table on the page opposite.

RESULTS OF YOUR PREFERENTIAL VOTING EXERCISE

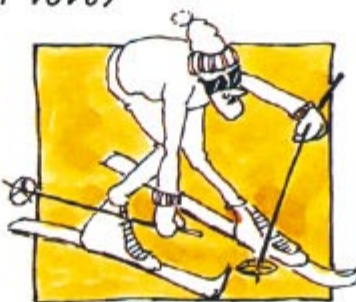


Q In your election there were 3 excursion candidates to choose from. After the election the ballot papers were counted and there were..... formal votes. Therefore the absolute majority needed to win is..... (absolute majority = more than 50% of the formal vote)

AT THE FIRST COUNT



CAMPING



SKIING



WINDSURFING

Has any excursion gained an absolute majority at the first count?

If no excursion has gained an absolute majority then the excursion with the lowest number of first preferences is eliminated. These ballot papers are distributed according to the second preferences shown on them.

AT THE SECOND COUNT



CAMPING



SKIING



WINDSURFING

The excursion chosen is

This excursion was chosen at thecount.



This is how the electors of a division elect one person to represent them all in the House of Representatives.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ARE KNOWN AS LOCAL MEMBERS

LOBBY!

LOBBY!

LOBBY!

I CAN...

- VISIT MY LOCAL MEMBER AT HIS/HER LOCAL OFFICE AND DISCUSS MY CONCERNS
- WRITE TO MY LOCAL MEMBER

■ ORGANISE A PETITION, ENCOURAGE OTHER PEOPLE IN MY DIVISION TO SIGN IT THEN SEND IT TO OUR LOCAL MEMBER

HOW CAN I TRY TO MAKE SURE THAT MY LOCAL MEMBER REALLY DOES REPRESENT MY OPINIONS?

VOTE!

VOTE!

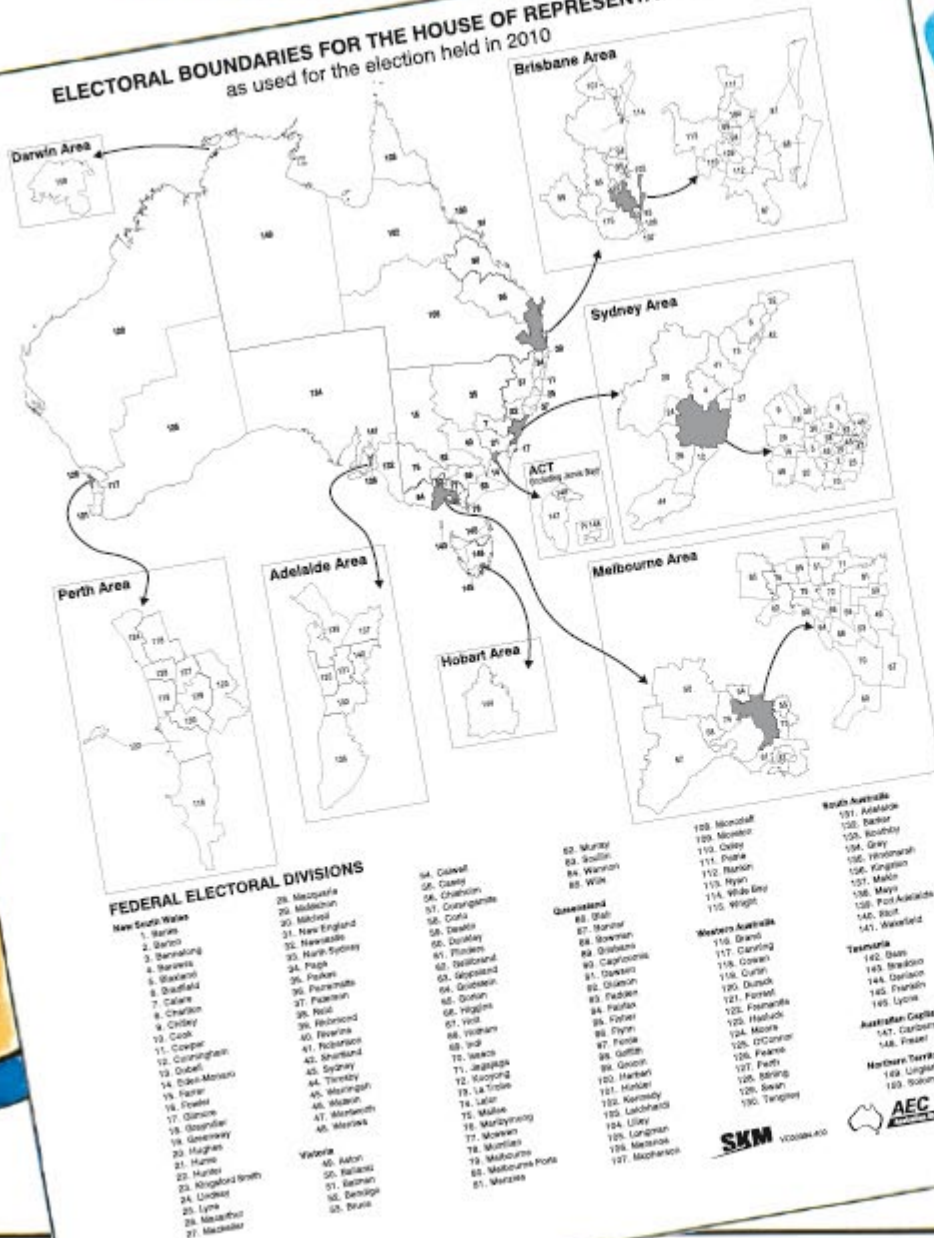
WHEN I VOTE, I CAN VOTE WISELY! I SHOULD REALLY GET TO KNOW THE POLICIES OF THE CANDIDATES IN MY DIVISION BEFORE ELECTION DAY SO THAT I CAN CHOOSE WELL ON ELECTION DAY.

...AND BECAUSE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ARE ELECTED FOR A TERM OF THREE YEARS ONLY, I KNOW (AND MY LOCAL MEMBER KNOWS) THAT VOTES ARE EARNED BY CONSISTENT, GOOD REPRESENTATION AND I'LL BE THE JUDGE OF THAT!

VOTE!

I ELECT SENATORS TOO - TO REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF MY STATE. I CAN LOBBY ANY OF THEM.

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES FOR THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES as used for the election held in 2010



Australia is divided into single member divisions which contain approximately the same number of electors; the electors of each division choose 1 person to represent their opinions and their interests in the House of Representatives.

At present there are 150 electoral divisions, each represented by 1 member in the House of Representatives.



BALLOT

The word ballot comes from the French word *ballotte* meaning a little ball. In Ancient Athens judges of the highest court used to give their verdicts by dropping stone or metal balls into boxes. Balls that were coloured black stood for condemnation. White balls meant acquittal.

Today some clubs use white and black balls to vote on new members. Persons not admitted are said to be blackballed.



SWINGING VOTERS

Swinging voters are in the minority. Most people tend to vote for the same party election after election but not so the swinging voters! They tend to vote for different parties at different elections.



DONKEY VOTES

A 'donkey vote' is a term used when a ballot paper is numbered from top to bottom in order. This is a formal vote.



PUMP FRESH

A colourful term that describes a way of campaigning which some candidates use to win votes; they shake the hands and slap the backs of every citizen they meet.



HUNG PARLIAMENT

A grizzly term used to describe a parliament in which no political party, or coalition of parties, has a majority in the "people's house". A parliament like this has no life because decisions can't be made - government grinds to a halt!



LOBBY

A word to describe groups of people who feel so strongly about particular causes that they try to persuade the government to make decisions which support their causes.

The word lobby not only describes the groups themselves but the tactics they use to influence powerful people and government. Some examples of lobby groups are the environmental lobby and the mining lobby. Can you think of any more lobby groups?



DEMOCRACY IS FOR THE BIRDS... TOO!



THINK YOU KNOW MORE ABOUT AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRACY NOW?

YEP! GLADI MADE THE EFFORT TO FIND OUT.



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