

Module 1: Australian Legal Systems

Levels of government

Australia has three different levels of government. These are:

- federal government
- State / territory governments
- local governments

Federal government

The federal government (also known as the Australian Government, the national government, the Commonwealth Government or simply the Commonwealth) deals with matters having a national concern, such as: immigration, foreign affairs and defence.

State and territory governments

The State and territory governments deal with matters of importance within each state or territory. Such matters include:

- public housing
- school education
- roads and transport within the State or territory.

The State and territory governments occupy the 'middle' level of government in Australia.

Local governments

The local governments deal with matters of concern within smaller geographical areas called local government areas (there are many such areas within each State and territory). The typical functions of local governments include:

- maintaining parks and gardens
- providing libraries, youth centres and other services to local residents
- removal of waste.

In Australia, local governments are commonly called councils.

Starting and running a business 1 – choosing a business structure

Types of business structure:

- One of the earliest decisions of starting a business is which structure should be used for the business
- Decision will influence several factors such as registration requirements, legal obligations, control of the business, financial liabilities and ownership of the business

A 'default' relationship:

- Although corporations are now, for many the main type of business structure, partnership law is still important because whenever people carry on business together they may be treated, legally as partners
- They may want to conduct business together, but may not want to incorporate or form a corporation