

Levels of government:

- **Federal Government:** Responsible for policies which unite the nation
eg. telecommunication infrastructure; health; federal policing and security; immigration, etc.
- **State Government:** Responsible for broader state issues
eg. education, roads and transports, state health and hospitals, police, etc.
- **Local Government:** Responsible for local issues
eg. local sport and recreation centers, libraries, rubbish collection, local roads.

The Constitution defines the structure, powers and procedures of federal government, and defines the rights and obligations of the states in relation to the Commonwealth.

State Constitution recognises local government.

The system of government in Australia is a parliamentary democracy based on the rule of law. The rule of law was created by a French philosopher in *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748).

It identified three branches of government: the legislature, the executive and the judiciary and stated that liberty existed because these branches were separate.

In the Australian Constitution, chapters 1, 2 and 3 are allocation to these branches.

The Legislature:

The legislature has the power to make law.

The role of the legislature is to:

- to provide for the formation of a government;
- to legislate;
- to provide the funds needed for government;
- to represent the people; and
- to scrutinize the actions of government.

The legislature is the bicameral parliament and consists of the lower house and the upper house.

The Lower House - known as the Legislative Assembly [State] / House of Representatives [Federal]
- elected by popular vote – represents the majority.

The Upper House – known as the Legislative Council [State] / Senate [Federal]

- elected by popular vote
- requires equal representation of geographic locations to represent majority

The Queen assents to Acts of Parliament through the Governor [State]/Governor-General [Federal].

The Executive:

The executive has the power to put law into action.

The role of the executive is to:

- execute the law
- ensure the day to day functioning of the government