

Mathematics Level 7

Chapter 2 — Laws and citizenship

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Enforcing the law: police, courts and the legal system

Curriculum link: VC2HC6K04 · VC2HC6K04.E01 · VC2HC6K04.E02 · VC2HC6K04.E03

Learn

Why do laws need enforcing?

A law is only words on a page unless someone makes sure it is followed. *Enforcing* a law means making sure people follow it. In Victoria, two key groups do most of this work: **Victoria Police** and **the courts**. Figure 2A.1 shows the four big reasons why laws are enforced at all.

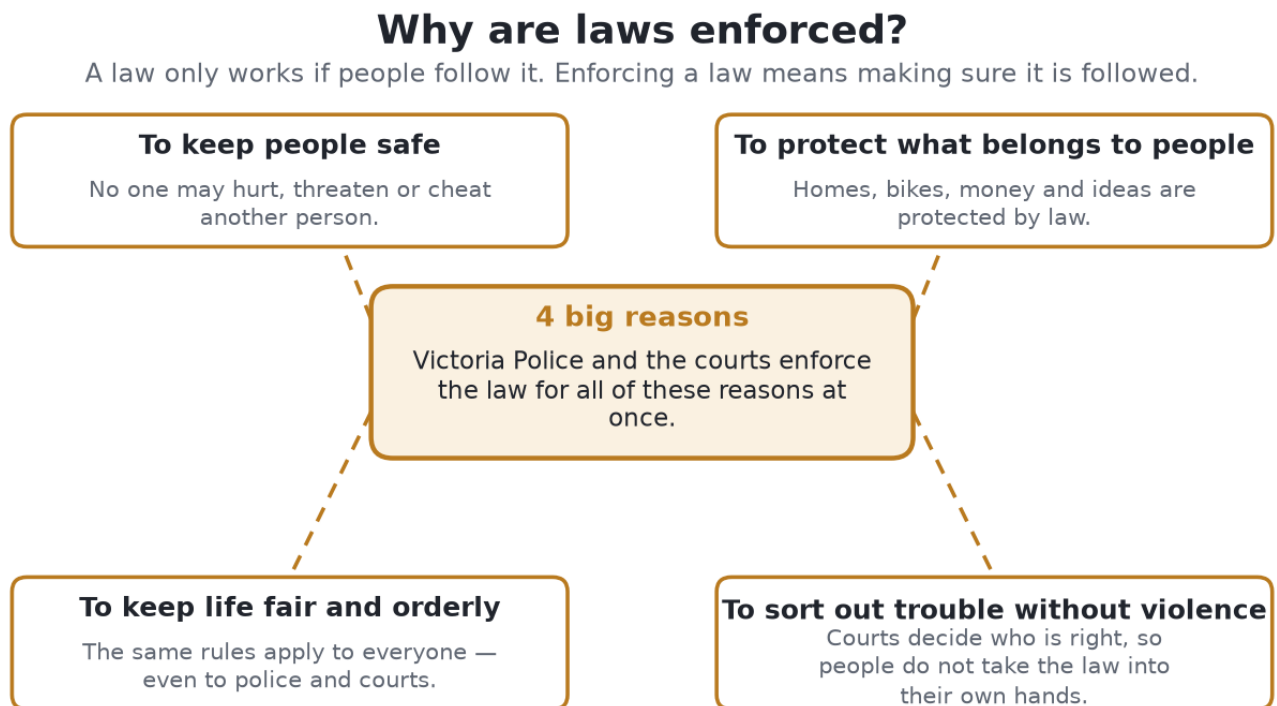


Figure 2A.1 · ClassBasics Civics and Citizenship 6

Spoke diagram with the question ‘Why are laws enforced?’ in the centre and four reason cards: to keep people safe, to protect what belongs to people, to keep life fair and orderly, and to sort out trouble without violence.

Two big kinds of law

The legal system deals with two big kinds of law. **Criminal law** is about actions that harm the whole community, like stealing or damaging things. **Civil law** is about disagreements between people or groups, often about money or things bought. Figure 2A.2 compares the two.

Two big kinds of law

The legal system deals with both. The words in bold are the ones lawyers use.

	CRIMINAL LAW	CIVIL LAW
What is it about?	Actions that harm the whole community, like stealing or damaging things	Disagreements between people or groups, often about money or things bought
Who starts the case?	The police charge the person they believe broke the law	The person or group with the complaint starts the case
Who hears the case?	A court — a magistrate or judge (a jury for serious cases)	A court, or VCAT, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal
What can happen in the end?	Found guilty: a sentence such as a fine, community work or prison	The losing side may have to pay money or fix the problem
Example laws	Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) Graffiti Prevention Act 2007 (Vic)	Australian Consumer Law Fair Trading Act 1999 (Vic)

One act can break both kinds of law: damaging a shop window is a crime, and the shop owner can also ask to be paid for the damage.

Figure 2A.2 · ClassBasics Civics and Citizenship 6

Two-column table comparing criminal law and civil law across five rows: what it is about, who starts the case, who hears the case, what can happen in the end, and example laws such as the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) and the Australian Consumer Law.

The police: enforcing criminal law in Victoria

Victoria Police is the state's police force. It says its job is to keep Victorians safe, every hour of every day (police.vic.gov.au, accessed 26 August 2026). Figure 2A.3 shows the four key jobs police do to enforce criminal laws.

Victoria Police: four key jobs

Victoria Police is the state's police force. It says its job is to keep Victorians safe, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (police.vic.gov.au).



Police powers are limited by law: officers must follow the rules too. That is part of the rule of law.

Figure 2A.3 · ClassBasics Civics and Citizenship 6

Four-card diagram of Victoria Police jobs: prevent crime, investigate crime, charge and bring to court, and protect the community, with a note that police powers are limited by law.

One rule matters above all: police can **charge** someone (say, formally, “we believe you broke this law”), but police do **not** decide guilt. Only a court can do that. Police powers are limited by law — officers must follow the rules too. That is part of the **rule of law**: the same rules apply to everyone, even to police.

What happens in court?

Figure 2A.4 follows the path of a criminal case, from charge to verdict to sentence.



Figure 2A.4 · ClassBasics Civics and Citizenship 6

Flow diagram of a criminal case in Victoria: police charge, then a court hearing, then the verdict branches into guilty (the court gives a sentence) or not guilty (the person is free to go), and a sentence strip listing a fine, community work, or prison for the most serious crimes; a side card explains that a jury of 12 people decides the verdict in serious cases.

New words from the courtroom:

- **evidence** — the facts, objects and witness stories a court looks at
- **witness** — a person who tells the court what they saw or know
- **verdict** — the court’s answer to “guilty or not guilty?”
- **jury** — in serious cases, 12 ordinary people who listen to the evidence and decide the verdict

- **magistrate** — the person who runs less serious cases and decides them without a jury
- **judge** — the person who runs more serious cases and, with a jury, decides the sentence

Which court hears which case?

Victoria has several courts. Figure 2A.5 shows the four that hear criminal cases.

Courts in Victoria that hear criminal cases

Different courts hear different cases. All four are real Victorian courts.



Most criminal cases in Victoria are heard in the Magistrates' Court.

Figure 2A.5 · ClassBasics Civics and Citizenship 6

Four court cards: Magistrates' Court of Victoria (most criminal cases, no jury), County Court of Victoria (more serious cases, usually a jury), Supreme Court of Victoria (the most serious cases, judge and jury), and Children's Court of Victoria (young people who were 10 to 17; children under 10 cannot be charged).

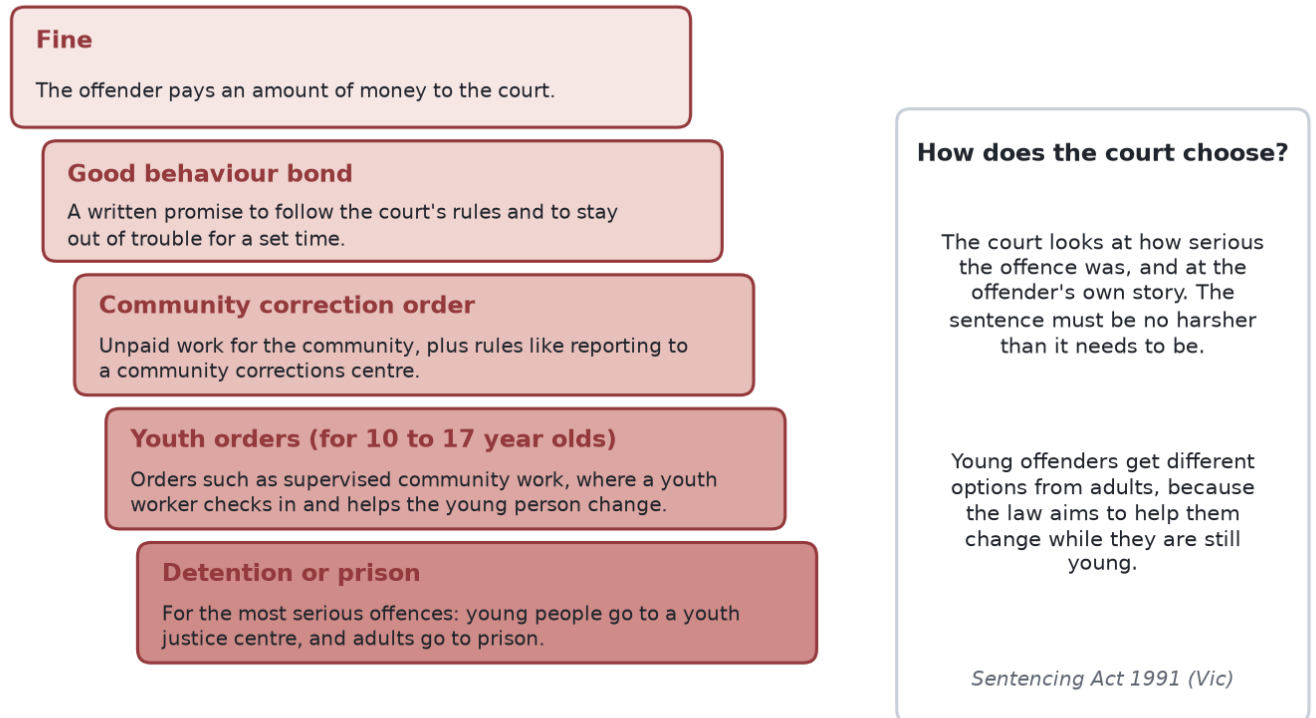
In Victoria, a child under 10 cannot be charged with a crime at all. Young people who were 10 to 17 are heard in the Children's Court of Victoria (Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)). Most adult criminal cases are heard in the Magistrates' Court.

Sentences: the court's choices

If a court finds someone guilty, it chooses a sentence. Figure 2A.6 shows the main options in Victoria, from lightest to heaviest. The list comes from the **Sentencing Act 1991 (Vic)**, the law that tells Victorian courts how to sentence.

Sentencing options: from lightest to heaviest

Victorian courts can choose from several sentences. The court picks one that fits the crime.



Arrow of severity: a fine is the lightest sentence; detention or prison is the heaviest.

Figure 2A.6 · ClassBasics Civics and Citizenship 6

Ladder diagram of sentencing options in Victoria from lightest to heaviest: fine, good behaviour bond, community correction order, youth orders for 10 to 17 year olds, and detention or prison; a side panel explains how the court chooses, naming the Sentencing Act 1991 (Vic).

Why punish? Five purposes

The Sentencing Act 1991 (Vic) says a court may sentence for only five purposes. Figure 2A.7 gives each purpose in plain English, next to the law's own word.

Why do courts give sentences? Five purposes

In Victoria, the Sentencing Act 1991 says these are the only reasons a court may punish someone.

Plain English	The law's word	What it means
Punish in a fair way	<i>just punishment</i>	The sentence fits what was done — no more, no less.
Stop crime before it happens	<i>deterrence</i>	The offender, and everyone watching, thinks twice before breaking the law.
Help the offender change	<i>rehabilitation</i>	Programs and support help the person stop committing crimes.
Say clearly: this behaviour is wrong	<i>denunciation</i>	The court speaks for the community in condemning the behaviour.
Protect the community	<i>community protection</i>	Keeping a dangerous offender in prison keeps people safe.

Courts often use several purposes at once — people disagree about which purpose matters most, and the law lets the court balance them.

Figure 2A.7 · ClassBasics Civics and Citizenship 6

Table of the five purposes of sentencing with plain-English labels (punish in a fair way, stop crime before it happens, help the offender change, say clearly this behaviour is wrong, protect the community) matched to the law's own word for each.

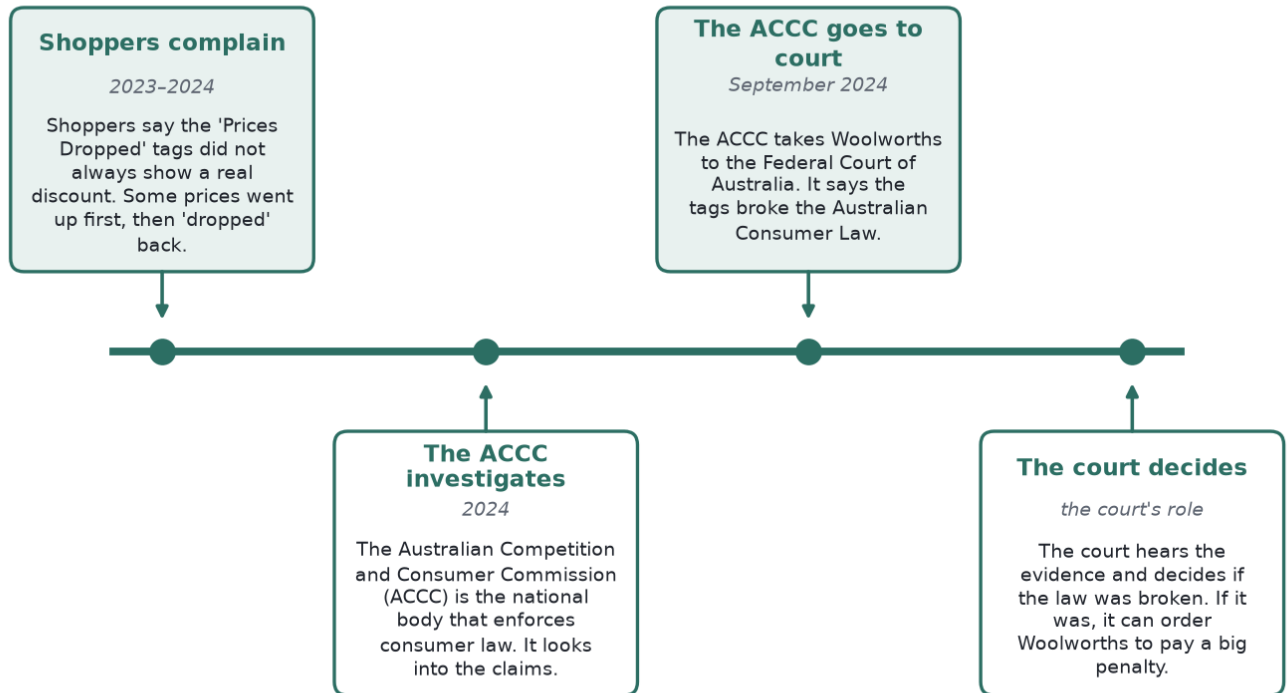
People disagree about which purpose matters most. Some say the point of a sentence is punishment — if you do wrong, you should pay for it. Others say the best sentence is one that helps the offender change, so there are fewer victims in the future. Both views care about keeping the community safe; they just get there in different ways. The law does not pick one winner — it lets the court balance the purposes, case by case.

Civil law in action: consumer law

Now a civil law. The **Australian Consumer Law** is a national set of rules about buying and selling. One key rule: shops must not mislead shoppers — for example, a “discount” tag must show a real discount. If a shop breaks this rule, it is not the police who act. Figure 2A.9 walks through a real case.

A real case: how consumer law is enforced

The Australian Consumer Law says shops must not mislead shoppers. Here is how that law was used.



Source: ACCC media release, September 2024; as reported in the Wikipedia entry 'Woolworths (Australia)', accessed 26 August 2026.

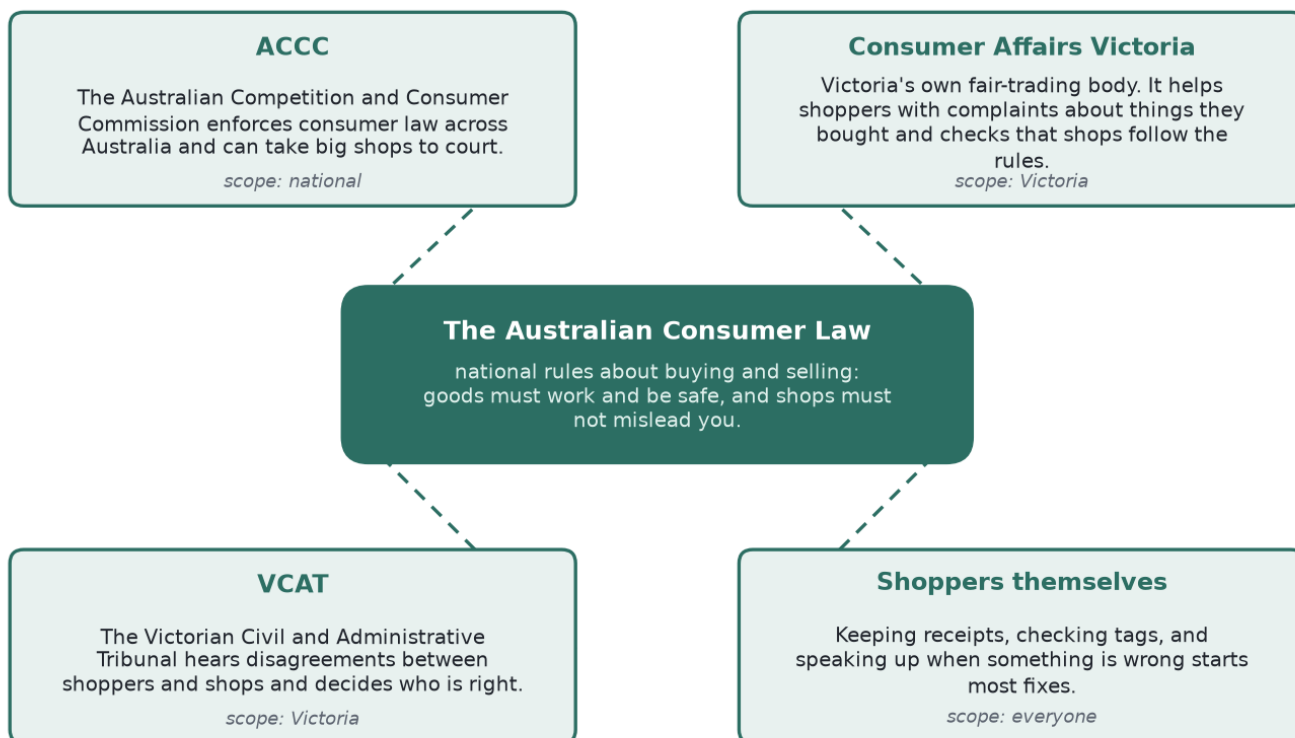
Figure 2A.9 · ClassBasics Civics and Citizenship 6

Timeline of the ACCC's Prices Dropped case: shoppers complain in 2023 to 2024 that the tags did not always show a real discount; the ACCC investigates in 2024; in September 2024 the ACCC takes Woolworths to the Federal Court of Australia; and the court hears the evidence and decides, with the power to order a big penalty.

(Source: ACCC media release, September 2024; as reported in the Wikipedia entry 'Woolworths (Australia)', accessed 26 August 2026.)

Who makes sure consumer law is followed? Figure 2A.10 shows the bodies.

Who makes sure consumer law is followed?



Civil law in action: these bodies make sure the rules are followed and help people when they are not.

Figure 2A.10 · ClassBasics Civics and Citizenship 6

Hub diagram with the Australian Consumer Law at the centre and four spokes: the ACCC (national), Consumer Affairs Victoria, VCAT, and shoppers themselves, each with a one-line role.

- **ACCC** — the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. It enforces consumer law across Australia and can take big shops to court.
- **Consumer Affairs Victoria** — Victoria's own fair-trading body. It helps shoppers with complaints about things they bought.
- **VCAT** — a Victorian government body where shoppers and shops can have a disagreement heard and decided, without a full court.
- **Shoppers** — keeping receipts and speaking up starts most fixes.

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — Sorting real laws (steps shown)

Task: For each real law, say (i) criminal or civil, and (ii) which body helps enforce it.

1. **Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)** — lists crimes like stealing and harming people.
2. **Graffiti Prevention Act 2007 (Vic)** — makes spray-painting other people's property without permission a crime.
3. **Australian Consumer Law** — rules about buying and selling, like "do not mislead shoppers".

Watch it done:

Step 1 — Ask: who is harmed? If the harm is to the whole community, think criminal. If it is a disagreement between people or groups, think civil (Figure 2A.2, row 1).

Step 2 — Ask: who starts the case? Police start criminal cases; the person or group with the complaint starts civil cases.

Step 3 — Apply.

1. *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*: stealing harms the whole community, and police start the case → **criminal law**, enforced by **Victoria Police**, with courts deciding guilt.
2. *Graffiti Prevention Act 2007 (Vic)*: damaging property is a harm to the community, and police can charge the person → **criminal law**, enforced by **Victoria Police**.
3. *Australian Consumer Law*: a misleading tag is a disagreement between a shopper and a shop about a thing bought → **civil law**, with the **ACCC** (and Consumer Affairs Victoria) making sure the rule is followed.

Worked example 2 — A real civil case (steps shown)

Task: Use the timeline in Figure 2A.9 to answer: which law was at issue, who enforced it, and what could the court do?

Step 1 — The law. The Australian Consumer Law rule “shops must not mislead shoppers”. Shoppers said the “Prices Dropped” tags did not always show a real discount.

Step 2 — The enforcing body. The ACCC — the national body that enforces consumer law — investigated and then started the case. Not the police: this is civil law.

Step 3 — The court. The ACCC took Woolworths to the **Federal Court of Australia** in **September 2024**. The court’s job is to hear the evidence from both sides and decide if the law was broken.

Step 4 — The possible outcome. If the court finds the law was broken, it can order Woolworths to pay a big penalty. That is what a sentence looks like in civil law (Figure 2A.2, row 4).

(Source: ACCC media release, September 2024; as reported in the Wikipedia entry ‘Woolworths (Australia)’, accessed 26 August 2026.)

Practice questions

With steps to help

Q1. Match each story to the police job it best shows. Choose from: *prevent crime · investigate crime · charge and bring to court · protect the community* (Figure 2A.3).

- a) Police look at camera footage and talk to witnesses after a bike is stolen.
- b) Police keep order and keep crowds safe at a big football final.
- c) Police lay a charge after collecting strong evidence, and bring the case to a court.
- d) Police visit a school to talk with students about staying safe, before anyone gets hurt.

Q2. Put the path of a criminal case in order using Figure 2A.4. Step 1 is done for you. Write the steps in order as 1–4.

- 1. Police charge
- _____. The verdict: guilty or not guilty?
- _____. The court hearing: a magistrate or judge hears the evidence
- _____. The sentence (if guilty)

Q3. Choose the court for each case. Use Figure 2A.5.

- a) An adult charged with stealing a chocolate bar (a less serious crime).
- b) A 14-year-old charged with spraying graffiti on a shop.
- c) An adult charged with one of the most serious crimes, heard with a judge and a jury.
- d) An adult’s more serious case, where a jury usually decides the verdict.

Q4. Pick a sentence that fits, using the ladder in Figure 2A.6, and say why it fits.

- a) An adult breaks a minor rule for the first time and pays the court an amount of money.
- b) A person who keeps stealing from shops is given unpaid community work plus rules to follow.
- c) A 15-year-old who broke the law is given supervised community work, with a youth worker checking in.

Q5. Match each court choice to the purpose it best shows. Choose from the plain-English column of Figure 2A.7.

- a) A dangerous offender is kept in prison so people outside are safe.
- b) An offender joins programs that help them stop committing crimes.
- c) A big penalty is put on the news so that others think twice before breaking the law.

Q6. Who can help? Choose from: *ACCC · Consumer Affairs Victoria · VCAT* (Figure 2A.10).

- a) Your toaster stops working after two days and the shop will not give a refund.
- b) A shop chain across the whole country may be breaking consumer law on a big scale.
- c) You and a shop cannot agree about who is right, and you want a government body to hear both sides and decide.

On your own

Q7. Look at Figure 2A.1. In your own words, explain why laws are enforced. Give two different reasons.

Q8. A student says: “Police catch people who break the law, so the police decide who is guilty.” Is that right in Victoria? Explain what really happens, and why it matters that a court — not the police — decides.

Q9. Compare criminal law and civil law (Figure 2A.2). Give one way they are the same, one way they are different, and name one real law for each kind.

Q10. A magistrate gives a young offender a community order with programs to help them change, instead of detention. Which two purposes from Figure 2A.7 can you see in that choice? Then give your own view: which purpose do you think matters most? Give a reason, and show you understand the other side too.

Source inquiry (Knowledge)

Read **Source 1** below. It is part of a real Victorian law: the Sentencing Act 1991, section 5(1). (Source: Sentencing Act 1991 (Vic) s 5(1), as published by the Parliament of Victoria at legislation.vic.gov.au, accessed 26 August 2026.)

SOURCE 1

Sentencing Act 1991 (Vic), section 5(1)

- (1) The only purposes for which sentences may be imposed are—
- (a) to punish the offender to an extent and in a manner which is just in all of the circumstances; or
 - (b) to deter the offender or other persons from committing offences of the same or a similar character; or
 - (c) to establish conditions within which it is considered by the court that the offender will be most likely to be rehabilitated; or
 - (d) to signify the denunciation by the court of the type of conduct in which the offender engaged; or
 - (e) to protect the community from the offender; or
 - (f) a combination of two or more of those purposes.

Source: Sentencing Act 1991 (Vic) s 5(1), as published by the Parliament of Victoria at legislation.vic.gov.au, accessed 26 August 2026.

Figure 2A.8 · ClassBasics Civics and Citizenship 6

Document card showing the exact words of section 5(1) of the Sentencing Act 1991 (Vic), paragraphs (a) to (f), with a source line at the bottom.

Q11. Answer these about Source 1.

- a) How many purposes are listed? (Count the lettered paragraphs.)
- b) Paragraph (b) is about stopping crime before it happens. Which plain-English purpose in Figure 2A.7 matches it?
- c) Which paragraph is about keeping the community safe from the offender?
- d) Paragraph (f) allows “a combination of two or more” purposes. Give one example of a sentence that serves two purposes at once, and name both.

Answers

Q1. a) investigate crime. b) protect the community. c) charge and bring to court. d) prevent crime.

Q2. 1. Police charge → 2. The court hearing → 3. The verdict → 4. The sentence (if guilty).

Q3. a) Magistrates' Court. b) Children's Court. c) Supreme Court. d) County Court.

Q4. a) A fine — the lightest step on the ladder, which fits a first, minor offence. b) A community correction order — unpaid work plus rules fits someone who keeps offending. c) A youth order — for 10 to 17 year olds, with supervision and help to change.

Q5. a) Protect the community. b) Help the offender change. c) Stop crime before it happens.

Q6. a) Consumer Affairs Victoria (or VCAT if the shop and you cannot agree). b) The ACCC. c) VCAT.

Q7. Any two of: to keep people safe; to protect what belongs to people; to keep life fair and orderly; to sort out trouble without violence.

Q8. No. Police investigate and charge, but only a court decides guilt, after hearing the evidence from both sides. It matters because police power is limited by law — if the same group could catch, charge *and* decide, a mistake or a grudge could put an innocent person in prison. The rule of law means the decider is separate from the catcher.

Q9. Same: both are law, and both can end in a court that applies the rule. Different: criminal cases are started by police and can end in a sentence like prison; civil cases are started by the person or group with the complaint and usually end in paying money or fixing the problem. Example laws: Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (criminal); Australian Consumer Law (civil).

Q10. The two purposes shown: help the offender change, and (as a less heavy choice than detention) punish in a fair way — or protect the community if the supervision keeps watch. Own view: any purpose, with a reason, plus a fair account of the other side (for example: "Punishment matters because people deserve to pay for wrongs — but I think helping young people change matters more, because it means fewer victims later.").

Q11. a) Six — paragraphs (a) to (f) list five purposes, and (f) adds that they can be combined. b) "Stop crime before it happens" (the law's word is in the middle column of Figure 2A.7). c) Paragraph (e). d) Example: a community correction order both punishes in a fair way (unpaid work is the price of the wrong) and helps the offender change (programs and supervision); or prison both protects the community and punishes.

Worked solutions

Q7 — model answer. Laws are enforced for at least two reasons. First, to keep people safe: if no one made sure the law was followed, people could hurt or threaten others and get away with it. Second, to sort out trouble without violence: when two people disagree, a court decides who is right, so people do not take the law into their own hands. (Other accepted reasons: protecting what belongs to people; keeping life fair and orderly, because the same rules apply to everyone.)

Q8 — model answer. The student is half right and half wrong. The right half: police do catch and charge people who are believed to have broken the law. The wrong half: police never decide guilt in Victoria. After a charge, a court — a magistrate or judge, sometimes with a jury — hears the evidence from both sides and gives the verdict. This split matters. Police power is limited by law, and the rule of law says no one should be a judge in their own case. If police both charged and decided, an innocent person would have nowhere to go. Keeping the decision in a separate, open court is how the system protects everyone, including people the police believe are guilty.

Q9 — model answer. One similarity: criminal law and civil law are both sets of rules made and applied by the legal system, and both can be heard in a court. One difference: a criminal case is started by police for the whole community and can end in a sentence such as a fine, community work or prison; a civil case is started by the person or group with the complaint and usually ends with the losing side paying money or fixing the problem. Real laws: the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) is criminal law (police enforce it); the Australian Consumer Law is civil law (the ACCC and Consumer Affairs Victoria make sure it is followed).

Q10 — model answer. The two clearest purposes in the magistrate’s choice are *help the offender change* (the programs and the youth worker checking in) and *punish in a fair way* (a community order is still a price for the wrong, just a less heavy one than detention). A fair own view, with the other side heard: “Some people say punishment matters most, because doing wrong should have a real cost, and victims deserve to see that. I understand that view. But for a young person, I think helping them change matters most, because a 15-year-old who changes stops committing crimes for the next fifty years — that protects the community better than a short detention would.” (Any purpose is accepted if the reason is civic, not “because I feel like it”, and the other side is given its best case first.)

Q11 — model answer. a) The section lists five purposes in paragraphs (a) to (e), and paragraph (f) adds one more option: a combination of two or more of them. b) Paragraph (b) — “to deter the offender or other persons” — matches the plain-English purpose *stop crime before it happens*. c) Paragraph (e) — “to protect the community from the offender”. d) Example: a community correction order serves two purposes at once — it punishes in a fair way (the unpaid work is the price of the wrong) and helps the offender change (programs plus supervision). Prison is another example: it protects the community *and* punishes. The point of paragraph (f) is that real sentences usually aim at more than one purpose, and the law lets the court balance them.

Citizens' rights and duties under Australian law

Curriculum: VC2HC6K05 (Levels 5 and 6) · draws on .E01, .E02, .E03.

Teaching sequence

Before we start: what is a *right*? The Victorian Curriculum uses the term *legal rights* but does not define it. This section therefore treats it as follows: a **legal right** is a freedom or protection that the law gives a person, that others (including the government) must respect, and that the person can claim if it is taken away. Other people use the word *right* in other senses — for example, a *moral right*, such as “everyone has a right to be treated kindly”, is a claim about what *should* happen, not always something a court can enforce. Those senses exist and are not interchangeable with the legal one. Every question in this section can be answered using the legal sense alone. Its partner word is a **legal responsibility**: something the law expects or requires a person to do. A **citizen** is a member of a country, with the rights and responsibilities that come with that membership.

Key idea. Rights and responsibilities are two sides of the same coin. The law protects a citizen's rights, and in return the citizen carries certain responsibilities.

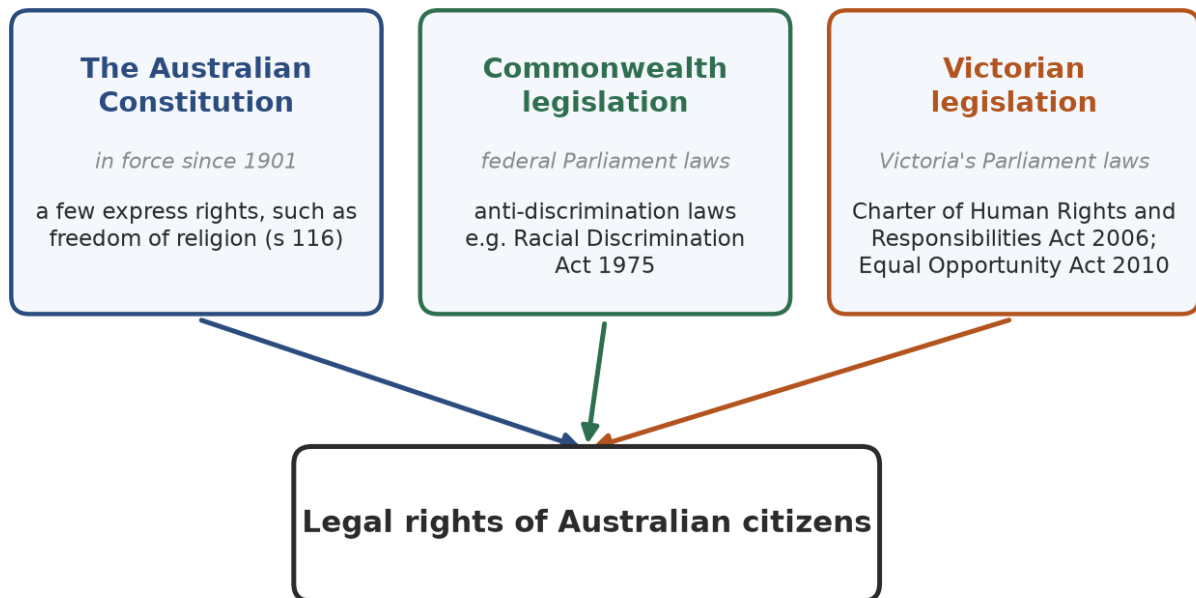
1. Where the law gives citizens their rights

In Australia, many rights are not just ideas — they are written down in the law, so a person can point to them and claim them. There are three main places they come from:

- **the Australian Constitution** — the founding law of Australia, in force since 1 January 1901, which sets out a few rights directly;
- **Commonwealth legislation** — laws made by the federal Parliament in Canberra, such as the anti-discrimination laws; and
- **Victorian legislation** — laws made by the Parliament of Victoria in Melbourne, such as the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

*A **constitution** is a country's founding law, the set of rules that says how the country is run. **Legislation** means laws made by a **parliament** — the body of elected members whose job is to make and change laws.*

Where do Australian citizens' legal rights come from?



Three boxes showing that legal rights in Australia come from the Constitution, from Commonwealth laws and from Victorian laws

Figure 1 — Where Australian citizens' legal rights come from.

2. Rights written in the Constitution

The Constitution does not carry a long list of rights. It sets out a few express rights — rights written directly into the text — and most of them limit what the **Commonwealth** (the federal government) may do.

Express rights in the Australian Constitution

Section	What it does (in plain language)
s 80	guarantees a jury trial for serious offences against Commonwealth law
s 116	protects freedom of religion — the Commonwealth may not stop people practising their religion or force religious observance
s 117	protects people from being treated worse in another state just because of the state they live in
s 51(xxxi)	the Commonwealth may take property only on fair terms (the Constitution calls them 'just terms')
s 128	the Constitution may be changed only by a national vote (a referendum) with a double majority

Australian Constitution, in force since 1 January 1901

Table of the express rights in the Australian Constitution and what each one does, in plain language

Figure 2 — Express rights in the Australian Constitution.

One of the most important is section 128. It says the Constitution itself can only be changed by a **referendum** — a national vote in which all enrolled electors vote yes or no on a proposed change, and the change needs a double majority: a majority of electors nationwide and a majority of electors in a majority of states.

3. Laws that protect people from discrimination

Another way citizens gain rights in the law is through Commonwealth and Victorian legislation that makes it against the law to treat a person unfairly for a reason such as their race, sex, age, disability or religious belief. **Discrimination**, in the legal sense this section uses, means treating a person unfairly for a reason such as these — and the Australian Parliament has passed a series of laws against it since 1975.

Commonwealth and Victorian laws that protect people from discrimination

1975	Racial Discrimination Act (Cth) protects people from unfair treatment because of race, colour or national or ethnic origin
1984	Sex Discrimination Act (Cth) protects people from unfair treatment because of sex, marital status or pregnancy
1992	Disability Discrimination Act (Cth) protects people from unfair treatment because of a disability
2004	Age Discrimination Act (Cth) protects people from unfair treatment because of their age
2010	Equal Opportunity Act (Vic) Victoria's law against discrimination — covers attributes such as age, disability, race, sex and religious belief

Timeline of Australian laws that protect people from discrimination, from the Racial Discrimination Act in 1975 to the Equal Opportunity Act (Vic) in 2010

Figure 3 — Laws that protect people from discrimination.

If a person believes they have been discriminated against, they can complain to the **Australian Human Rights Commission**, which was set up by a Commonwealth law of 1986 to hear complaints of this kind, or in Victoria to the **Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission**, which does the same work under Victoria's Equal Opportunity Act 2010.

4. The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

Victoria has its own human rights law: the **Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006**. A *charter* is a written list of rights that a parliament has agreed to protect. The Charter does three main jobs:

- it **names the rights** — a list of human rights protected in Victorian law;
- it **binds public bodies** — Victorian government bodies such as the police, government departments, councils and public schools must act in ways that respect these rights; and
- it **guides the courts** — when a court works out what a Victorian law means, it must, as far as possible, read that law in a way that respects Charter rights. In 2011 the High Court of Australia, the highest court in the country, confirmed this in a case called *Momcilovic v The Queen* [2011] HCA 37.

The figure below shows a selection of the rights the Charter names, with the section of the Act each one sits in.

Some of the human rights in Victoria's Charter

Charter section	Right
s 8	recognition and equality before the law
s 9	right to life
s 12	freedom of movement
s 13	right to privacy and reputation
s 14	freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief
s 15	freedom of expression
s 16	peaceful assembly and freedom of association
s 20	right to take part in public life
s 24	right to a fair hearing

A selection of the rights in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic), Part 2

Table of a selection of the human rights in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities with their section numbers

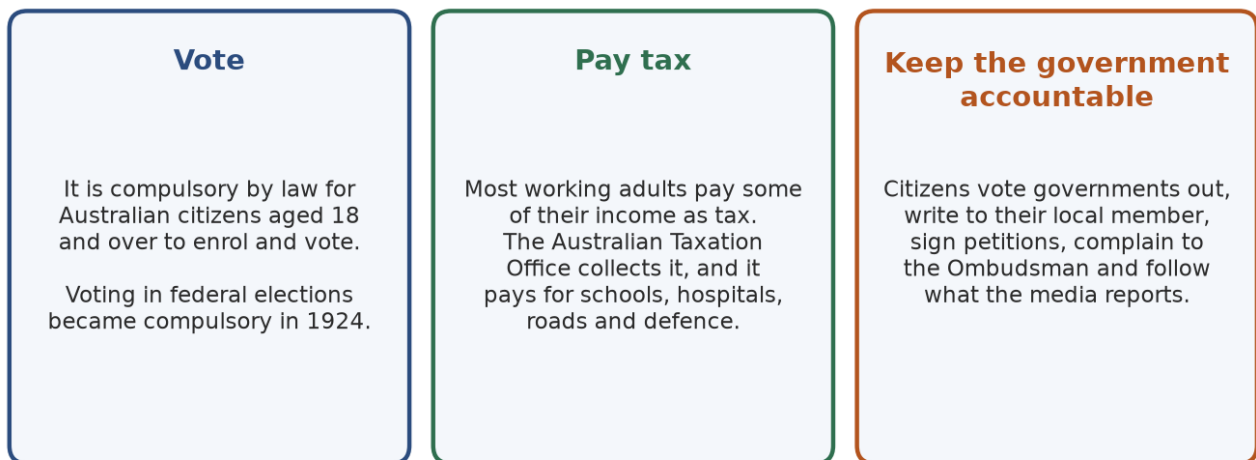
Figure 4 — Some of the human rights in Victoria's Charter.

*Section 1B uses the Charter to show which democratic values it protects, and section 3C uses it to show how rights shape lawmaking in Victoria. Here it is doing different work: showing **where** the law gives citizens in Victoria their rights.*

5. The responsibilities of citizens

Rights in law only work if citizens carry their responsibilities. Three stand out.

Three responsibilities of Australian citizens

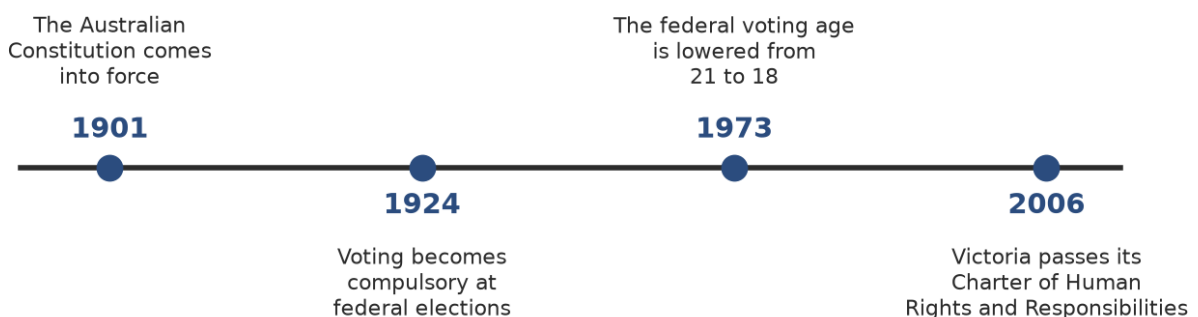


Three cards showing the responsibilities of Australian citizens: to vote, to pay tax and to keep the government accountable

Figure 5 — Three responsibilities of Australian citizens.

Voting. In Australia it is **compulsory** — required by law — for Australian citizens 18 and over to enrol and to vote. Enrolment became compulsory in 1912, and in 1924 the federal Parliament changed the electoral law to make voting at federal elections compulsory as well, so that more electors would vote. It is also compulsory to vote at Victorian state elections. If an elector does not vote and has no valid reason, the Australian Electoral Commission first sends a letter, and the elector may explain, give a valid and sufficient reason, or pay a fine of \$20. The timeline below puts these changes in order.

A timeline of voting rights and responsibilities in Australia



Sources: Australian Electoral Commission; Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)

Timeline showing the Constitution of 1901, compulsory voting at federal elections from 1924, the voting age lowered to 18 in 1973, and Victoria's Charter passed in 2006

Figure 6 — Key dates for voting rights and responsibilities.

Paying tax. Most working adults in Australia pay part of what they earn as tax. The **Australian Taxation Office** collects it, and governments spend it on the things everyone uses: schools, hospitals, roads, the police and the armed forces.

Keeping the government accountable. To keep the government **accountable** means to be able to check what it is doing and to make it explain itself. Citizens do this in several ways.

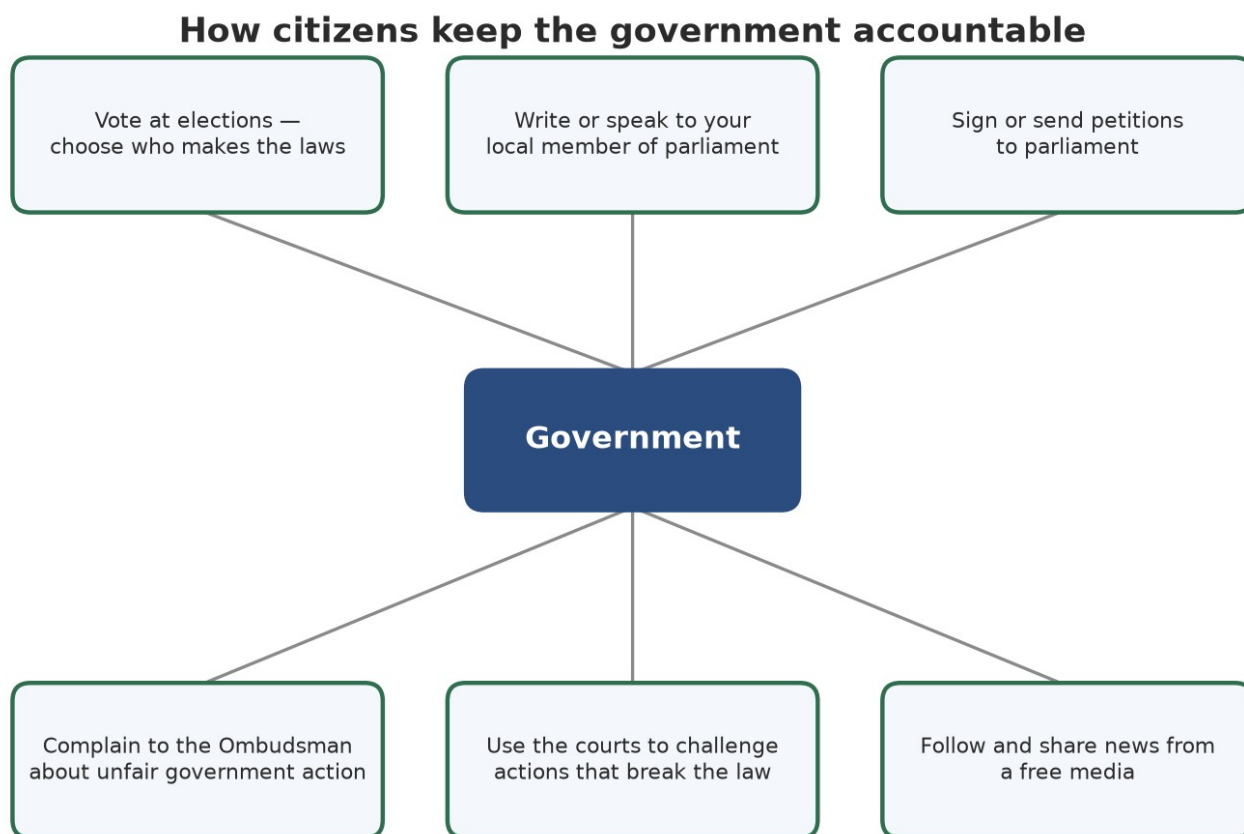


Diagram of six ways citizens keep the government accountable: voting at elections, writing to a local member, petitions, the Ombudsman, the courts and a free media

Figure 7 — How citizens keep the government accountable.

The **Ombudsman** is an independent official who investigates complaints about unfair or wrong action by government bodies. Victoria set its Ombudsman up in 1973, one of the first in Australia. There is one more responsibility worth naming: obeying the law itself — and, if called, serving on a **jury** (a group of ordinary electors who decide the facts in a court case), which in Victoria is required by the Juries Act 2003.

Key idea. A right is only as strong as the citizens who look after it. The right to vote is protected in the law; the responsibility to vote, and to keep watching what the government does, is what makes that right real.

Two views — should voting be compulsory?

Whether **compulsory** voting is a good idea is genuinely debated, and both sides have real arguments.

View 1 — yes, keep it. If every enrolled elector must vote, the parliament that gets elected truly reflects the whole country, not just the people who felt like voting that year. In recent federal elections about 9 in 10 enrolled electors have voted — a share most countries without compulsory voting do not reach — so governments must listen to almost everyone, not only to their most eager supporters.

View 2 — no, make it a choice. Voting is a freedom, and a freedom you are fined for not using is a strange kind of freedom. In countries such as New Zealand and the United Kingdom, voting is not compulsory and most electors still choose to vote; on this view, a vote given by choice says more about a healthy democracy than a vote the law requires.

Neither view is the “right answer” — and the Australian Electoral Commission itself takes no side, saying whether voting should be compulsory is a matter for the Parliament of Australia to decide. In this subject you are marked on

the quality of your reasoning — defining your terms, using evidence, and giving the other side a fair hearing — not on which view you reach.

Worked examples

Example 1 — with help

Use the source below (the exact words of section 116 of the Constitution) to find and explain a constitutional right.

Australian Constitution — Section 116

The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth.

In force since 1 January 1901

The exact words of section 116 of the Australian Constitution, presented as a source document, in force since 1 January 1901

Figure 8 — The exact words of section 116 of the Australian Constitution.

Working	Comment
Step 1 — Read the source. It begins “The Commonwealth shall not make any law ...”.	The words name who is bound: the Commonwealth , the federal law-maker.
Step 2 — Find what is stopped. It may not set up a religion, force religious acts, or stop the free practice of religion.	Three protections of religion sit in one section.
Step 3 — State the right in your own words. “The federal Parliament cannot make a law that stops people practising their religion.”	Restating a source in plain words shows you understand it, not just copied it.
Step 4 — State one limit. It binds the Commonwealth; and a court decides what the words mean in a real case.	Every right has edges. Naming one keeps your claim exact.

Example 2 — with help

Trace one responsibility of citizens — the duty to vote — back to the law, and say why it matters.

Working	Comment
Step 1 — Name the responsibility. Australian citizens 18 and over must enrol and vote.	“Compulsory” means the law requires it.
Step 2 — Find it in the law. Enrolment became compulsory in 1912; voting at federal elections in 1924, by a change to the Commonwealth electoral law.	A responsibility, like a right, should sit in a law you can name.

Working	Comment
Step 3 — What happens if it is not done? The Australian Electoral Commission writes to the elector, who may explain, give a valid reason, or pay a \$20 fine.	The law has a gentle first step: a letter, not a punishment.
Step 4 — Why does it matter? With almost everyone voting, parliaments must answer to almost everyone.	The responsibility to vote is what keeps the right to vote powerful.

Practice questions

Practice with help

- Q1.** A classmate says “rights in Australia are just ideas people believe in.” Using Figure 1, name the three places citizens’ rights actually come from.
- Q2.** Figure 2 lists the express rights in the Constitution. Match each right to the section that protects it: (a) the federal government taking someone’s property without paying a fair amount; (b) a federal law that stopped people practising their religion; (c) changing the Constitution without asking the voters.
- Q3.** Sort these into **rights** and **responsibilities**: (a) freedom of religion; (b) voting at elections; (c) a fair hearing; (d) paying tax; (e) freedom of expression; (f) keeping the government accountable.
- Q4.** Look at the source in Figure 8 (section 116 of the Constitution). (a) Who do the words “The Commonwealth” bind? (b) In your own words, what may the Commonwealth not do?
- Q5.** Using Figure 5, complete the sentences: “Paying tax is a responsibility because ...” and “The money collected by the Australian Taxation Office pays for ...”.
- Q6.** Read *Two views — should voting be compulsory?* Give one reason from each view, in your own words.

Practice on your own

- Q7.** Explain two different places where Australian citizens’ rights come from in the law, giving one named example for each.
- Q8.** The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities does three main jobs. Explain two of them, and give one Charter right (with its section) that each job protects.
- Q9.** “Rights and responsibilities are two sides of the same coin.” Do you agree? Explain your view using one right and one responsibility from this section.
- Q10.** Choose one way citizens keep the government accountable (Figure 7). Explain how it works and why it matters for democracy.

Source inquiry

Read the source — the exact words of **section 116 of the Australian Constitution** — shown in Figure 8, then answer the questions.

- Q11.** The source says the Commonwealth shall not make any law “for establishing any religion”. Explain, in your own words, what a law like that would do, and why this section stops it.
- Q12.** The source also says “no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth.” Explain what this means for a person who wants to work for the federal government or hold federal public office.

Q13. Section 116 binds the Commonwealth. Figure 4 shows that Victoria’s Charter names freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief (s 14). Explain why Australia needs both — a constitutional section and a state Charter — to protect the same value.

Answers

Q1. The Australian Constitution; Commonwealth legislation (federal laws); and Victorian legislation (state laws). **Q2.** (a) s 51(xxxi); (b) s 116; (c) s 128. **Q3.** Rights: (a), (c), (e). Responsibilities: (b), (d), (f). **Q4.** (a) The Commonwealth — the federal government and its parliament. (b) It may not set up a religion, force religious acts, or stop people practising their religion. **Q5.** Sample: ...because the law requires working adults to pay part of their earnings, and without it the things everyone shares could not be paid for; ...schools, hospitals, roads, the police and the armed forces. **Q6.** Sample: View 1 — everyone voting means parliament reflects the whole country; View 2 — voting is a freedom, and forcing it makes it a strange kind of freedom. **Q7–Q13** — see the worked solutions below.

Worked solutions

Q7. Citizens gain rights in the law in more than one place. One place is the Australian Constitution, in force since 1901 — for example, section 116 protects freedom of religion from federal law. A second place is legislation made by a parliament — for example, the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (a Commonwealth law) gives citizens a right not to be treated unfairly because of their race, and Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 names human rights that Victorian public bodies must respect. Two different sources, one point: rights sit in laws that can be named and claimed.

Q8. First job: the Charter names the rights, so everyone knows what they are — for example, freedom of expression (s 15). Second job: it binds public bodies, so Victorian government bodies such as the police, councils and public schools must act in ways that respect those rights — for example, the right to a fair hearing (s 24) when a body makes a decision about a person. (Third job, for reference: it guides courts to read Victorian laws, as far as possible, in a way that respects Charter rights, as the High Court confirmed in *Momcilovic v The Queen* [2011] HCA 37.)

Q9. Sample agree: the right to vote is written in the law, but it only keeps the government listening if citizens carry the responsibility to vote and to watch what the government does — about 9 in 10 enrolled electors voting at federal elections is what gives the right its force. Sample disagree: some rights, such as freedom of religion (s 116), protect a person even if they never vote, so rights can stand on their own. Both answers earn full marks when the right and the responsibility are named and the link (or its absence) is explained.

Q10. Sample — the Ombudsman: an independent official, set up in Victoria in 1973, who investigates a citizen's complaint about unfair or wrong action by a government body. It works because an ordinary person can complain without going to court, and the government body must answer. It matters for democracy because a government that must answer to an independent official is harder to misuse. (Equally good: voting a government out; writing to a local member; a petition; a court challenge; a free media reporting what the government does.)

Q11. A law “for establishing any religion” would make one religion the official religion of the country, or pay for one religion out of everyone's taxes, or give one religion powers over others. Section 116 stops it because the Constitution says the Commonwealth may not make any such law — the federal parliament's power over religion is a “shall not”, so the value sits above ordinary politics.

Q12. It means the federal government cannot ask a person about their religion, or demand they hold (or do not hold) a particular belief, as a condition of getting a job or an office under the Commonwealth. A person's belief is their own business; what matters is whether they can do the job.

Q13. Section 116 binds only the Commonwealth — it stops *federal* law from interfering with religion. It does not, by its words, bind a state. Victoria’s Charter fills that space in Victoria: it names freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief (s 14) and binds Victorian public bodies. So the same value is guarded at two levels of government — the Constitution guarding it against the federal parliament, and the Charter guarding it in Victorian law. (This is the same pattern as the other rights in this section: a citizen’s rights come from more than one source, and each source covers a different law-maker.)

Sources, retrieved 26 August 2026 unless stated: Australian Constitution, ss 80, 116, 117, 51(xxxi), 128 (in force since 1 January 1901); Australian Electoral Commission, Electoral Backgrounder: Compulsory voting and About the AEC: History (aec.gov.au — the 1912 and 1924 changes, the \$20 fine, and the 1973 lowering of the voting age from 21 to 18); Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic), Part 2, and Momcilovic v The Queen [2011] HCA 37; Racial Discrimination Act 1975, Sex Discrimination Act 1984, Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth); Equal Opportunity Act 2010 and Juries Act 2003 (Vic); Ombudsman Act 1973 (Vic).**

How a bill becomes a law

In this section you will follow a real bill from its first day in parliament to the day it becomes a law, and you will work out who a government must convince when it does not hold a majority in the upper house.

Curriculum link: VC2HC6K06 · VC2HC6K06.E01 · VC2HC6K06.E02 · VC2HC6K06.E03 (Levels 5–6)

Theory

Part 1 — Two parliaments, one job: making laws

Australia’s national government makes laws for the whole country, and each state government makes laws for its state. In this section we look at two parliaments: the **Parliament of Australia** (the federal parliament) in Canberra, and the **Parliament of Victoria** (the state parliament) in Melbourne. They meet in different buildings and have different numbers of members, but they make laws in exactly the same way.

Each parliament has **two houses**. The **lower house** is where the government is formed: the party (or group of parties) with the most seats in the lower house becomes the government. The **upper house** is called the **house of review**: its job is to give every proposed law a second, careful look, and to change it or reject it if it thinks it should.

Two parliaments, one way of making laws

The federal parliament in Canberra and the Victorian parliament in Melbourne both have two houses.

	Parliament of Australia (the federal parliament)	Parliament of Victoria (the state parliament)
Where it meets	Parliament House, Canberra	Parliament House, Spring Street, Melbourne
Lower house	House of Representatives 151 members (MPs)	Legislative Assembly 88 members (MPs)
Upper house	Senate 76 senators	Legislative Council 40 members
Who gives the final sign-off (Royal Assent)?	the Governor-General	the Governor of Victoria

In both parliaments, the party (or parties) with the most seats in the lower house forms the government.

A two-column table comparing the Parliament of Australia and the Parliament of Victoria: where each meets, the name and size of each lower and upper house, and who gives Royal Assent

Part 2 — The key words

Lawmaking has its own special words. Here are the ones you need for this section. Two more are defined here at first use: the **Opposition** is the largest party that is *not* in government — its job is to check the government’s work and say what it would do instead; and **Royal Assent** is the final sign-off, given in the King’s name by the Governor-General (federal) or the Governor (Victoria), that turns a bill into a law.

Key words for this section

parliament	the group of people elected to make laws for a country or state
bill	a proposed new law, or a proposed change to a law, that parliament has not passed yet
legislation	a law, or laws, made by parliament (also called an Act once passed)
second reading speech	the speech where a minister explains why parliament should pass a bill
lower house	the house where the government is formed (House of Representatives / Legislative Assembly)
upper house	the house that reviews bills — the Senate (federal) or the Legislative Council (Victoria)
Royal Assent	the final sign-off by the Governor-General (federal) or Governor (Victoria) that makes a bill a law
crossbench	members or senators who belong to neither the government nor the main opposition
majority	more than half of the votes — the number a bill needs to pass

A key-word chart defining parliament, bill, legislation, second reading speech, lower house, upper house, Royal Assent, crossbench and majority

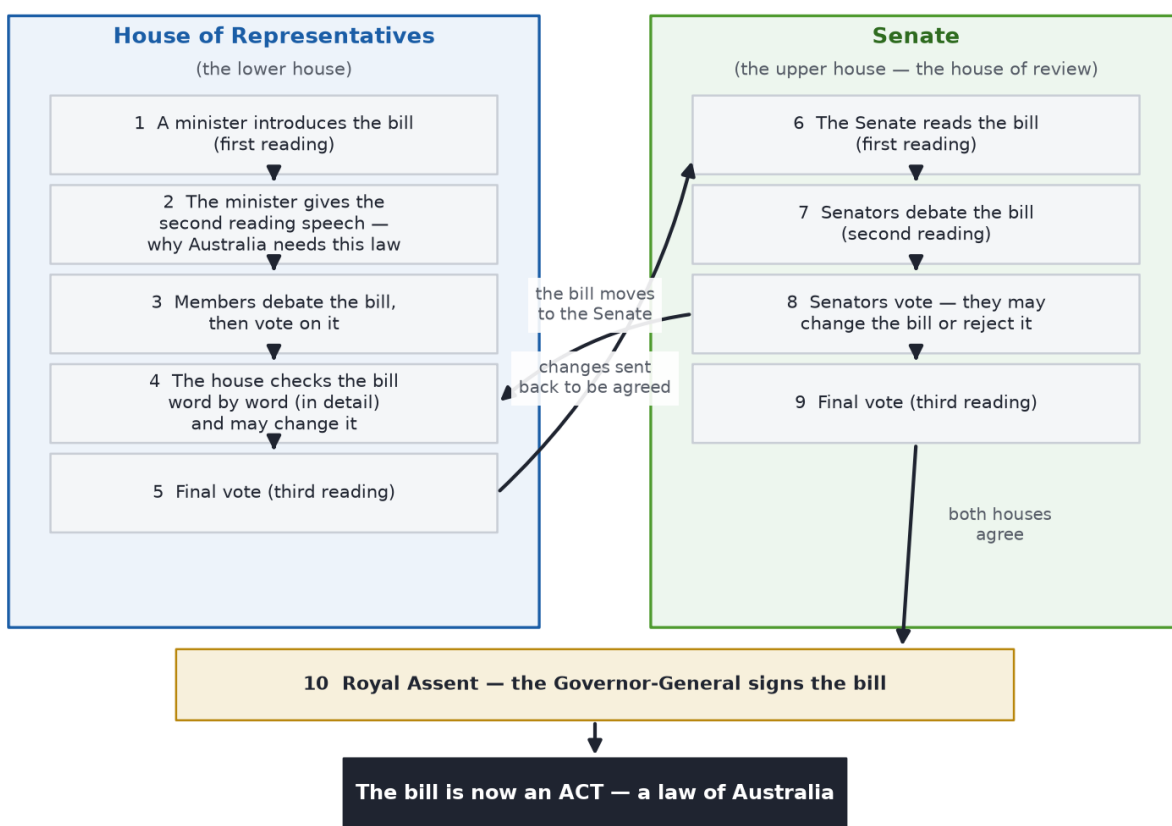
A **bill** is only a proposal. It does not matter how loudly a minister says “this will be a law” — until both houses agree to the *same words* and the bill receives Royal Assent, it is not law and nobody has to obey it.

Part 3 — The journey of a bill

Here is the full journey, step by step. The same ten steps happen in the Victorian parliament, with the Legislative Assembly instead of the House of Representatives, the Legislative Council instead of the Senate, and the Governor of Victoria instead of the Governor-General.

The journey of a bill through the federal parliament

A bill is a proposed law. It must be agreed to by BOTH houses in the SAME words, then signed by the Governor-General.



The Victorian parliament works the same way: a bill passes the Legislative Assembly, then the Legislative Council, then the Governor of Victoria signs it.

A flowchart of the ten steps a bill takes through the federal parliament: five steps in the House of Representatives column, the bill moves to the Senate column for four more steps, changes can be sent back, then Royal Assent and the bill becomes an Act

Some steps have old names that are worth explaining:

- **First reading** — the Clerk reads the name of the bill out loud. No debate yet. It is the bill's official first day.
- **Second reading** — the minister gives the **second reading speech**, explaining why the country needs this law. Then members debate the bill's big idea and vote on it.
- **Consideration in detail** — the house checks the bill word by word and may **amend** it (change parts of it).
- **Third reading** — the final vote in that house.

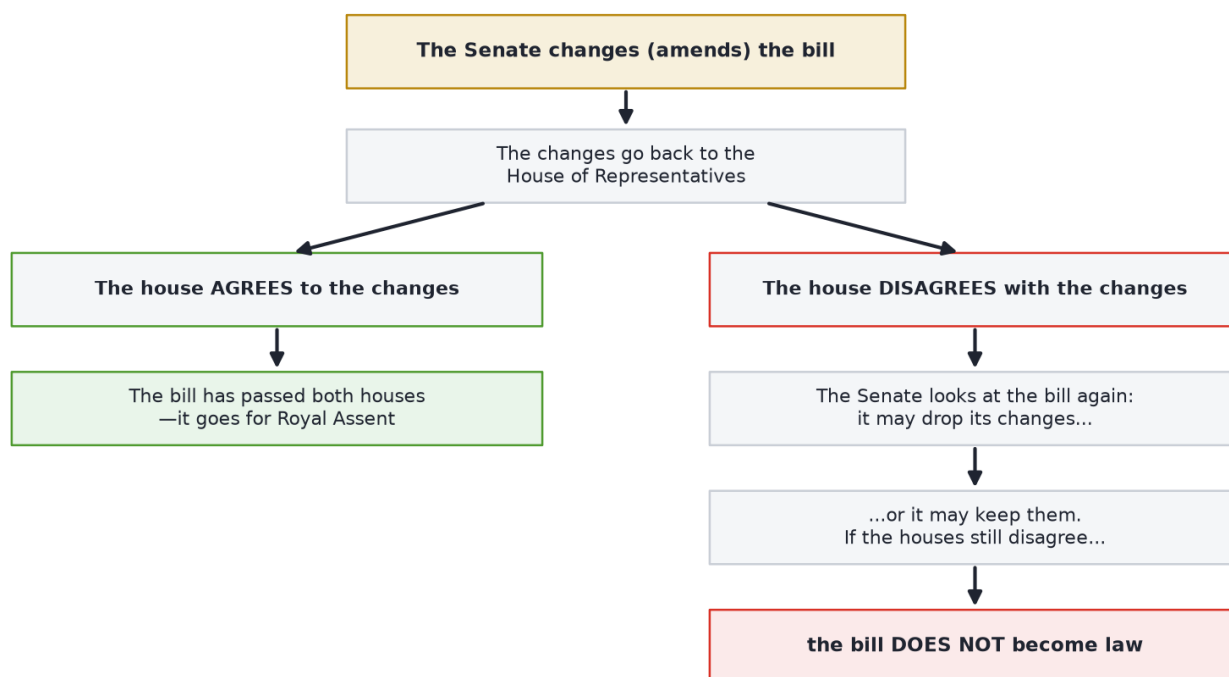
Then the bill crosses to the other house, which can pass it, change it, or reject it. If the second house changes the bill, the first house must agree to those changes — because both houses must end up with the **same words**.

Part 4 — What if the two houses can't agree?

Sometimes the upper house changes a bill and the lower house does not like the changes. The bill then bounces between the houses until they agree — or it fails.

What if the two houses can't agree?

A bill only becomes law when BOTH houses agree on the SAME words.



This back-and-forth is one reason lawmaking can be slow — and why the upper house is called the house of review: it gives every bill a second, careful look.

A flowchart showing that when the Senate amends a bill the changes go back to the House of Representatives; if the house agrees the bill passes and goes for Royal Assent, but if the houses keep disagreeing the bill does not become law

This is one reason lawmaking can be slow. It is also the point of the house of review: a bill that survives this bouncing between the houses has been checked at least twice, by people who do not all belong to the same party.

Part 5 — The second reading speech

The second reading speech is the moment a minister has to give **reasons**, not just say what will happen. A good speech does five jobs: it names the bill, explains the problem, says what the bill will do, says who it helps and why it is fair, and asks the house to support it. After the speech, the Opposition and the crossbench debate it — they may agree, or they may explain why they will vote against the bill or change it.

How to build a second reading speech

The minister's speech that explains WHY the parliament should pass the bill. Use these 5 parts.

1 Name the bill	"Today I introduce the Bill 2026."
2 Explain the problem	"At the moment, ... This is a problem because"
3 Say what the bill will do	"This bill will " (name the main rules, one by one)
4 Who it helps and why it is fair	"This bill will help It is fair because"
5 Ask the house to support it	"For these reasons, I ask the house to support this bill."

Remember: a second reading speech gives REASONS. Other members then debate it — they may agree, or they may say why they will vote against it or change it.

A five-part plan for building a second reading speech: name the bill, explain the problem, say what the bill will do, say who it helps and why it is fair, and ask the house to support it

Part 6 — Why the numbers in the upper house matter

In the lower house, the government nearly always has a **majority** (more than half of the seats), so its bills usually pass. In the upper house this is different: Australian governments *do not often* hold a majority of Senate seats, and Victorian governments do not often hold a majority of Legislative Council seats either. That means the minister cannot just walk the bill through — the government must **convince** senators or members from other parties to vote with it, and that usually means listening to their ideas and sometimes amending the bill to win their support. You will use real seat numbers in the worked examples and questions below.

Part 7 — Think it through: should the upper house be able to change or block the government's bills?

People disagree about this, and the strong versions of each side are both worth hearing.

- **Yes, it should.** Supporters argue that a government can get things wrong, or rush, or please only the voters who chose it. An upper house that the government does not control forces a second look, brings in views from smaller parties, and can fix badly written parts before they hurt anyone. On this view, the Senate's changes to bills are not getting in the way — they are the review doing its job.
- **No, it shouldn't (or not as much).** Critics argue that voters chose a government to get things done, and a government that cannot pass its laws looks broken. When a few crossbench members hold the balance of power, people who were elected by a tiny share of voters can reshape laws that most members support. On this view, too much upper-house power slows down the changes people voted for.

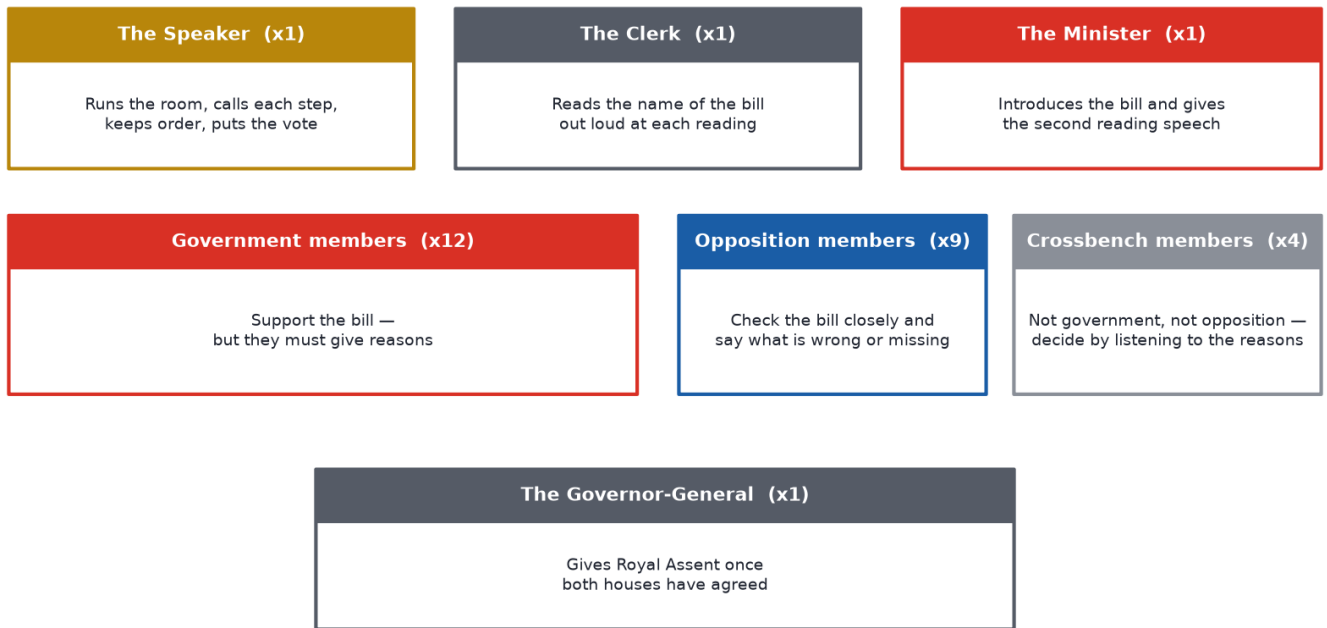
There is no perfect answer here — Australia keeps a strong upper house and has done so for over a century. What matters in this subject is *which reasons* you lean on, not which side you pick.

Part 8 — Your turn to run a parliament

The best way to learn the journey is to act it. The cards below set out every role a bill needs. Your class will use them in Practice Question 1.

Class role-play: act a bill through parliament

Split the class into these roles. Every bill needs all of them.



Tip: to play the SENATE instead, give the government fewer seats than everyone else combined — then the minister must convince crossbench members to get a majority.

Seven role cards for a class role-play of a bill passing through parliament: the Speaker, the Clerk, the Minister, government members, Opposition members, crossbench members and the Governor-General, each with a duty and a number of students

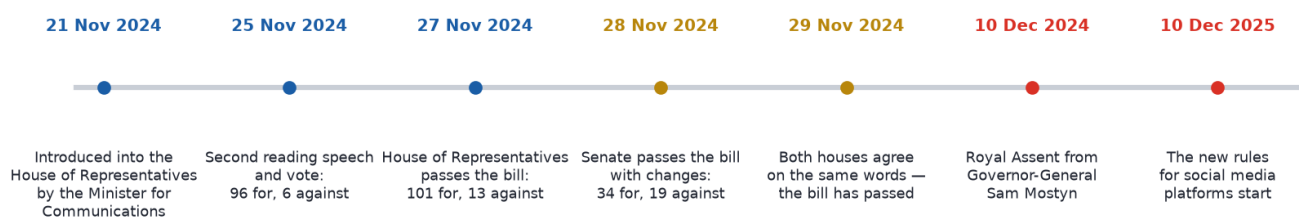
Worked examples

Example 1 — with help: following a real bill all the way

*We will track a real bill: the **Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024**, which set a minimum age of 16 for certain social media platforms in Australia.*

A real bill becomes law: the social media minimum age law

Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024 — every step really happened on these dates.



The bill took just over 3 weeks to pass the parliament, and just over a year before the new rules started.

A dated timeline of the bill: introduced 21 November 2024, second reading 25 November, passed the House of Representatives 27 November, passed the Senate with changes 28 November, agreed by both houses 29 November, Royal Assent 10 December 2024, and the new rules starting 10 December 2025

Step 1 — Spot the first reading. The timeline shows the bill was introduced into the House of Representatives on 21 November 2024 by the Minister for Communications. That day was its first reading.

Step 2 — Find the second reading. On 25 November the minister gave the second reading speech and the house voted 96 for to 6 against. The big idea passed.

Step 3 — Watch the third reading. On 27 November the house voted 101 for to 13 against. The bill had now passed the lower house and crossed to the Senate.

Step 4 — Let the house of review review. On 28 November the Senate passed the bill *with changes* — 34 for, 19 against. Remember Part 4: the changes had to go back to the House of Representatives.

Step 5 — Same words in both houses. On 29 November the House of Representatives agreed to the Senate's changes. Both houses now held the same words — the bill had passed.

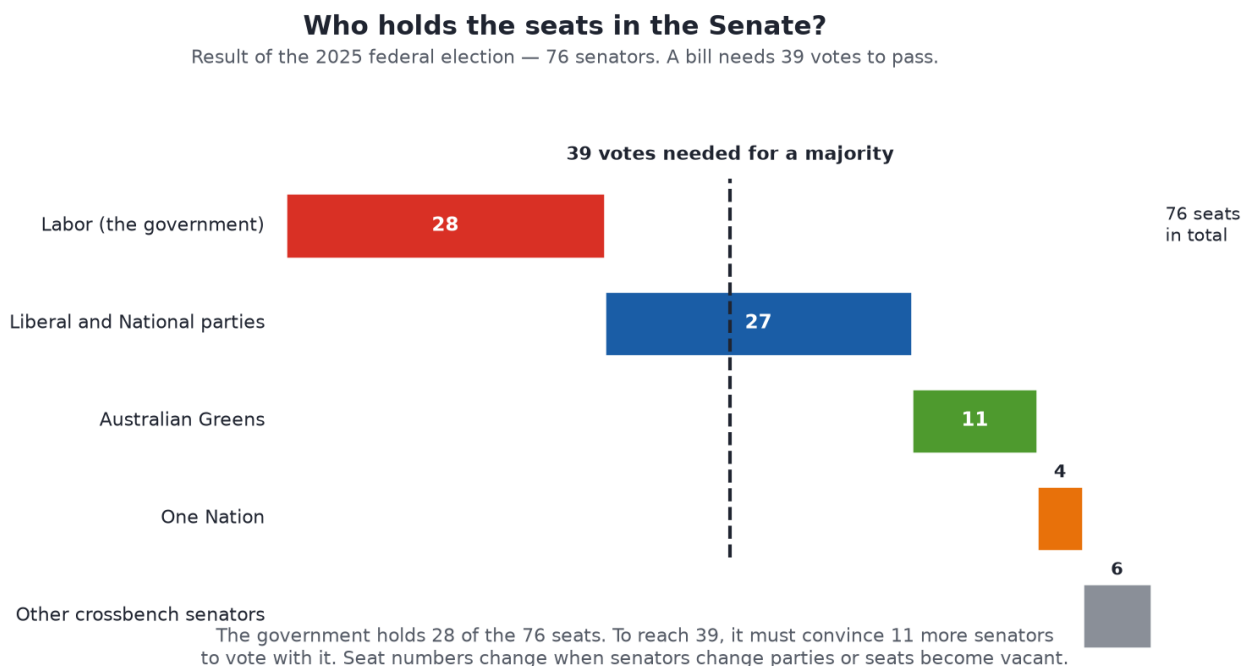
Step 6 — Royal Assent. On 10 December 2024 the Governor-General, Sam Mostyn, gave Royal Assent. The bill became an Act — the *Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024* — a law of Australia.

Step 7 — When do the rules start? The new age limit took effect on 10 December 2025, exactly one year after Royal Assent. A law can start later than the day it is signed, so that people and businesses have time to get ready.

Check your reading: the whole journey took 21 November to 10 December 2024 — just over three weeks in parliament, then one year before the rules began. Notice which steps were votes (steps 2, 3, 4) and which were speeches or sign-offs. That is the journey of Part 3 happening in real life, on real dates.

Example 2 — with help: who must the government convince in the Senate?

The upper house is where the arithmetic gets interesting. We will use the real result of the 2025 federal election.



A bar chart of the 76 Senate seats after the 2025 federal election: Labor 28, the Liberal and National parties 27, the Australian Greens 11, One Nation 4 and other crossbench senators 6, with a dashed line at the 39 votes needed for a majority

Step 1 — How many votes does a bill need? The Senate has 76 seats. Half of 76 is 38, so a majority is **39**.

Step 2 — How many does the government hold? Labor (the government) won 28 seats.

Step 3 — How many more votes are needed? $39 - 28 = 11$. Every Senate bill starts 11 votes short.

Step 4 — Who can make up the 11? Read the chart:

- The Australian Greens hold exactly 11 — if the government convinces all the Greens, $28 + 11 = 39$. Passed.
- One Nation holds 4. $28 + 4 = 32$ — not enough on its own; the government would still need 7 more votes from other senators.
- The other crossbench senators hold 6. $28 + 6 = 34$ — still 5 short.

So the government either wins over the whole Greens group, or builds a mixed set of senators adding up to at least 11. That is why ministers spend so much time talking to parties they do not belong to: in the upper house, *convincing* is the job.

One honesty note: these are the numbers the 2025 election produced. Seat numbers can change between elections — senators sometimes change parties or a seat can fall vacant — so the chart is a snapshot, not a permanent fact. (By mid-2025, for example, Labor's number had grown to 30 after two senators joined it.)

Practice questions

Practice with help

Q1. (Role-play — Elaboration E01) Using the role cards in Part 8, act a bill through a *lower house* in your classroom. Follow this running order: (a) the Clerk reads the bill's name (first reading); (b) the Minister gives a two-minute second reading speech using the five parts from Part 5; (c) Opposition and crossbench members each give one reason for or against; (d) the Speaker puts the vote and counts hands; (e) if it passes, the Governor-General gives Royal

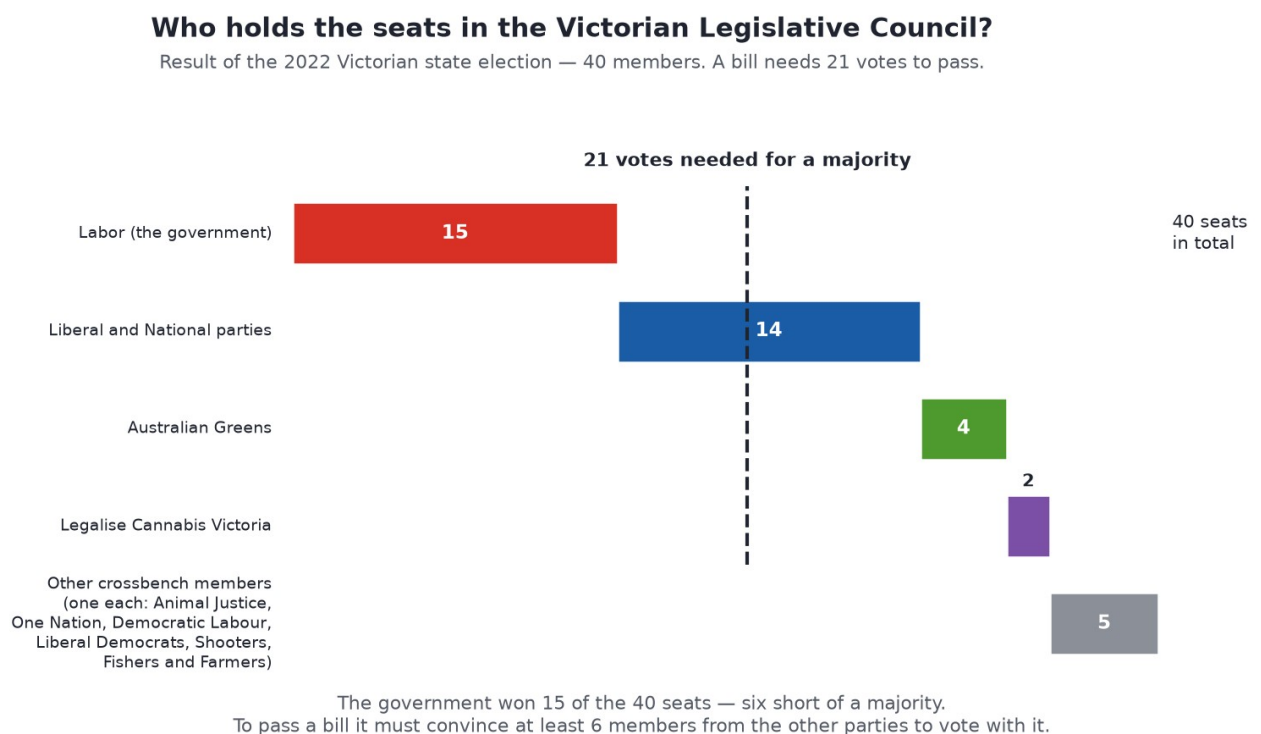
Assent. Then replay the same bill as a *Senate*: keep the same roles but change the seat numbers so the government holds fewer seats than everyone else combined, and watch what the Minister must do in a different way before the vote. Write two or three sentences describing what changed for the Minister in the Senate version.

Q2. These eight events from the journey of a bill are in a mixed-up order. Rewrite them in the correct order, 1–8. (a) The Governor-General gives Royal Assent. (b) The Clerk reads the bill’s name in the House of Representatives (first reading). (c) The House of Representatives agrees to the Senate’s changes, so both houses hold the same words. (d) The Minister gives the second reading speech in the House of Representatives. (e) The Senate passes the bill with changes (third reading in the Senate). (f) The House of Representatives passes the bill (third reading). (g) The bill is now an Act — a law. (h) The Senate reads the bill for the first time.

Q3. Match each key word (i–vi) to its meaning (a–f). (i) bill (ii) majority (iii) crossbench (iv) Royal Assent (v) upper house (vi) second reading speech (a) the final sign-off that turns a bill into a law (b) more than half of the votes (c) the speech in which a minister explains why parliament should pass a bill (d) a proposed law that parliament has not passed yet (e) members or senators who are not part of the government or the main Opposition (f) the house of review — the Senate at federal level, the Legislative Council in Victoria

Q4. (Guided speech — leads to Elaboration E02) Choose **one** problem your bill will fix: (A) riders of e-scooters not wearing helmets near your school; (B) too much rubbish left in your local park; (C) no safe place to cross a busy road near your school. Then fill in the five blanks of the speech plan from Part 5, one sentence each. Start with: “Today I introduce the Bill 2026.”

Q5. (Elaboration E03) Use the chart of the Victorian Legislative Council below, showing the real result of the 26 November 2022 Victorian state election. Answer (a)–(d). (a) How many seats does the Council have, and how many votes make a majority? (b) How many seats did Labor (the government) win, and how many short of a majority is that? (c) Name two different groups of members that, added to the government’s 15, would reach the majority. Show the addition each time. (d) In one sentence: which members must the government win over for the Council to pass its bill?



A bar chart of the 40 Legislative Council seats after the 2022 Victorian state election: Labor 15, the Liberal and National parties 14, the Australian Greens 4, Legalise Cannabis Victoria 2 and five other crossbench members with one seat each, with a dashed line at the 21 votes needed for a majority

Q6. A bill passes the House of Representatives and crosses to the Senate. The Senate votes to change two lines of it. The changes go back to the House of Representatives, and the house votes *not* to accept them. The Senate meets again

and votes to *keep* its changes. Using the flowchart in Part 4, state what happens to the bill, and name the term for the upper house’s job that this bouncing-around shows.

Practice on your own

Q7. (Elaboration E02) Write your own second reading speech, of about 150–200 words, for a bill of **your** choosing. It must do all five jobs from Part 5, and it must give at least two reasons a crossbench member might find convincing. Finish with: “For these reasons, I ask the house to support this bill.”

Q8. Using the table in Part 1, write two ways the federal and Victorian parliaments are the **same**, and two ways they are **different**. Use full sentences and include at least four numbers.

Q9. Back to the Senate chart from Example 2 (76 seats; majority 39; Labor 28). The government has decided it cannot win over the Greens. Find **two different** groups of other senators that, added to the government’s 28, would reach 39 or more. Show each addition, and say in one sentence which group you think would be easier to convince and why.

Q10. Part 7 gave the strong version of each side of the upper-house question. In a short paragraph: give the best reason *for* a strong upper house, the best reason *against* it, and then your own view — with the reason it rests on.

Source-based inquiry task

Knowledge and understanding — read the source, then answer the questions.

Source A — a bill card built from the official record of the federal parliament for the *Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024*.

Source A — a bill card from the federal parliament

Read the card, then answer the questions below it.

BILL CARD	
Name of the bill	Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024
What it does	Sets a minimum age of 16 on certain social media platforms (it changes the Online Safety Act 2021)
Introduced by	the Minister for Communications, in the House of Representatives
First reading	21 November 2024
Second reading vote (House of Representatives)	96 for, 6 against
Passed the House of Representatives	27 November 2024
Passed the Senate (with changes)	28 November 2024 — 34 for, 19 against
Agreed by both houses	29 November 2024
Royal Assent	10 December 2024, by the Governor-General

A bill card for the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024, listing its purpose, who introduced it, and the real dates and votes for first reading, second reading, passage through both houses, and Royal Assent

a. Which house did the bill enter first, and on what date? **b.** How many members voted *against* the bill at the second reading vote in the lower house? **c.** The card says the Senate passed the bill “with changes” on 28 November 2024. What had to happen on 29 November before the bill could be called passed? **d.** Work out how many days passed between the bill’s first reading and Royal Assent. (November has 30 days.) **e.** The Senate vote on 28 November was 34 for, 19 against. Add the two numbers, then show that more than half of the senators who voted, voted yes. **f.** How long after Royal Assent did the new social media rules start? **g.** Using Source A and what you know about upper houses, explain in two or three sentences why the government could not pass this bill on its own votes in the Senate.

Answers

Q1. Model observations: in the lower-house version the vote was safe because the government held a majority, so the Minister's speech was for explaining, not for winning votes; in the Senate version the Minister had to listen, answer questions and often promise changes, because crossbench members held the balance. Any two or three sentences noticing that the Minister had to persuade or amend to win votes score full marks.

Q2. 1 = (b), 2 = (d), 3 = (f), 4 = (h), 5 = (e), 6 = (c), 7 = (a), 8 = (g).

Q3. (i)–(d), (ii)–(b), (iii)–(e), (iv)–(a), (v)–(f), (vi)–(c).

Q4. Answers vary. A model fill for choice (C): “Today I introduce the *Safer School Crossings* Bill 2026. At the moment, students cross the highway at a spot with no crossing supervisor. This is a problem because drivers do not always slow down near children. This bill will pay for a supervised crossing and a 40 km/h zone outside every primary school. This bill will help students and their families. It is fair because every child, in every suburb, gets the same safe crossing. For these reasons, I ask the house to support this bill.”

Q5. (a) 40 seats; a majority is 21. (b) 15 seats; six short. (c) Any two correct additions, e.g. $15 + 14 = 29$ (the Liberal and National parties), or $15 + 4 + 2 = 21$ (Greens + Legalise Cannabis Victoria), or $15 + 4 + 1 + 1 = 21$. (d) The government must convince at least six members from other parties (or one whole opposing group) to vote with it.

Q6. The bill **does not become law** — while the houses disagree on the words, it cannot go for Royal Assent. The bouncing shows the upper house acting as the **house of review**.

Q7. Check against the five parts: names the bill; explains a real problem; says what the bill will do; says who it helps and why it is fair; closes by asking for support. Two reasons aimed at crossbench members must be present (fairness, cost, safety, freedom, and so on).

Q8. Same: both have two houses; in both, a bill becomes a law only after the final sign-off (Royal Assent) by the Governor-General or the Governor; in both, the government is formed from the lower house. Different: the federal lower house has 151 members while Victoria's has 88; the Senate has 76 senators while the Legislative Council has 40 members; they meet in Canberra and in Spring Street, Melbourne. Any two-and-two that uses at least four numbers scores full marks.

Q9. Any two different groups that reach 39 or more. Model pair: (1) the Liberal and National parties: $28 + 27 = 55$; (2) the Liberal and National parties plus One Nation: $28 + 27 + 4 = 59$. (The trap is $28 + 4 + 6 = 38$ — it looks like a majority and is one vote short.) The reasoning mark goes to any stated view, e.g. that the smaller crossbench members are easier to convince because they can be won over one at a time, bill by bill.

Q10. Must contain: one strong reason for (a second check stops rushed or bad laws), one strong reason against (voters chose a government to act; a few crossbench members can stall it), and the student's own view tied to a stated reason.

Inquiry a. The House of Representatives, on 21 November 2024. **b.** 6 against. **c.** The House of Representatives had to agree to the Senate's changes, so that both houses held the same words. **d.** 21 Nov to 30 Nov is 9 days, plus 10 days in December = **19 days**. **e.** $34 + 19 = 53$ senators voted; half of 53 is 26.5; 34 is more than 26.5, so more than half voted yes. **f.** One year (Royal Assent 10 December 2024; rules start 10 December 2025). **g.** The government did not hold 39 of the 76 Senate seats, so its senators alone could not pass the bill; it needed votes from senators of other parties — which is exactly why the Senate vote (34 for) included senators beyond the government's own.

Fully-worked solutions

Q2 — why this order. A bill always starts in the lower house with a first reading (b), then the second reading speech (d), then the lower house's final vote (f). Only then does it cross to the upper house: first reading in the Senate (h), Senate debate and vote with changes (e), the changes go back and the lower house agrees so both houses hold the same words (c), Royal Assent (a), and the bill is an Act (g). The two rules that fix the order are: *the government's house goes first*, and *Royal Assent is always the last political step*.

Q5 — the Council arithmetic, shown. (a) The chart's subtitle gives 40 members; half of 40 is 20, so a majority is $20 + 1 = 21$. (b) Labor's bar shows **15**; $21 - 15 = 6$ short. (c) Group 1: $15 + 14$ (Liberal and National parties) = $29 \geq 21$. ✓

Group 2: $15 + 4$ (Greens) + 2 (Legalise Cannabis Victoria) = 21. ✓ (Also acceptable: $15 + 4 + 1 + 1 = 21$ using any two single-seat crossbench members.) (d) Whoever the government persuades, the smallest gap is six — so the government must convince **at least six** non-government members for every bill.

Q9 — the Senate arithmetic, shown. Target: 39. Government: 28. Without the Greens (11), the remaining groups are 27, 4 and 6. Group 1: $28 + 27 = 55$ ✓ (the Liberal and National parties). Group 2: $28 + 27 + 4 = 59$ ✓ (the Liberal and National parties plus One Nation). Adding the other crossbench as well gives $28 + 27 + 4 + 6 = 65$ ✓. The trap in this question is $28 + 4 + 6 = 38$: it *looks* like a majority and is not. Without the Greens, every road to 39 goes through the Liberal and National parties — which is why governments sometimes make deals with their biggest rivals.

Inquiry d — counting the days. From 21 November to 30 November inclusive of the end date: $30 - 21 = 9$ days. Add the 10 days of December up to Royal Assent: $9 + 10 = 19$ days.

Inquiry e — more than half, shown. Senators voting: $34 + 19 = 53$. Half of 53 = 26.5. The “for” side, 34, is greater than 26.5, so a majority of those voting supported the bill.

Q7 — a skeleton you can self-check against. 1 “Today I introduce the Bill 2026.” → names the bill. 2 “At the moment, ... This is a problem because” → problem + reason it is a problem. 3 “This bill will” → the rules, one by one. 4 “This bill will help It is fair because” → who it helps + fairness. 5 “For these reasons, I ask the house to support this bill.” → the ask. If any of the five lines is missing, the speech is not yet a second reading speech — it is just an announcement.

Sources (retrieved 26 August 2026): Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024 (C2024A00127), Federal Register of Legislation, [legislation.gov.au](https://www.legislation.gov.au); Parliament of Australia bills records for the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024; Australian Electoral Commission 2025 federal election Senate results; Victorian Electoral Commission 2022 state election Legislative Council results. Seat charts are election-day snapshots; memberships can change between elections.

The many meanings of citizenship

Teaching sequence

1. What does 'citizenship' mean?

A **citizen** is a member of a community. **Citizenship** is that membership — and it runs both ways. The member gets rights, such as a say in how the community is run, and the member carries responsibilities, such as following the community's rules and helping to look after it.

In Australia, the national kind of citizenship is set out in a law: the **Australian Citizenship Act 2007 (Commonwealth)**. The law's opening words say that Australian citizenship is "full and formal membership of the community of the Commonwealth of Australia", and that it is "a common bond" of rights and obligations that go both ways, "uniting all Australians, while respecting their diversity". Because a law defines it, national citizenship is a **legal status** — you either are an Australian citizen or you are not, and the rules say which.

The other kinds of citizenship named in this section work in a different way. The Victorian Curriculum uses the terms *global citizenship* and *digital citizenship* but does not define them. This section therefore treats them as follows: **a global citizen is a person who sees themselves as part of the world-wide community and takes some responsibility for it; a digital citizen is a person who belongs to online communities and acts safely, honestly and kindly there.** These two are **contested terms** — thoughtful people disagree about exactly what they mean, and whether they are citizenship at all — so every question in this section can be answered using the definitions just given, and you will look at both sides of the argument later in the section. Local and state citizenship sit in between: they are not legal statuses of their own, but they name the community you take part in at each level of Australia's three levels of government (the level idea was built in Section 1C).

Figure 1 puts the five kinds side by side.

Five kinds of citizenship

Kind	What it means	One way to take part
Local	Being part of your street, suburb or town and its council area	Vote in council elections (by post in Victoria)
State	Being part of your state — for this book, Victoria	Vote in state elections, held every four years
National	Being an Australian citizen — full and formal membership of Australia, set out in law	Enrol and vote in federal elections once you turn 18
Global	Seeing yourself as part of the world-wide community (a contested term)	Learn about world issues and help people in other countries
Digital	Being part of online communities (a contested term)	Post and share safely, and check a claim before you share it

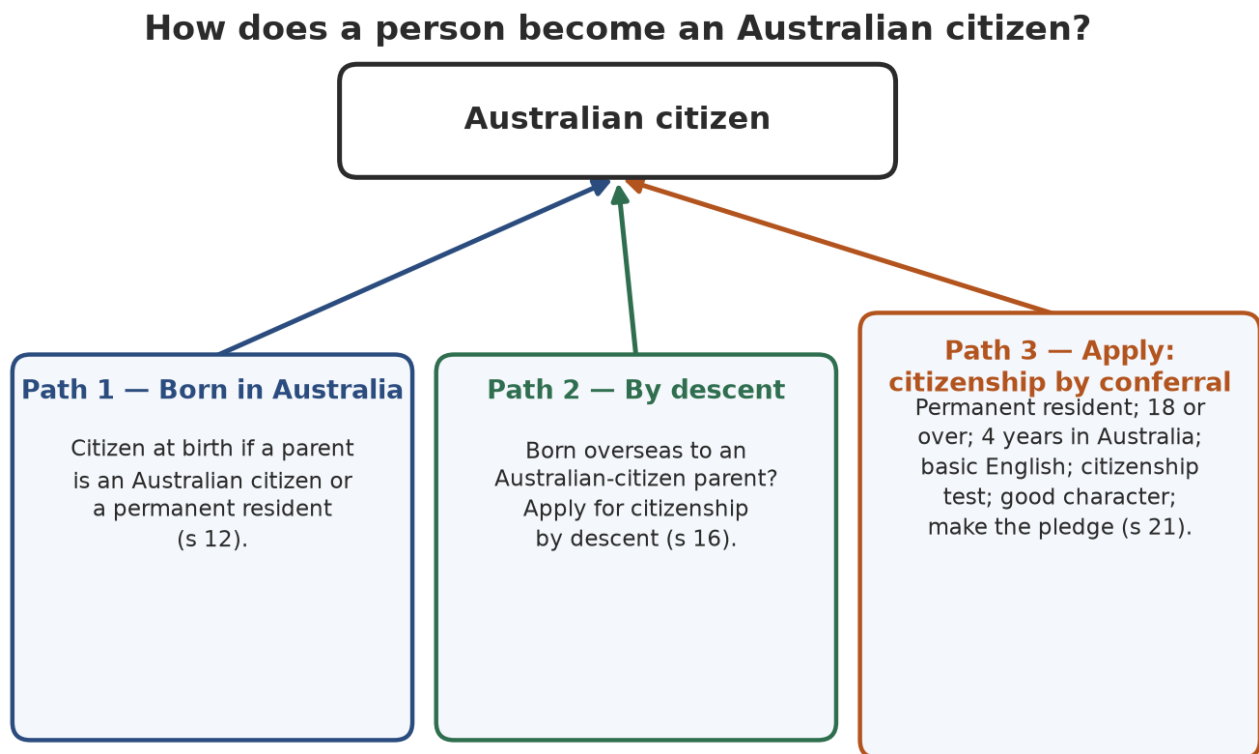
National citizenship is a legal status given by law. Global and digital citizenship are contested terms — people disagree about what they mean.

A table of five kinds of citizenship — local, state, national, digital and global — with what each kind means and one way to take part in each

Figure 1 — Five kinds of citizenship. National citizenship is given by law; global and digital citizenship are contested terms.

2. Who can become an Australian citizen?

The Act sets out three main paths to Australian citizenship. Figure 2 shows them.



Australian Citizenship Act 2007 (Cth), ss 12, 16, 21–22 (viewed 26 August 2026)

A flow diagram of the three paths to Australian citizenship: born in Australia to a citizen or permanent resident parent; born overseas to an Australian-citizen parent and applying for citizenship by descent; or applying to become a citizen, with the rules listed

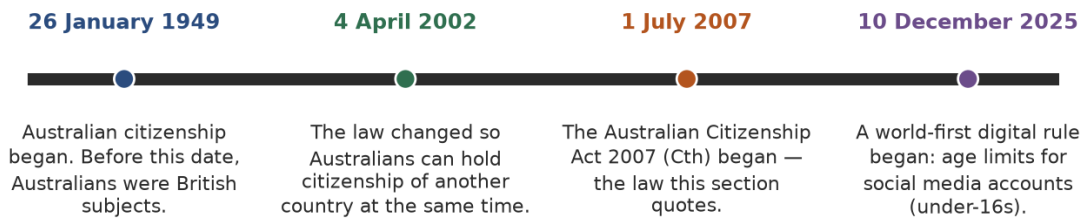
Figure 2 — Three paths to Australian citizenship under the Australian Citizenship Act 2007 (Commonwealth). The third path's legal name is shown in the diagram.

A few facts about who is included:

- **Born in Australia** (s 12): a baby born here is a citizen at birth if a parent is an Australian citizen or a **permanent resident** — someone allowed to live in Australia with no end date. A baby born here to parents who are not is still a citizen if the child lives in Australia for the first ten years of their life.
- **Born overseas to an Australian parent** (s 16): the child can be registered as a citizen by **descent** — citizenship passed down from a parent.
- **Applying to become a citizen** (ss 21–22): a person must, among other rules, be a permanent resident, be 18 or over, have lived in Australia for four years (including twelve months as a permanent resident), have basic English, know about Australia and the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship, be of good character, and make the pledge in Figure 9.

Citizenship in Australia has a short history, and the rules about who is included have changed more than once. Before 26 January 1949 there was no such thing as an Australian citizen — people born here were **British subjects**. Figure 3 shows four dates that changed the story.

Citizenship has changed over time



Sources: Australian Citizenship Act 2007 (Cth); Australian Citizenship Legislation Amendment Act 2002; eSafety Commissioner (all viewed 26 August 2026)

A timeline with four dates: 26 January 1949, when Australian citizenship began; 4 April 2002, when the law changed so Australians can hold citizenship of another country at the same time; 1 July 2007, when the Australian Citizenship Act 2007 began; and 10 December 2025, when a world-first digital rule began putting age limits on social media accounts for under-16s

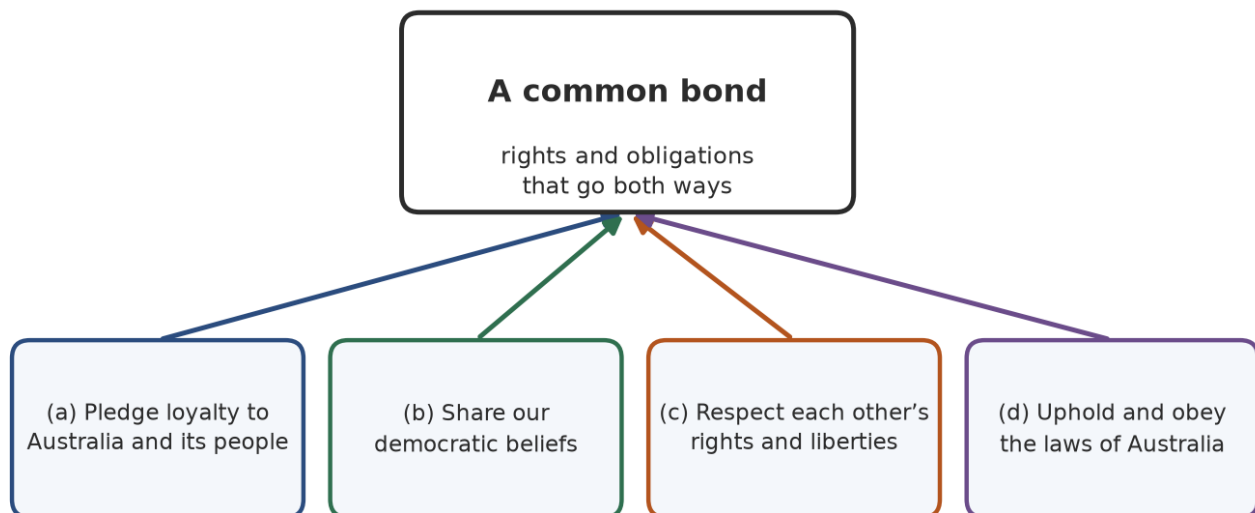
Figure 3 — Citizenship has changed over time.

3. Rights, responsibilities and shared values

Remember the common bond: rights and obligations go both ways. The Act's opening words name four things citizenship asks of a citizen, shown in Figure 4.

The four things citizenship asks of us

The Act's preamble says citizenship is "a common bond, involving reciprocal rights and obligations".



"Reciprocal" means the rights and obligations go both ways — citizens get rights and carry obligations.

Australian Citizenship Act 2007 (Cth), preamble (viewed 26 August 2026)

A diagram with a central box labelled "a common bond — rights and obligations that go both ways", joined to four cards: pledge loyalty to Australia and its people; share our democratic beliefs; respect each other's rights and liberties; uphold and obey the laws of Australia

Figure 4 — The four things citizenship asks of us, from the Act's opening words.

New citizens say these things out loud. At a citizenship **ceremony**, a new citizen reads the **pledge** — the promise shown in Figure 9 at the end of this section. The pledge has two forms; one says "under God" and one does not, so that people of every belief, and of no belief, can make the same promise.

What does a citizen get in return? Section 2B looked at where the law gives citizens their rights — the Constitution, federal laws and Victorian laws — and that is where the full list lives. Two rights belong to citizenship itself: the right to enrol and vote in Australian elections, and the right to call Australia home with no end date. And what must a citizen do? Three responsibilities stand out in this section:

- 1. **Obey the law** — the pledge’s last promise.
- 2. **Enrol and vote** — once you turn 18, the law requires every Australian citizen to enrol and to vote. If you are 16 or 17 you can enrol early, so you are ready on your 18th birthday. (Why voting is required by law, and the two sides of that question, is Section 2B’s job.)
- 3. **Take part** — citizens participate in many more ways: joining a community group (the Section 2E idea), writing to a local member, signing or starting a petition, and checking a claim before sharing it online.

Figure 5 shows the three kinds of elections an Australian citizen takes part in, and the rules for each.

Three kinds of elections in Australia — who takes part?

Election	Run by	Who must enrol and vote
Federal	Australian Electoral Commission (AEC)	Australian citizens aged 18 and over. The last federal election was on Saturday 3 May 2025.
Victorian state	Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC)	Citizens aged 18 and over who have lived in Victoria for at least one month. Elections are every four years — next on Saturday 28 November 2026.
Local council	Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC)	State-enrolled voters — plus ratepayers who apply to enrol, even if they are not yet citizens. All council voting is by post.

If you are 16 or 17 you can enrol early, so you are ready to vote when you turn 18.

A table of three kinds of elections — federal, Victorian state and local council — showing who runs each and who must enrol and vote, with the dates of the last federal election and the next Victorian state election

Figure 5 — Three kinds of elections in Australia. Notice that the rules about who takes part are different at each level.

4. National citizenship and global citizenship

These two kinds of citizenship are the pair the curriculum asks you to compare, because they are the most different. Figure 6 lines them up.

National citizenship and global citizenship — how do they differ?

National citizenship	Global citizenship
Is it a legal status? Yes — set out in the Australian Citizenship Act 2007.	Is it a legal status? No — there is no world government to give it. It is a contested term.
Who gives it? Australia, through its laws.	Who gives it? No one. It is a way of seeing yourself as part of one world.
Duties? Legal duties — obey the law, enrol and vote at 18.	Duties? Moral duties — duties you take on yourself, like helping others.
Example of taking part Voting at the federal election on 3 May 2025.	Example of taking part Supporting girls' schooling in poorer countries (see 2E).

The United Nations uses the term in Sustainable Development Goal Target 4.7, alongside human rights and a culture of peace.

Two comparison cards: national citizenship is a legal status set out in the Australian Citizenship Act 2007, given by Australia, with legal duties such as obeying the law and enrolling and voting at 18; global citizenship is not a legal status because there is no world government to give it, and it is a way of seeing yourself as part of one world, with moral duties you take on yourself

Figure 6 — National citizenship and global citizenship, side by side.

So your responsibilities look different at each scale. As a **national citizen**, your responsibilities are legal: obey the law, enrol and vote when you turn 18, and take part in your community. As a **global citizen**, your responsibilities are ones you choose to carry: learning about world issues, treating people of every country with respect, acting in ways that do not damage the shared planet, and backing groups that help people in other countries — the kind of work Section 2E's groups do, such as the campaign for girls' education in poorer countries.

The term “global citizenship” is real enough to appear in an agreement between the world's governments: the United Nations' **Sustainable Development Goals** include Target 4.7, which says that by 2030 all learners should gain the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, human rights, a culture of peace — and global citizenship. But the term is still contested, and the two sides deserve a fair hearing.

Think about both sides

“Is global citizenship real citizenship?”

Side 1 — yes, in its own way. The world is joined up: what one country burns, buys or posts affects people in every country, so responsibilities cannot stop at a border. A person who learns about world issues, respects other cultures and helps people in other countries is doing the work of a citizen at the biggest scale there is.

Side 2 — no, it is a metaphor. Real citizenship is a legal bond between a person and a country: rights you can claim and duties the law enforces. There is no world government to grant those rights or enforce those duties, so “global citizenship” borrows the word citizenship without its legal heart. It is good behaviour, not citizenship.

Both sides make fair points. In this book you are marked on how well you reason — on whether you use defined words, give evidence and answer both sides — not on which side you end up on.

5. Differences between the kinds — who is included, who is excluded, and why

The clearest way to see the differences between the five kinds of citizenship is to ask, for each kind, who is in and who is out. The rules give different answers for the same person.

Local. In Victoria, council elections include people who are not citizens: a **ratepayer** — a person who pays rates to the council on a property they own or occupy — can apply to enrol for council elections even before they are Australian citizens. State-enrolled voters in the council area are enrolled without applying.

State and national. These are citizens-only. The same ratepayer who votes in a council election cannot vote in a state or a federal election until they become an Australian citizen.

Global. There is no gate at all — no list, no test, no ceremony. Anyone who takes up the responsibilities is taking part, which is exactly why Side 2 above says it is not citizenship in the legal sense.

Digital. Here the gate has changed recently. From **10 December 2025**, a world-first Australian law puts age limits on social media: the biggest platforms must not let **under-16s** hold accounts. The reason is safety — the **eSafety Commissioner**, the independent official whose job is to make the online world safer for Australians “but especially children”, explains the change on the government’s hub for the new rules. People under 16 are excluded from those platforms not because they are less worthy, but because the law judges that at their age the harms outweigh the benefits. Being a good digital citizen — kind, honest, checking before sharing — is still expected of everyone, on games, school platforms and in every other online place.

Figure 7 walks through one real example of a person included in one kind of citizenship and excluded from others, and Figure 8 sets out the digital rules.

Worked example: Raj and Lakshmi (a VEC example)



The same person can be included in one kind of citizenship and excluded from another — it depends on the rules for each.

Source: Victorian Electoral Commission, council enrolment examples (viewed 26 August 2026)

A four-step flow card about Raj and Lakshmi, who moved from India to Australia in 2022 and bought a house: they pay rates on it; they have not yet become citizens so they cannot vote in state or federal elections; as ratepayers they applied to enrol for their council and were accepted; so they must vote in every council election but only at council level until they become citizens

Figure 7 — One person, three different answers. The Victorian Electoral Commission uses this example to show how council enrolment works.

Digital citizenship — being a good citizen online

1. Behave online as you would in person.

Be kind and honest. Do not bully, and do not share private things about others.

2. Check before you share.

A false story can spread as fast as a true one. Ask: who made this, and can I check it?

3. Know the rules that protect you.

Australia's eSafety Commissioner works "to make the online world safer for all Australians — but especially children". From 10 December 2025, a world-first law puts age limits on social media accounts for under-16s.

Source: eSafety Commissioner, esafety.gov.au (viewed 26 August 2026)

A card listing three habits of a good digital citizen: behave online as you would in person; check before you share; and know the rules that protect you, including the eSafety Commissioner's role and the world-first age limits on social media accounts for under-16s from 10 December 2025

Figure 8 — Digital citizenship: the habits and the rules.

Worked examples

Both examples use the method: name the kind of citizenship, find the rule, say which people the rule takes in and which it leaves out, and give the reason it draws the line there.

Example 1 — worked step by step

Raj and Lakshmi moved from India to Australia in 2022. They bought a house and pay rates on it. They are not yet Australian citizens. Which kinds of citizenship include them today, which exclude them, and why? (Figure 7 shows their story.)

Working	Comment
Step 1 — Local: included. They pay rates on the house they own, so the council rules let them apply to enrol — and once enrolled they must vote in council elections.	The local kind includes people for a money-and-stake reason: rates pay for the library, the bins and the oval, so payers get a say.
Step 2 — State and national: excluded. Both levels' rules say only Australian citizens enrol and vote, and Raj and Lakshmi are not citizens yet.	The state and national kinds include people for a membership reason: they are about being a member of Australia, which citizenship defines.
Step 3 — Why the lines differ. Each kind of citizenship has its own purpose, so each sets its own gate: a stake in the local area, or membership of the nation.	"Who is in, who is out, and why" is answered by asking what the kind of citizenship is <i>for</i> .
Step 4 — What changes later. When Raj and Lakshmi become citizens, they will enrol and vote at state and federal elections too — the same people, now included, because the rule they could not meet is met.	Being included or excluded is not fixed to a person; it moves when the rule is met.

Example 2 — worked step by step

Pick two dates from Figure 3 and explain, for each, what changed about who is included in Australian citizenship, or what citizenship asks of people.

Working	Comment
Step 1 — Choose 26 January 1949. Before it, people born in Australia were British subjects; from it, Australian citizenship existed, so a new kind of membership — with its own rights and duties — included people born here.	A date can create a kind of citizenship: before it, the word “Australian citizen” meant nothing in law.
Step 2 — Choose 4 April 2002. Before it, an Australian who became a citizen of another country lost Australian citizenship; from it, the law allowed both at once, so people who had been excluded were included again.	This change is why an Australian today can also be, say, an Indian or an Italian citizen.
Step 3 — (A digital date, for contrast) 10 December 2025 did not change legal citizenship, but it changed who is included in a big part of online community life: under-16s were excluded from holding social media accounts, for safety.	Not every rule about belonging is a citizenship rule — some are age rules about safety, and noticing the difference is exactly the skill this section builds.
Step 4 — Tie the dates together. In 1949 the kind was created; in 2002 the gate widened; in 2025 a new, digital kind of belonging got its first big safety rule.	Citizenship is not a fixed thing — parliaments redraw the lines as the world changes.

Practice questions

Guided

Q1. Complete the sentences using words from the box.

legal

contested

bond

- (a) National citizenship is a _____ status: a law, the Australian Citizenship Act 2007 (Commonwealth), says who is a citizen.
- (b) The Act’s opening words call citizenship a common _____ of rights and obligations that go both ways.
- (c) Global and digital citizenship are _____ terms: thoughtful people disagree about what they mean.

Q2. Match each person to the path in Figure 2 that makes them an Australian citizen. One path is used twice.

Person	Path
(a) Mia, born in Sydney in 2020; her mum is an Australian citizen.	
(b) Tom, born in London in 2015; his dad is an Australian citizen.	
(c) Priya, born in Mumbai; a permanent resident in Australia for four years, 18 and over, who passed the citizenship test and made the pledge.	
(d) Zoe, born in Perth in 2019; no parent is a citizen, but both are permanent residents.	

Q3. Figure 5 shows three kinds of elections. Copy the table and fill in the empty cells.

Election	Run by	Must enrol and vote
Federal		Australian citizens 18 and over
	Victorian Electoral Commission	
Local council	Victorian Electoral Commission	State-enrolled voters, plus _____ who apply

Q4. For each kind of citizenship in Figure 1, write one way *you* could take part this year, even though you are under 18.

Q5. Raj and Lakshmi (Figure 7) are included in local citizenship and excluded from state and national citizenship. Copy the table and complete it.

Kind	Included or excluded today?	The rule that decides it
Local		
State	Excluded	
National		Only Australian citizens enrol and vote

Q6. Figure 8 gives three habits of a good digital citizen. Choose two and, for each, give one example of doing it in a group chat or on a school platform.

Independent

Q7. Compare your responsibilities as a national citizen with your responsibilities as a global citizen. For each scale, name one responsibility and say whether the law requires it or you take it on yourself. Use Figure 6.

Q8. Look at the “Think about both sides” box in part 4. Give the strongest point of each side in your own words, then state your own view with a reason.

Q9. Choose two kinds of citizenship from Figure 1. For each, name one group that is included and one group that is excluded, and explain *why* the rule draws the line there.

Q10. “The rules about who is included keep changing.” Use two dates from Figure 3 to support or challenge this claim.

Source inquiry

Read Source 2D.1 — the pledge a new citizen makes, shown exactly as it appears in the Act — then answer Questions 11–13.

The pledge new citizens make

“From this time forward, under God,
I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people,
whose democratic beliefs I share,
whose rights and liberties I respect,
and whose laws I will uphold and obey.”

Australian Citizenship Act 2007 (Cth), Schedule 1, form no. 1

Form no. 2 is the same pledge without the words “under God”.

New citizens aged 16 or over make the pledge at a citizenship ceremony.

Source: Australian Citizenship Act 2007 (Cth), ss 26–27, Schedule 1 (viewed 26 August 2026)

The pledge of commitment as set out in Schedule 1 of the Australian Citizenship Act 2007: “From this time forward, under God, I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people, whose democratic beliefs I share, whose rights and liberties I respect, and whose laws I will uphold and obey.” A note adds that the second form of the pledge is the same without the words “under God”

Figure 9 — Source 2D.1: the pledge of commitment, Australian Citizenship Act 2007 (Commonwealth), Schedule 1, form no. 1.

Q11. Identify two of the four promises the pledge makes.

Q12. The pledge promises to “uphold and obey” Australia’s laws. Explain in your own words what that asks of a new citizen, and give one example of what it looks like in an ordinary week in Australia.

Q13. The Act offers two forms of the pledge — with and without the words “under God”. Explain why offering both forms fits the shared values named in this section.

Answers

Q1. (a) legal (b) bond (c) contested

Q2. (a) Path 1 — born in Australia to a citizen parent. (b) Path 2 — citizenship by descent. (c) Path 3 — applying to become a citizen. (d) Path 1 again — born in Australia to a permanent resident parent. Path 1 is the path used twice.

Q3. Federal — run by the Australian Electoral Commission. Victorian state — citizens 18 and over who have lived in Victoria for at least one month. Local council — ratepayers.

Q4. Sample answers. Local: join a junior advisory group or help at a library event. State: write to a state member about a local park or a road. National: write to a federal member, or join a school group that backs a national charity. Global: join a school drive for a world cause, such as girls' education. Digital: check a claim before sharing it in a group chat.

Q5. Local — included; the rule: ratepayers can apply to enrol for council elections even if not citizens. State — the rule: only Australian citizens enrol and vote. National — excluded; only Australian citizens enrol and vote.

Q6. Sample. “Behave online as in person”: in the class group chat, I would not say something about a classmate I would not say to their face. “Check before you share”: before forwarding a message about a school rule change, I would check with a teacher or the school website first.

Q7–Q13 — see the worked solutions below.

Worked solutions

Q7. A model answer compares the *kind* of duty. As a national citizen my responsibilities are legal: when I turn 18 I must enrol and vote, and I must obey the law — the law requires these, and the pledge names them. As a global citizen my responsibilities are ones I take on myself: learning about a world issue such as girls' education, and backing a group that works on it, or acting in ways that do not damage the shared planet. The difference is the enforcer: a parliament and the courts sit behind the national duties, while conscience and care for others sit behind the global ones.

Q8. Marks go to reasoning, not to the side chosen. Side 1 at its strongest: problems and help now cross borders in a day, so a person's responsibilities cannot sensibly stop at the border, and Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals shows the world's governments treating global citizenship as a real part of what learners should study. Side 2 at its strongest: citizenship's heart is legal — rights you can claim and duties you can be made to do — and with no world government, “global citizenship” has no such rights or duties, so it is good behaviour borrowing a powerful word. A strong answer then states a view with a reason, for example: global citizenship is real as responsibility but not as legal status, so both sides are right in part.

Q9. A model answer names the purpose behind each gate. Example pair 1 — national: included, Australian citizens; excluded, permanent residents who have not yet become citizens, because the national kind is membership of Australia and the Act says who holds it. Example pair 2 — local (Victoria): included, ratepayers who apply, even non-citizens, because the local kind is about a stake in the area's services; excluded, a visitor with no property or residence in the area, because they have no stake. Example pair 3 — digital: included, people 16 and over on the biggest platforms; excluded, under-16s from 10 December 2025, because the law judges the harms of social media at that age to outweigh the benefits. Any two kinds earn full marks when the included group, the excluded group and the reason for the line are all given.

Q10. A model answer uses the dates as evidence for the claim. 26 January 1949: before it, no one was included in Australian citizenship because it did not exist; the rule created the group. 4 April 2002: the gate widened — Australians who took another citizenship stopped losing their Australian citizenship, so people once excluded were included. (Bonus date: 10 December 2025 shows the rules about *digital* belonging changing too.) The claim is supported: parliaments have redrawn the lines at least twice, so who is included is a choice each generation can revisit, not a fixed fact.

Q11. Any two of: loyalty to Australia and its people; sharing Australians’ democratic beliefs; respecting their rights and liberties; upholding and obeying their laws.

Q12. It asks the new citizen to follow Australia’s laws, not just when it is easy, and to stand behind the system of law itself — “uphold” means keeping the law strong, not just avoiding getting caught. In an ordinary week it looks like obeying road rules, paying for a ticket on the train, or reporting income honestly for tax. The example earns the mark when it is a real, everyday act of keeping the law.

Q13. The shared values in this section include respecting each other’s rights and liberties, and uniting all Australians “while respecting their diversity”. Belief is part of that diversity: some new citizens worship God, some worship in another way, some hold no belief at all. Offering two forms lets every new citizen make the *same* promise — loyalty, democratic beliefs, respect for rights and liberties, obeying the law — without saying words their conscience does not allow. Unity in the promise, freedom in the words: that is the value the two forms protect. (It also echoes the idea behind section 116 of the Constitution, met in Section 2B: the government does not test anyone’s religion.)

Where next?

You will use this section’s ideas again soon. In **Section 3B** you will locate and organise information about an issue in the news today, and many such issues turn out to be about who is included and who is excluded. In **Section 4B** you will examine active citizenship — citizens taking part to make a difference — which is the participation idea from part 3 in action. And looking ahead beyond Year 6, this section hands on to Years 7–8 (VC2HC8K09–VC2HC8K12), where citizenship, identity and belonging are studied in more depth, while the idea of global citizenship you met here is the first step of the Global Politics route through the later years of the subject.

Curriculum link

Owns: VC2HC6K07

Draws on: .E01 · .E02 · .E03 · .E04 — all as linkage keys (TOC §3).

Sources, retrieved 26 August 2026 unless stated: Australian Citizenship Act 2007 (Commonwealth), compilation of 4 June 2026 — its opening words, ss 12, 16, 21–22, 26–27 and Schedule 1 (the pledge), legislation.gov.au; compilation history of the Australian Citizenship Act 1948 (the Australian Citizenship Legislation Amendment Act 2002 removed the old loss-of-citizenship section on 4 April 2002); Australian Electoral Commission, enrolment pages (the law requires citizens 18 and over to enrol and vote; 16- and 17-year-olds can enrol early) and the 2025 federal election page (polling day Saturday 3 May 2025); Victorian Electoral Commission, state election pages (elections every four years under the Electoral Act 2002 (Vic); next on Saturday 28 November 2026) and council election pages (all-postal voting; ratepayer enrolment, including the Raj and Lakshmi example); eSafety Commissioner, social media age restrictions hub (world-first age limits in effect from 10 December 2025); United Nations, Sustainable Development Goal Target 4.7 (the United Nations goals website).

Working together for a civic goal

Civics and Citizenship Level 6 · Chapter 2 Laws and citizenship · Section 2E

Big ideas

What is a civic goal?

The Victorian Curriculum uses the term *civic goal* but does not define it. This section treats it as follows: **a civic goal is a goal that helps a community or makes life better for the people in it.** Every question in this section can be answered using that definition alone.

Break the term into its parts:

- **civic** — to do with citizens and their community
- **a goal** — something you try to make happen

Examples of civic goals: making a beach safe for swimmers, helping people after a flood, backing volunteer firefighters with the gear they need, or helping girls in poorer countries get to school.

Beliefs and values: what brings people together

- A **belief** is something a person thinks is true.
- A **value** is something a person thinks matters, such as fairness, kindness, safety or learning.

People who **share** the same beliefs and values — that is, people who hold the same ones — can see a goal that matters to all of them. That shared goal can bring them together and get them working as one. One person can help, but many people working together can do far bigger things.

Who works together?

All over Australia, ordinary citizens join groups and give their time. A **volunteer** is a person who gives their time to help without being paid. A **member** is a person who belongs to a group. Figure 1 shows five kinds of groups you might meet.

Volunteer and community groups working together in Australia

Group	What members share	How members help
Rural fire services (e.g. NSW RFS, CFA)	Protecting people and homes from fire	Training, joining a brigade, going to emergencies
Surf life-saving clubs	Keeping beachgoers safe	Patrolling beaches, rescue skills and first aid
Emergency services groups	Helping people through storms, floods and other emergencies	Filling sandbags, rescues, checking on people
Religious groups and other charities	Caring for people in need	Meals, clothes and visits; raising money for help
Youth groups	Young people helping and learning together	Fundraisers, clean-ups and helping people nearby

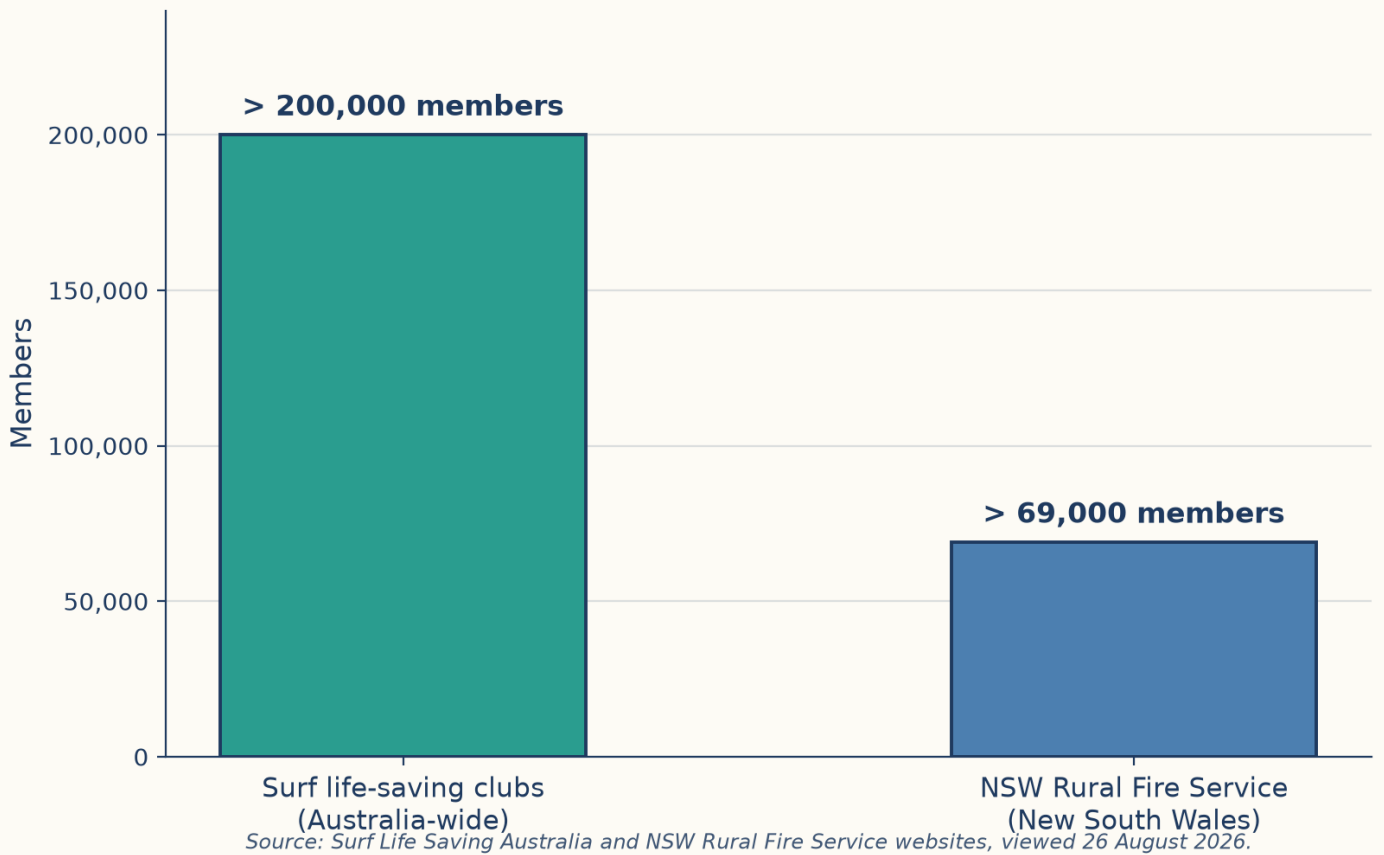
A table of five kinds of volunteer and community groups in Australia, listing what each group shares and how its members help

Figure 1 — Citizens with shared beliefs and values join groups like these to help their communities.

Some of these groups are big and famous:

- The **New South Wales Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS)** is the world's largest volunteer fire service. It has more than 69,000 members in almost 2,000 brigades. A **brigade** is an organised local team.
- **Surf life-saving clubs** began on Sydney's ocean beaches in 1907. Today there are 316 clubs with more than 200,000 members, and volunteers have rescued more than 715,000 people.
- The **Country Fire Authority (CFA)** in Victoria is made up of 1,211 brigades across 21 districts and five regions. Most of its members are volunteers.

How many members? Two Australian volunteer groups

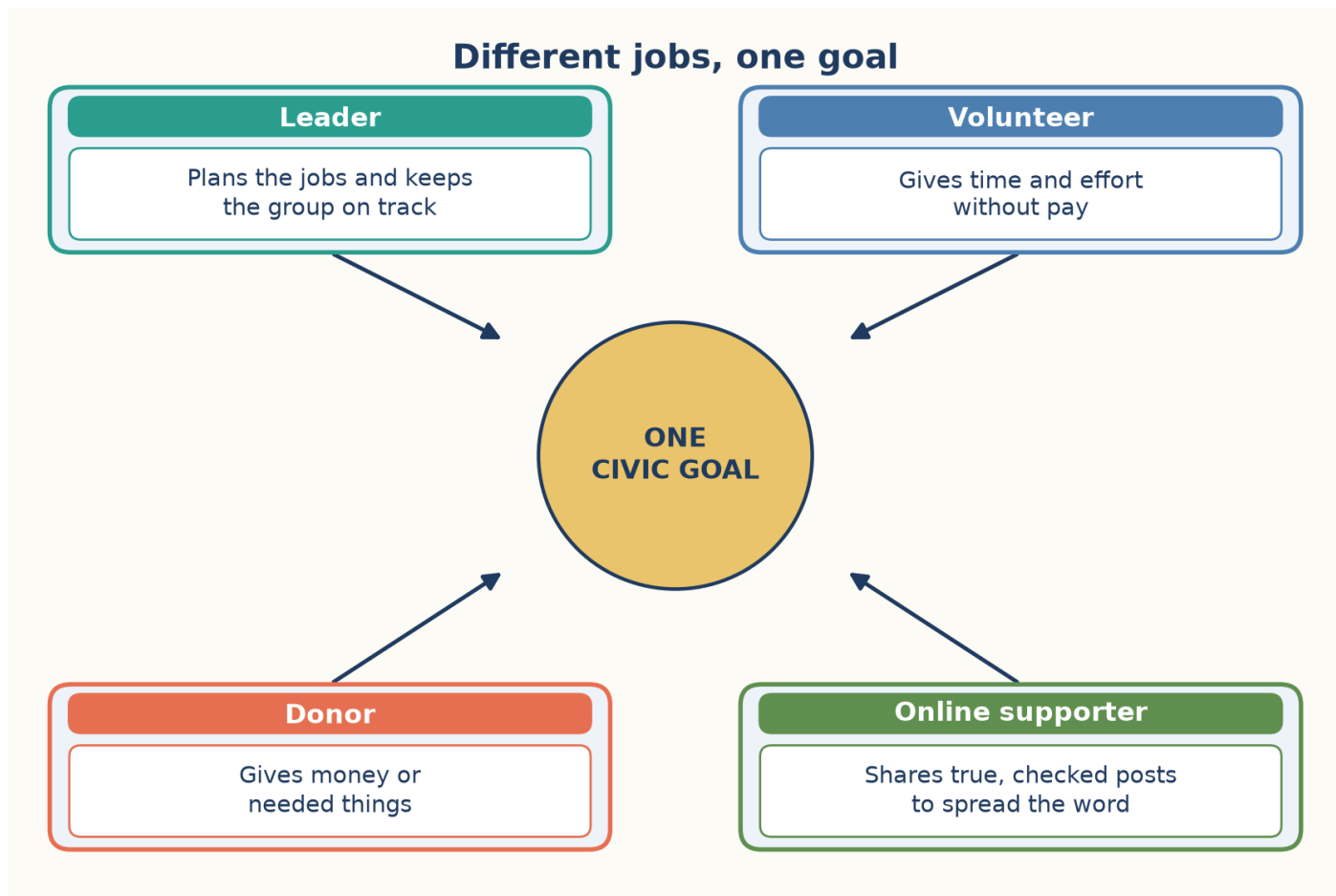


A bar chart comparing the member counts of two Australian volunteer groups: surf life-saving clubs with more than 200,000 members, and the New South Wales Rural Fire Service with more than 69,000 members

Figure 2 — When many citizens share one value, groups can grow very large. (Source lines under the figure in the Answer guide.)

Different jobs, one goal

People in a group do not all do the same job. Figure 3 shows four common roles. Each role matters, and each person is still working toward the same civic goal.



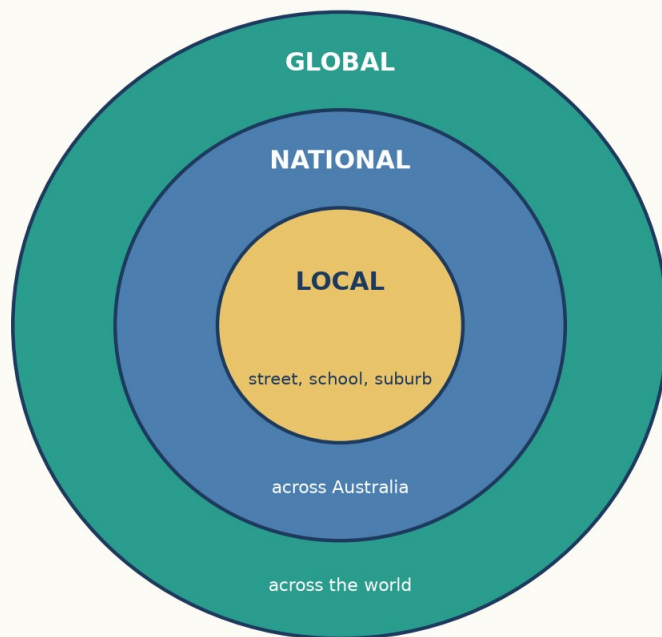
Four role cards — leader, volunteer, donor and online supporter — arranged around a central circle labelled one civic goal

Figure 3 — Four ways one citizen can help a group reach a civic goal.

From local to global

Civic goals come in different sizes. You can work together as a **local** citizen (in your street, school or suburb), as a **regional** or **national** citizen (across your state or country), or as a **global** citizen (across the world). Figure 4 shows the three scales with a real example at each one.

Working together at three scales



Local

A working bee to clean up the schoolyard

National

The Black Summer fundraiser for volunteer firefighters

Global

The Malala Fund's push for girls' education

One civic goal can start in a classroom and grow to circle the world.

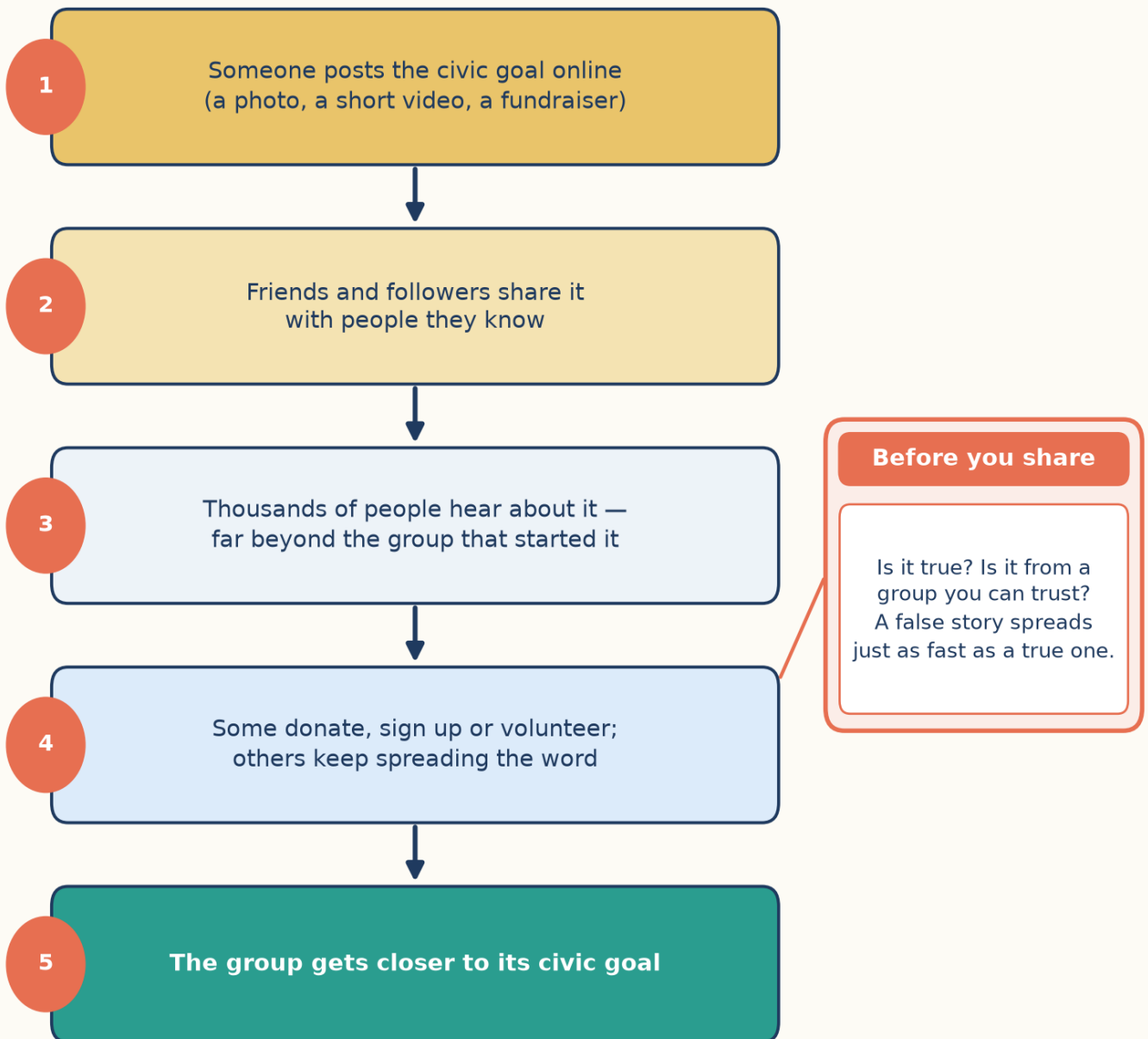
Three circles, one inside the next, showing the local, national and global scales of citizenship, with one real example placed at each scale

Figure 4 — The same skills of working together work at every scale.

How social media helps a campaign

A **campaign** is a planned effort by a group to reach a goal. Today, many campaigns use **social media** — apps and websites where people create and share messages with large numbers of people. Sharing a post can move an idea from the local scale to the global scale in a single day. Figure 5 shows the steps.

How a message becomes a movement



A five-step flow diagram showing how a social media campaign works, from one person posting an idea to a group reaching its civic goal

Figure 5 — How a message becomes a movement.

Social media is a tool, and tools need care. Before you share a post, check that it is true and that it comes from a group you can trust. A false story can spread just as fast as a true one.

Think about both sides

“Sharing a post is just as useful as giving your time.”

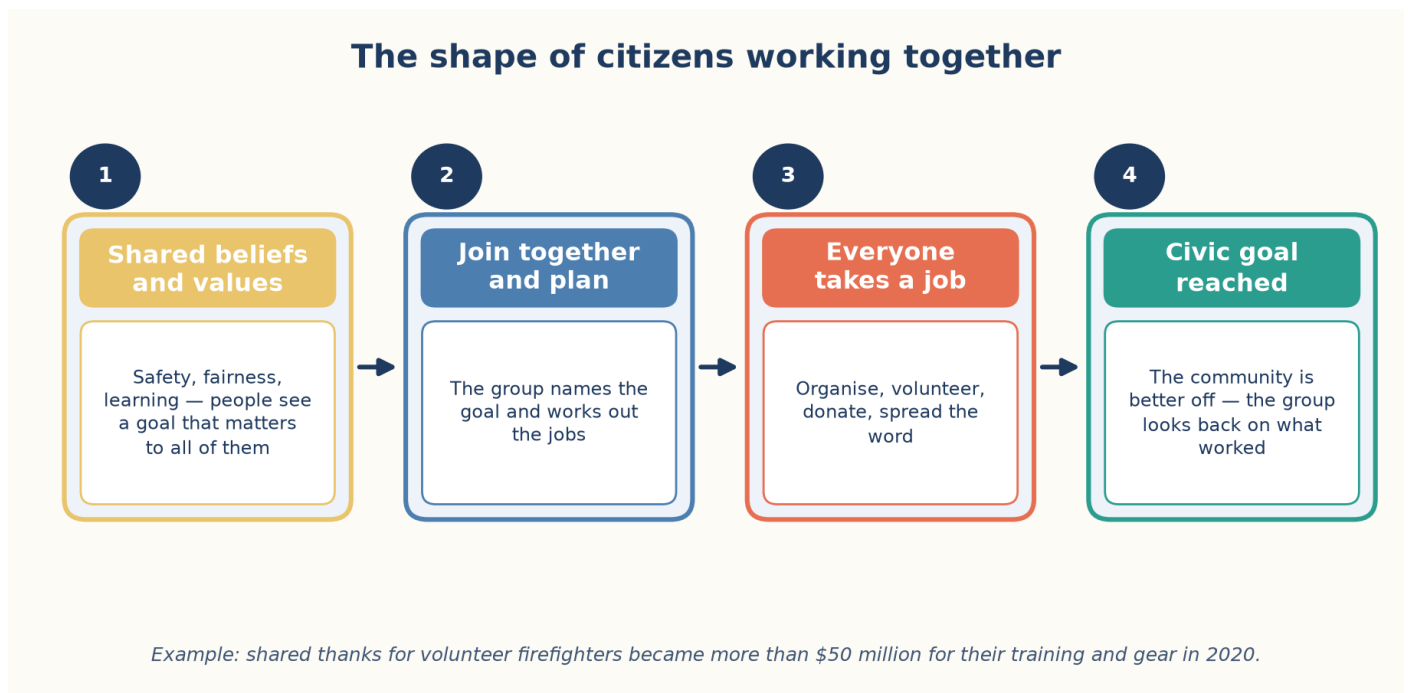
Side 1. Sharing costs nothing and can reach thousands of people. Some of them will donate, sign up or volunteer who would never have heard of the goal without that post. The message itself is doing real work.

Side 2. A post alone does not fight a fire, patrol a beach or hand out meals. Groups still need hands, hours and skills. Some people share posts and never do anything else, so the group gets attention but no help.

Both sides make fair points. In this book you are marked on how well you reason — on whether you use defined words, give evidence and answer both sides — not on which side you end up on.

Turning values into action

Groups that reach their goal usually follow the same shape, shown in Figure 6. You will use these five steps again in Question 10.



A flow diagram with four stages: shared beliefs and values, people joining together and planning, everyone taking a job, and the civic goal reached

Figure 6 — The shape of citizens working together toward a civic goal.

1. **Name the goal.** What exactly are you trying to make happen, and who will it help?
2. **Find your people.** Who shares your beliefs and values?
3. **Plan the jobs.** Who will organise, volunteer, donate or spread the word?
4. **Work together.** Do the jobs — and use social media carefully to reach more people.
5. **Look back.** Did you reach the goal? What worked? What would you change next time?

Worked examples

Both examples below are real. Each one is analysed with the same five questions, so you can copy the method on any civic goal you meet.

The five questions

1. What was the civic goal?
2. What beliefs and values did people share?
3. Who worked together, and what did each person or group do?
4. How did social media help?
5. What was achieved?

Example 1 — Backing volunteer firefighters during the Black Summer

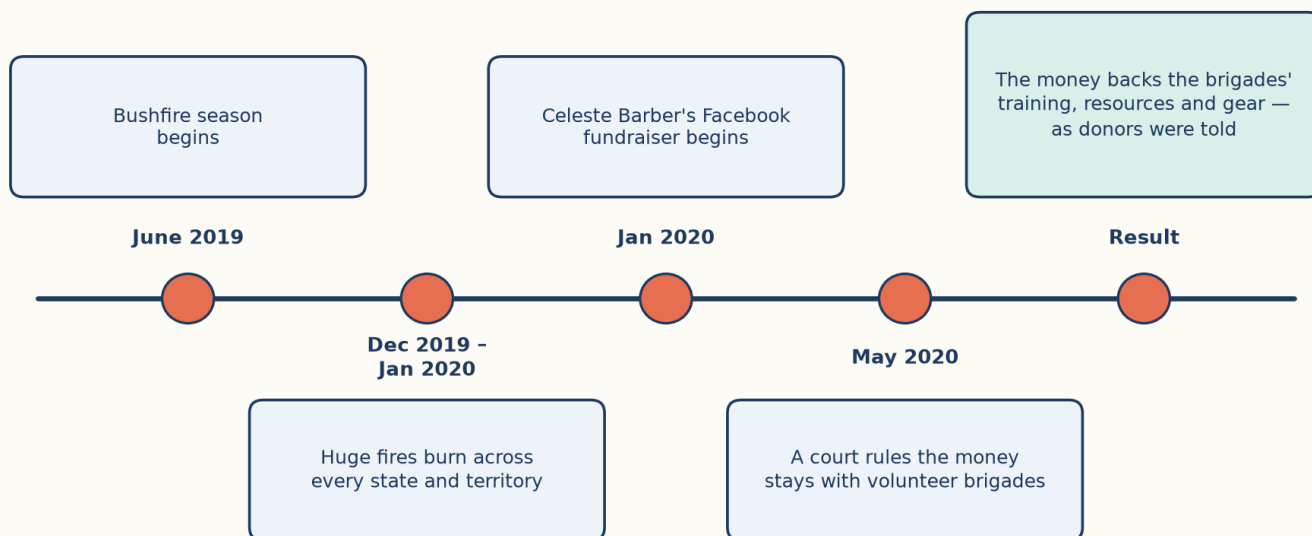
The case

From June 2019 to 31 March 2020, huge bushfires burned across every state and territory of Australia. The season became known as the **Black Summer**. About 24 million hectares of land burned, and 2,779 homes were lost.

Volunteer firefighters stood at the front of the response. The NSW RFS — the world's largest volunteer fire service — sent its members from almost 2,000 brigades. In Victoria, the CFA's 1,211 brigades answered call after call.

In January 2020, Australian comedian **Celeste Barber** started a **fundraiser** on Facebook — a campaign to collect money for a purpose. Her first target was small. Instead, people in Australia and in many other countries gave more than 50 million Australian dollars, making it the largest fundraiser in Facebook’s history. The money went to a donations fund for NSW RFS brigades. By law, that money could only be used for the training, resources and gear of volunteer brigades. When there was a question about sending some of the money to other groups, a New South Wales court ruled in May 2020 that it must stay with the brigades, as donors had been told.

Example 1 — key dates: the Black Summer and the fundraiser



A timeline showing the key dates of the Black Summer bushfires and the fundraiser for volunteer firefighters, from June 2019 to the court ruling in May 2020

Figure 7 — Key dates for Example 1.

Question

1. What was the civic goal?
2. What beliefs and values did people share?
3. Who worked together, and what did each do?
4. How did social media help?
5. What was achieved?

Model answer

To support volunteer firefighters while they protected homes and lives during the Black Summer.

The belief that volunteers who put themselves in danger deserve our backing, and values like looking after one another in hard times and saying thank you with action, not just words.

Celeste Barber organised the fundraiser and spread the word. Millions of people around the world acted as donors. The NSW RFS brigades kept fighting the fires. Courts kept the promise about how the money would be used.

Facebook carried the call from one person to millions in days. Without it, most donors would never have heard of the goal or found a way to help from overseas.

More than \$50 million was raised for volunteer brigades — training, resources and gear — and the courts made sure the money was used exactly as donors were told.

Model paragraph. During the Black Summer, citizens with shared beliefs and values worked together to reach a civic goal. The goal was to back the volunteer firefighters protecting homes and lives. People shared the belief that these volunteers deserved help, and values like looking after one another in hard times. Celeste Barber used social media to start a small fundraiser, and people in Australia and around the world gave more than 50 million dollars. The courts

then made sure the money was used the way donors had been told. This case shows two things: when many people share one goal, ordinary citizens can do something huge — and the law can keep the group’s promise honest.

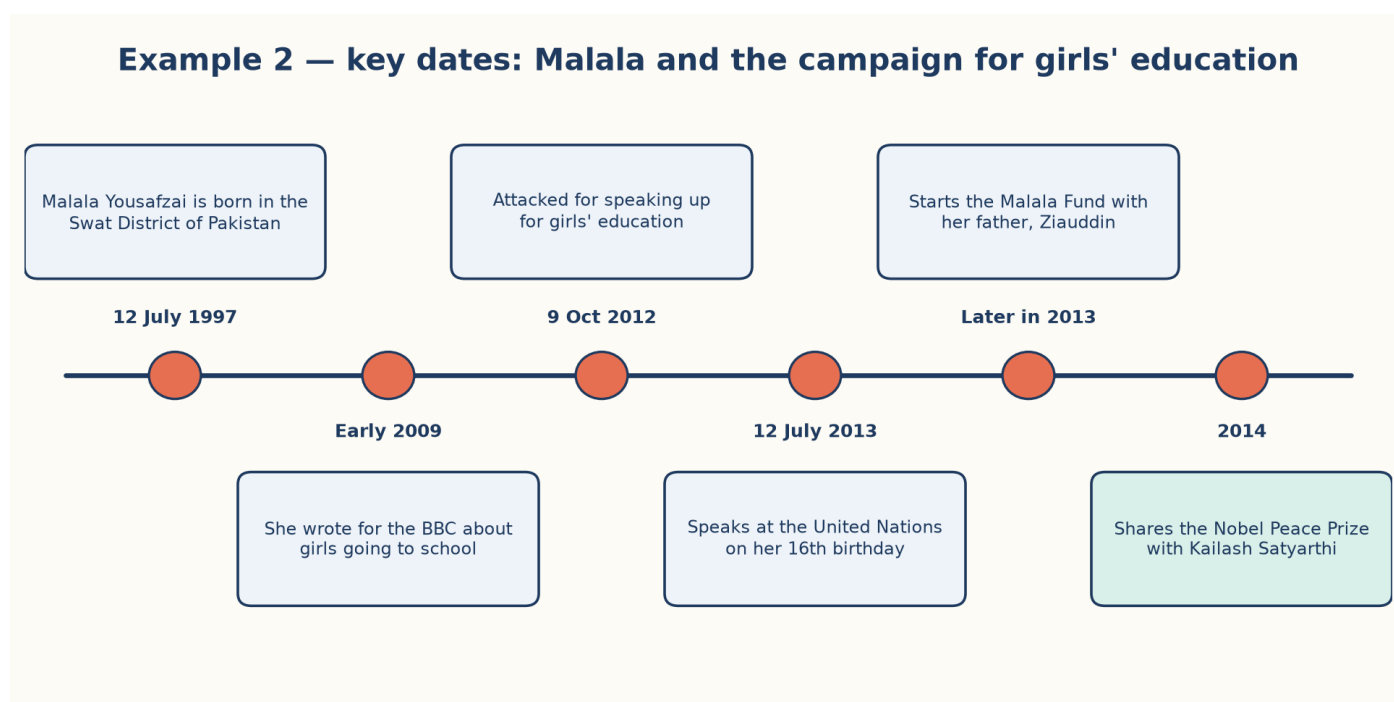
Example 2 — Malala and the campaign for girls’ education

The case

Malala Yousafzai was born on 12 July 1997 in the Swat District of Pakistan. She loved school. In early 2009, when she was about 11, she wrote short online notes for the BBC under a different name, describing what it was like to live where some people wanted to stop girls going to school.

On 9 October 2012, Malala was attacked for speaking up for girls’ education. She recovered and refused to stop. On 12 July 2013 — her 16th birthday — she spoke at the United Nations in New York and called for every child to be in school. That same year, Malala and her father, Ziauddin Yousafzai, started the **Malala Fund**. Its goal: every girl gets 12 years of free, safe, quality education. In 2014, Malala shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Kailash Satyarthi, a campaigner for children’s rights.

People all over the world shared Malala’s story and her speeches on social media, and many joined the call. The work is far from finished: the Malala Fund says more than 122 million girls around the world are still out of school today.



A timeline showing the key dates of Malala Yousafzai’s story, from her birth in 1997 to the shared Nobel Peace Prize in 2014

Figure 8 — Key dates for Example 2.

Question	Model answer
1. What was the civic goal?	Access to education for girls — every girl able to go to school and learn, especially in poorer countries.
2. What beliefs and values did people share?	The belief that girls can learn and lead just as boys can, and values like fairness, courage and the power of education.
3. Who worked together, and what did each do?	Malala spoke and led. Her father backed her and helped start the Malala Fund. The Fund works with local education champions in poorer countries. Supporters around the world shared her story, gave money and added their voices.
4. How did social media help?	Malala’s story and speeches were shared across the world online. A goal that began in one district of one

5. What was achieved?

country became a global campaign that millions could join from home.

The Nobel Peace Prize drew the world's attention to girls' education, and the Malala Fund keeps working toward 12 years of school for every girl.

Model paragraph. Malala's story shows how citizens with shared beliefs and values can work together across the whole world. The civic goal was access to education for girls in poorer countries. Malala, her father, the Malala Fund and millions of online supporters shared the belief that every girl deserves to learn. Social media carried her story from one district in Pakistan to every part of the world, and the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize turned even more eyes to the goal. The case also shows that some goals take a long time: more than 122 million girls are still out of school, so the campaign continues.

Practice tasks

With a little help

Q1. Complete the sentences using words from the box. *Hint: the definition of a civic goal on the first page will help.*

community

goal

values

together

- (a) A civic goal is a goal that helps a _____ or makes life better for the people in it.
 (b) When people share beliefs and _____, they can see a goal that matters to all of them.
 (c) A shared goal can bring people _____ to work as one.

Q2. Draw a line from each group to the shared value that best fits it. One is done for you.

Group

Shared value

Surf life-saving club



Keeping beachgoers safe

Rural fire brigade



Every girl deserves to learn

Charity that hands out meals



Looking after people in a fire

Group that campaigns for girls' school places



No one should go hungry

Q3. For each scenario, fill in the three columns of the table below.

Scenario

The civic goal

A shared belief or value

How they work together

(a) A surf life-saving club patrols its beach every weekend of summer.

(b) People from the same street fill sandbags together before a flood.

(c) Students run a book stall to buy reading books for a school in another country.

Hint: the goal answers "what are they trying to make happen?", the value answers "what do they think matters?", and working together answers "who does which job?"

Q4. Sort the four civic goals below into **local**, **national** and **global**. Write each one in the correct row of the table. One row will hold two goals.

- The Black Summer fundraiser for volunteer firefighters
- A working bee to clean up the schoolyard
- The Malala Fund’s push for girls’ education
- A stall at the local market to raise money for the town’s playground

Scale	Civic goal(s)
Local	
National	
Global	

Q5. Your class is planning a beach or park clean-up. Give one job for each role from Figure 3.

Role	Your job for the clean-up
Leader	
Volunteer	
Donor	
Online supporter	

Q6. Finish both sentences for a group you have met in this section.

“I chose the _____. The shared belief or value is _____. Members work together by _____. This helps because _____.”

On your own

Q7. Explain why shared beliefs and values help citizens achieve a civic goal that no one could achieve alone. Use one example from this section.

Q8. Look at the “Think about both sides” box on the first page. Give one strong point for each side, then state your own view with a reason.

Q9. Choose Example 1 or Example 2. Write five or six sentences that answer all five analysis questions in your own words.

Q10. Plan your own civic goal using the five steps in Figure 6 and the checklist in Figure 9. Your plan must name the goal, the shared belief or value, three jobs (and who does each one), and one careful way to use social media to spread the word.

My civic goal plan

Five steps from this section

- ☐ 1. Name the goal — what will happen, and who will it help?
- ☐ 2. Find your people — who shares this belief or value?
- ☐ 3. Plan the jobs — who organises, volunteers, donates, shares?
- ☐ 4. Work together — and check facts before sharing online
- ☐ 5. Look back — did we reach the goal? What did we learn?

Our plan:

A checklist card with the five planning steps from this section and a blank box for your own civic goal plan

Figure 9 — Use this checklist to plan your class's own civic goal.

Source inquiry

Read Source 2E.1, then answer Questions 11–13.

Source 2E.1 — Volunteers on the beach

On 18 October 1907, a group of beach lovers met in Sydney and formed Australia's first surf life-saving body. Their idea was simple: if volunteers keep watch over swimmers, fewer people will drown. The idea grew. Today Australia has 316 surf life-saving clubs with more than 200,000 members, from young junior

members called nippers to grandparents. Members train in rescue skills and first aid. They give their time without pay, patrolling beaches on weekends and public holidays. Since 1907, surf lifesavers have rescued more than 715,000 people. In every club, the same beliefs and values — that every life matters and that people should look after one another — bring members together each summer.

(Model text written for this book. Figures from the Surf Life Saving Australia website, viewed 26 August 2026.)

Q11. Identify two shared beliefs or values named in Source 2E.1.

Q12. Using details from the source, explain two ways members of surf life-saving clubs work together.

Q13. The source says surf lifesavers have rescued more than 715,000 people since 1907. Explain what this figure shows about what citizens can achieve when they work together.

Answer guide

Q1. (a) community (b) values (c) together

Q2. Surf life-saving club → Keeping beachgoers safe. Rural fire brigade → Looking after people in a fire. Charity that hands out meals → No one should go hungry. Group that campaigns for girls' school places → Every girl deserves to learn.

Q3. (a) Goal: keep swimmers safe at the beach; value: every life matters; working together: trained members take turns patrolling on weekends. (b) Goal: keep the street safe from flood water; value: people on the same street look after one another; working together: many hands fill and stack sandbags fast. (c) Goal: buy reading books for a school in another country; value: every child deserves to learn; working together: some students sell, some make signs, some handle the money. Other fair answers are possible if they fit the definition of a civic goal.

Q4. Local: the working bee; the market stall. National: the Black Summer fundraiser. Global: the Malala Fund's push for girls' education. (The Black Summer fundraiser also drew donors from overseas — if you said so, well spotted. Its goal was to back Australia's volunteer brigades, so it sits at the national scale.)

Q5. Sample answers. Leader: books the date, checks the council rules and hands out gloves and bags. Volunteer: picks up rubbish and sorts what can be recycled. Donor: gives gloves, bags or money for a trailer. Online supporter: posts the date and place and asks friends to come along.

Q6. Sample answer. "I chose the surf life-saving club. The shared belief or value is that every life matters and people should look after one another. Members work together by training in rescue skills and taking turns to patrol beaches without pay. This helps because no single person could watch a beach all summer, but 316 clubs have rescued more than 715,000 people."

Q7. A good answer names a goal, names the shared belief or value, and explains the teamwork: one person has limited time, money and skills, but many people who share one goal can split the jobs — organising, volunteering, donating, spreading the word — and reach a goal too big for any of them alone. Example: millions of small donations added up to more than \$50 million for the volunteer brigades.

Q8. Marks go to reasoning, not to the side chosen. Side 1: a share can reach thousands at no cost and turn strangers into donors or volunteers. Side 2: posts alone do not do the hands-on work; groups need hours and skills, and some people share without ever acting. A strong answer gives one fair point for each side and a view backed by a reason or example.

Q9. Check that all five questions are answered and that the facts match the case chosen (for Example 1: Black Summer 2019–20, Celeste Barber's Facebook fundraiser, more than \$50 million, NSW RFS brigades, the May 2020 court ruling; for Example 2: Malala's speech at the United Nations on 12 July 2013, the Malala Fund founded in 2013, the shared 2014 Nobel Peace Prize, more than 122 million girls still out of school).

Q10. A complete plan names: the goal and who it helps; the shared belief or value; three jobs matched to roles; and a social media step that checks facts first. The plan should follow the five steps in Figures 6 and 9.

Q11. Any two of: every life matters; people should look after one another; everyone deserves help in the water.

Q12. Sample points: members train together in rescue skills and first aid; they take turns patrolling on weekends and public holidays; clubs share the one idea across all 316 clubs, so a beach in any town is watched the same careful way.

Q13. The figure shows that small gifts of time add up. Each patrol hour looks small on its own, but shared by thousands of members across more than a century, they add up to more than 715,000 rescues — far more than any one person could ever make alone.

Source line for Figure 2. Surf life-saving clubs: Surf Life Saving Australia website (viewed 26 August 2026). NSW RFS: New South Wales Rural Fire Service website (viewed 26 August 2026). Exact web addresses are listed under Curriculum link.

Where next?

You will use this section's ideas again soon. In **Section 3B** you will practise locating and organising information, and one of the jobs there is summing up how citizens worked together on a civic goal. In **Section 4B** you will examine how active citizenship — citizens taking part to make a difference — reaches civic goals.

Curriculum link

Owns: VC2HC6K08

Draws on: .E01 .E02 .E03 — linkage keys only (TOC §3). Per TOC decision D3, .E01 is taught through its neutral remainder (the community and volunteer groups named in this section) and .E03 is excluded and reported as ACCEPTED in coverage audits.

Source index (audit; all viewed 26 August 2026). Surf Life Saving Australia, sls.com.au/about (members, clubs, rescues, founding date). NSW Rural Fire Service, rfs.nsw.gov.au/about-us (membership, brigades). Country Fire Authority, cfa.vic.gov.au/about/who-we-are (brigades, districts, regions). Malala Fund, malala.org/about (founding, mission, girls out of school). Wikipedia: 'Malala Yousafzai' (birth, BBC blog, attack, UN speech, Nobel Peace Prize), 'Celeste Barber' (fundraiser total, recipient fund, May 2020 Supreme Court ruling), '2019–20 Australian bushfire season' (dates, area burned, homes lost). Exact web addresses are kept here rather than in the student-facing text so the body stays at the Year 6 vocabulary ceiling.