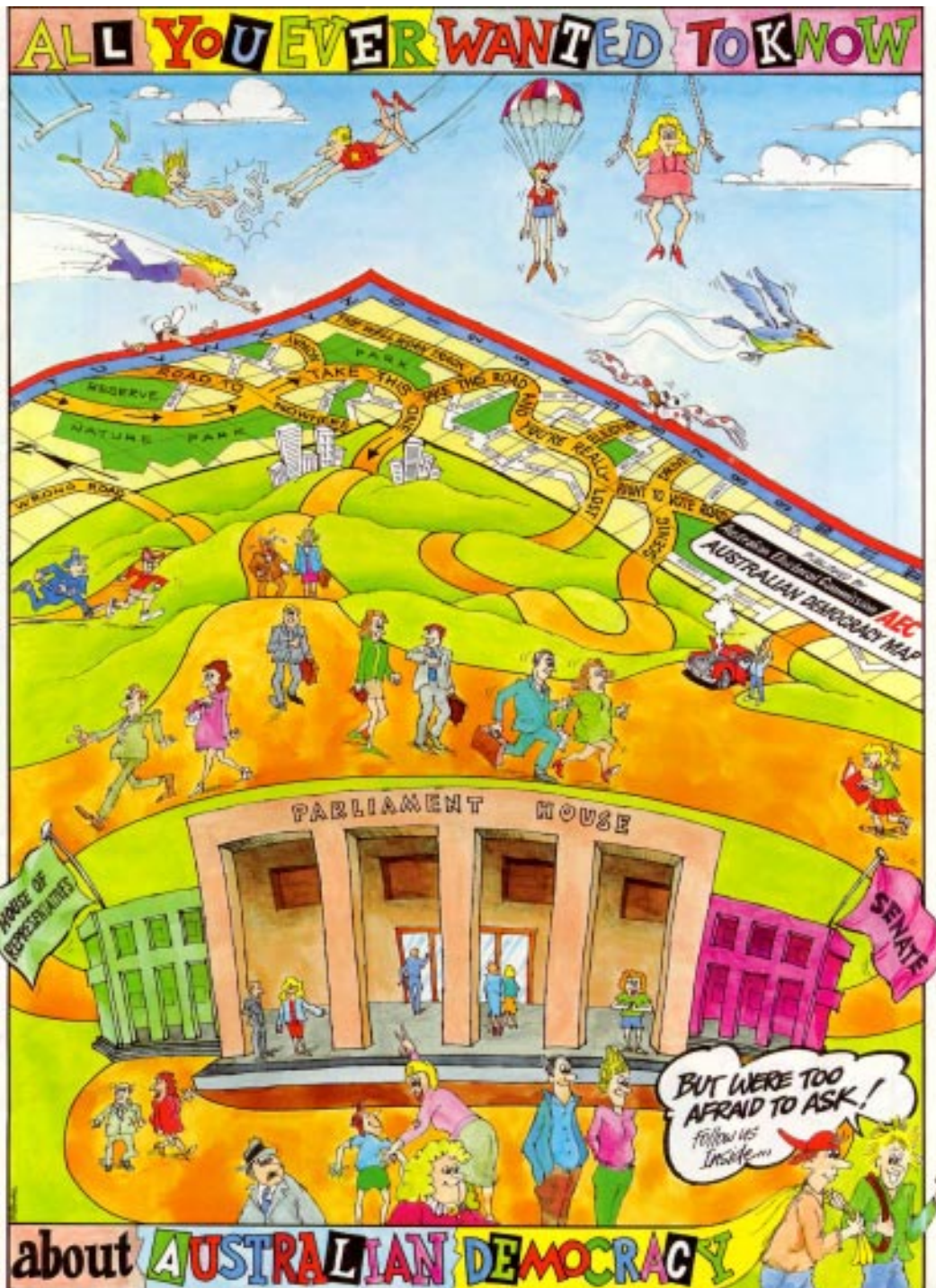
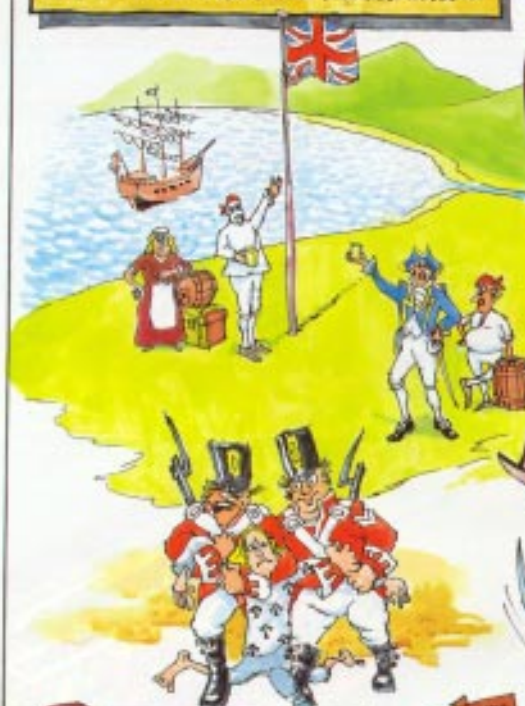




LET'S START FROM THE BEGINNING...



A

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

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

Many things have changed in Australia over this past 200 years. In 1788 the first fleet arrived and a prison colony run by a governor appointed in England was established. Early free settlers had no say in the government of the colony.

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

B

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

T

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

Thus the Federation movement began.

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

HOW FAR TO
PARLIAMENT
HOUSE?





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

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

GLUG!

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

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

WOW!

CRACK!!!

WIPE
WIPE



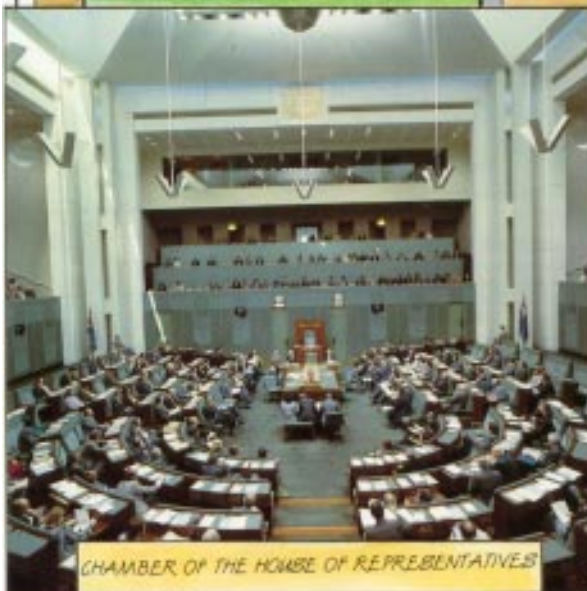
DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION



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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The House of Representatives is known as the "People's House". Members are elected by citizens who are grouped in electoral divisions. There are 148 Members—1 for each division in Australia. Members are elected for a term of 3 years.



CHAMBER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



Usually elections are held every 3 years for the House of Representatives and Territory Senators. An election for half the State Senators, a half-Senate election, is normally held at the same time.

IN FEDERAL PARLIAMENT



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

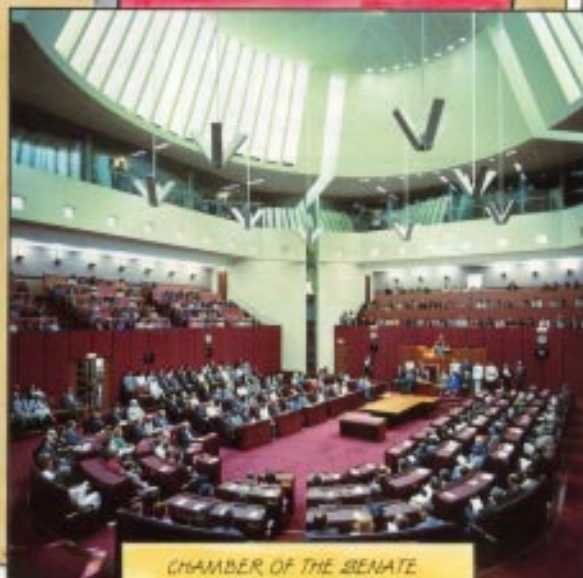


THE SENATE

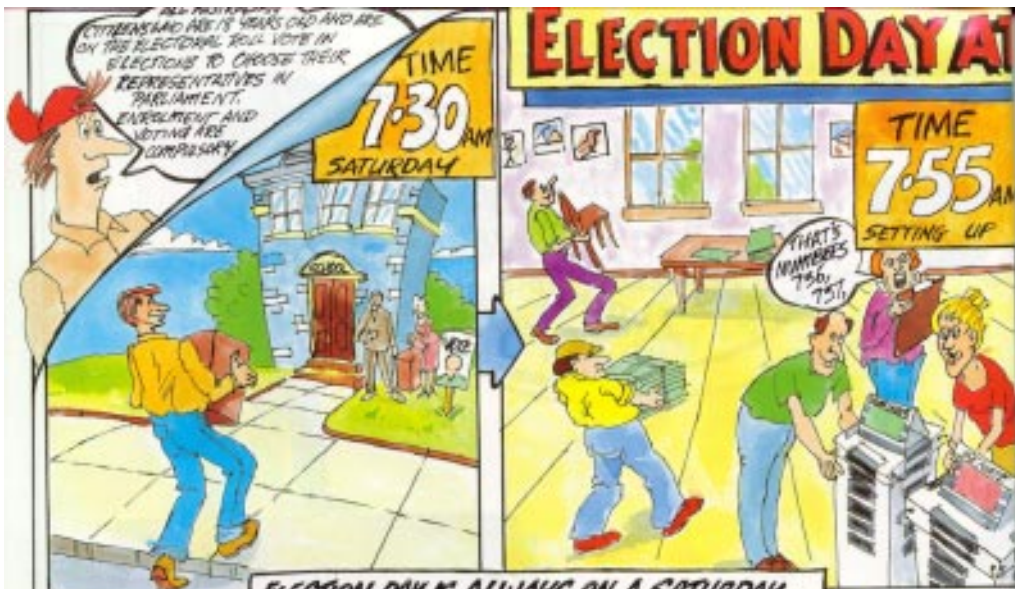
The Senate is known as the "States" House. Senators are elected by the citizens of the 6 States and 2 Territories. There are 76 Senators - 12 from each State and 2 from each Territory. State Senators are elected for a term of 6 years. Territory Senators are elected for a term of 3 years.



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



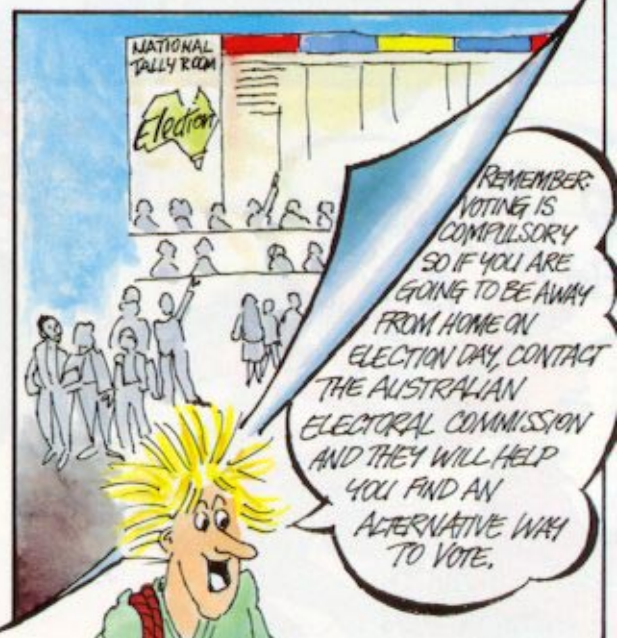
CHAMBER OF THE SENATE



ELECTION DAY IS ALWAYS ON A SATURDAY...

VOTING COMMENCES AT 8 AM AND ENDS AT 6 PM.



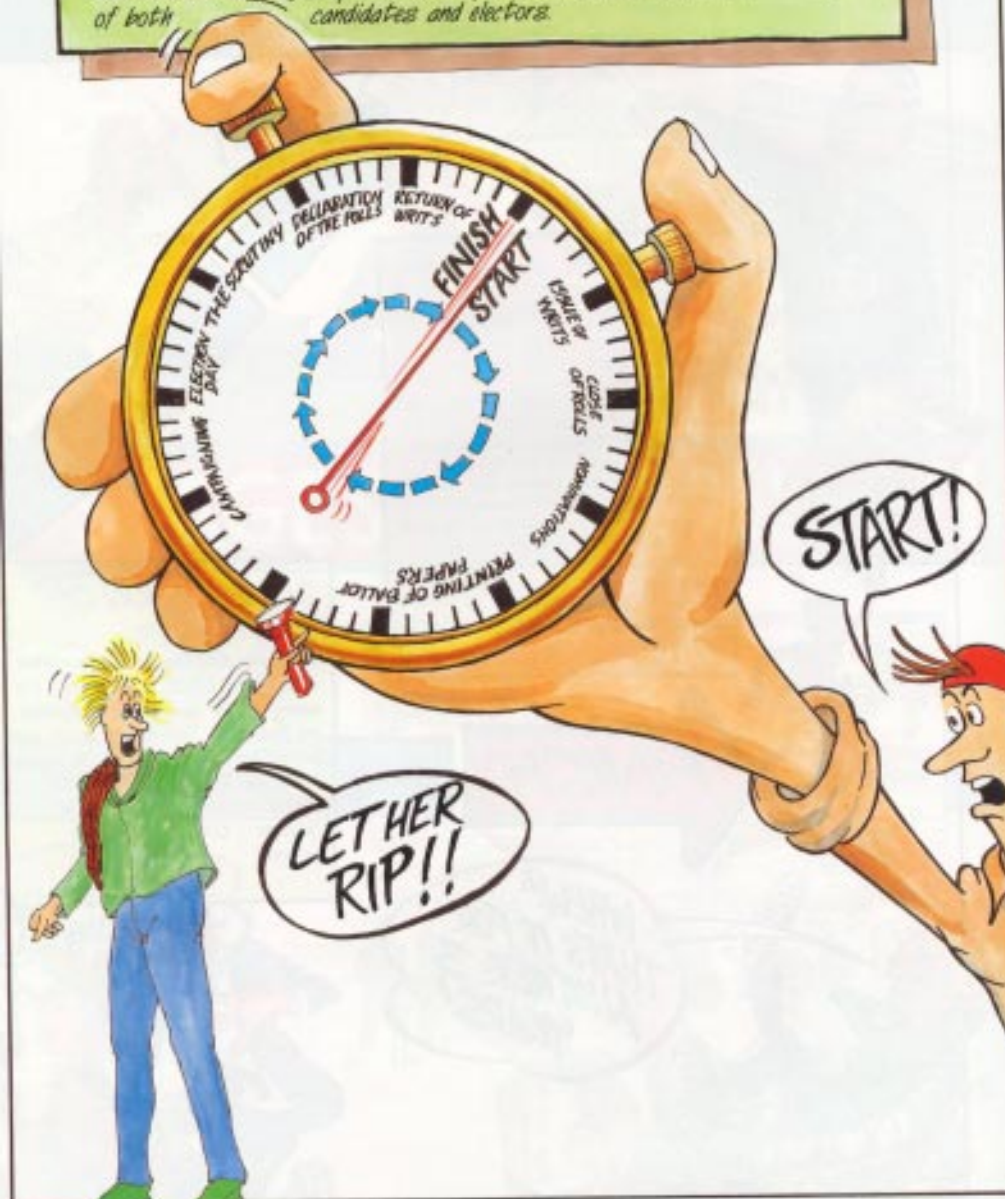


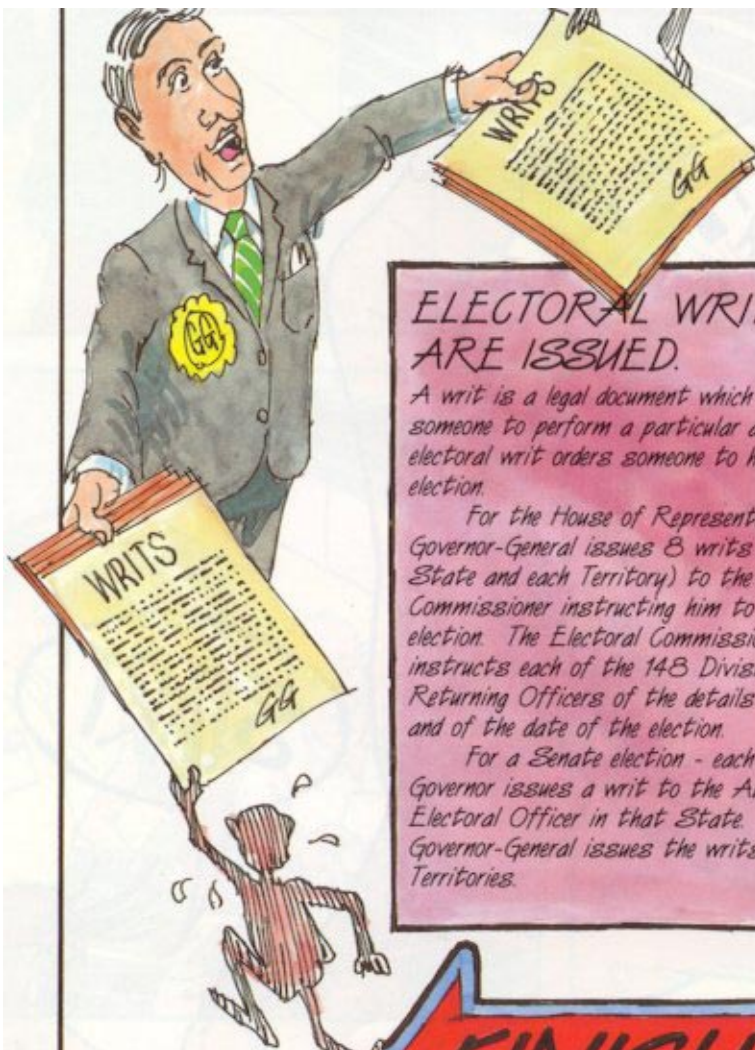
T

HERE ARE STAGES IN AN ELECTION

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

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





ELECTORAL WRITS ARE ISSUED.

A writ is a legal document which tells someone to perform a particular action. An electoral writ orders someone to hold an election.

For the House of Representatives - the Governor-General issues 8 writs (1 for each State and each Territory) to the Electoral Commissioner instructing him to hold an election. The Electoral Commissioner then instructs each of the 148 Divisional Returning Officers of the details of the writs and of the date of the election.

For a Senate election - each State Governor issues a writ to the Australian Electoral Officer in that State. The Governor-General issues the writs for the 2 Territories.

FINISH

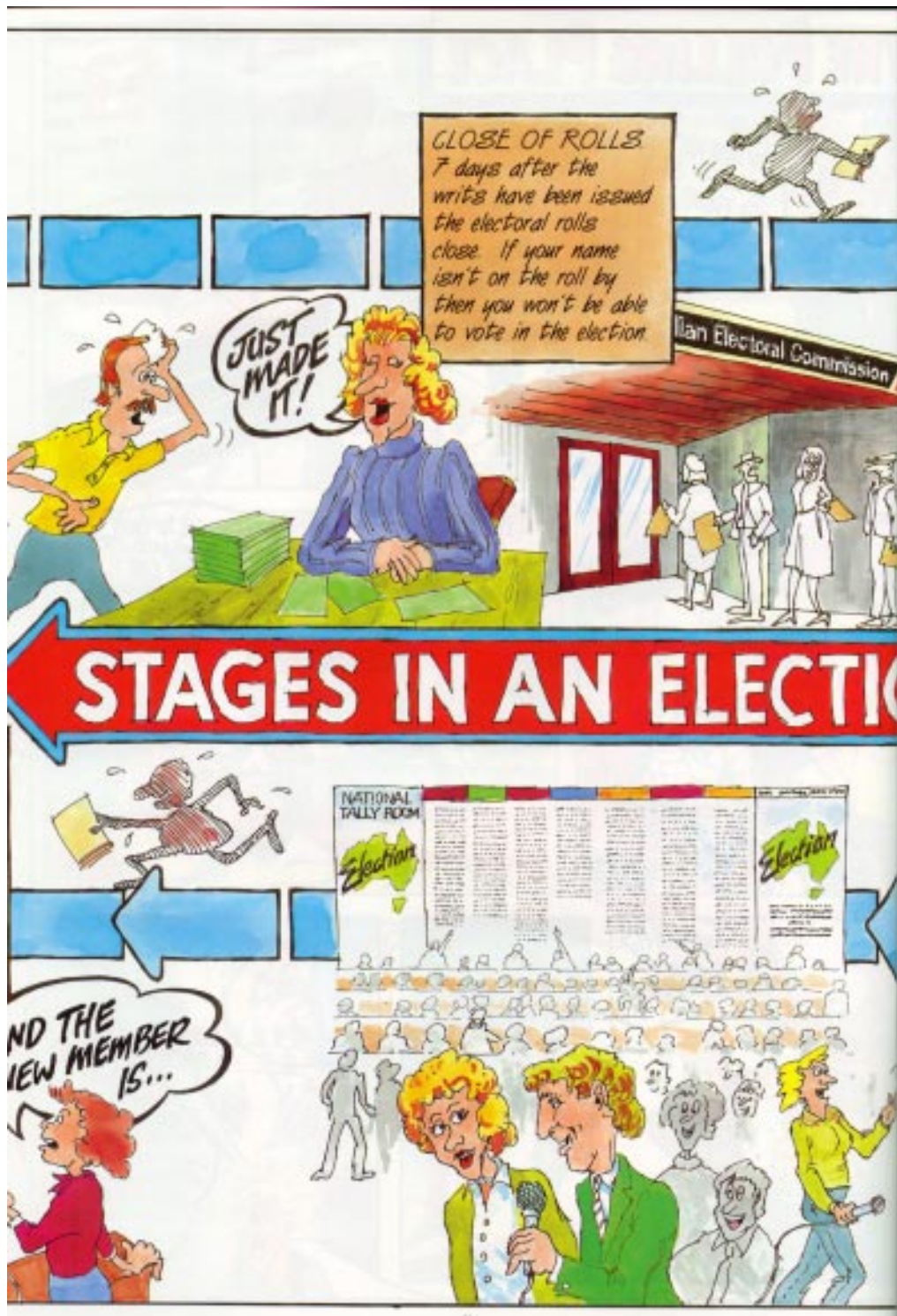
DECLARATION OF THE POLL

When the scrutiny is complete the **THE POLL IS DECLARED** — the names of the successful candidates are announced. Their names must be written on the back of the original writs and the writs returned to whoever issued them either the Governor-General or a State Governor.



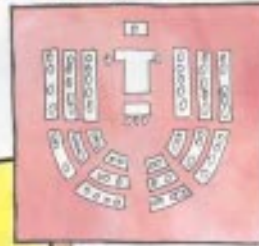
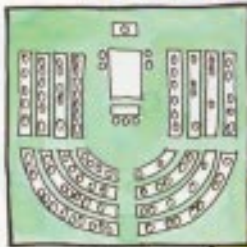
WHEW!
THAT'S IT FOR
ANOTHER 3
YEARS!







As a result of the election **PARLIAMENT IS FORMED**



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



QUESTION: Which Members of Parliament form the 'Government of the day'?



ANSWER: The party, or coalition of parties, with a majority of Members in the House of Representatives becomes the Government. The leader of the Government is called the Prime Minister.



THE PRIME MINISTER IS THE LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT.

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION LEADS THE OPPOSITION



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

VOTING

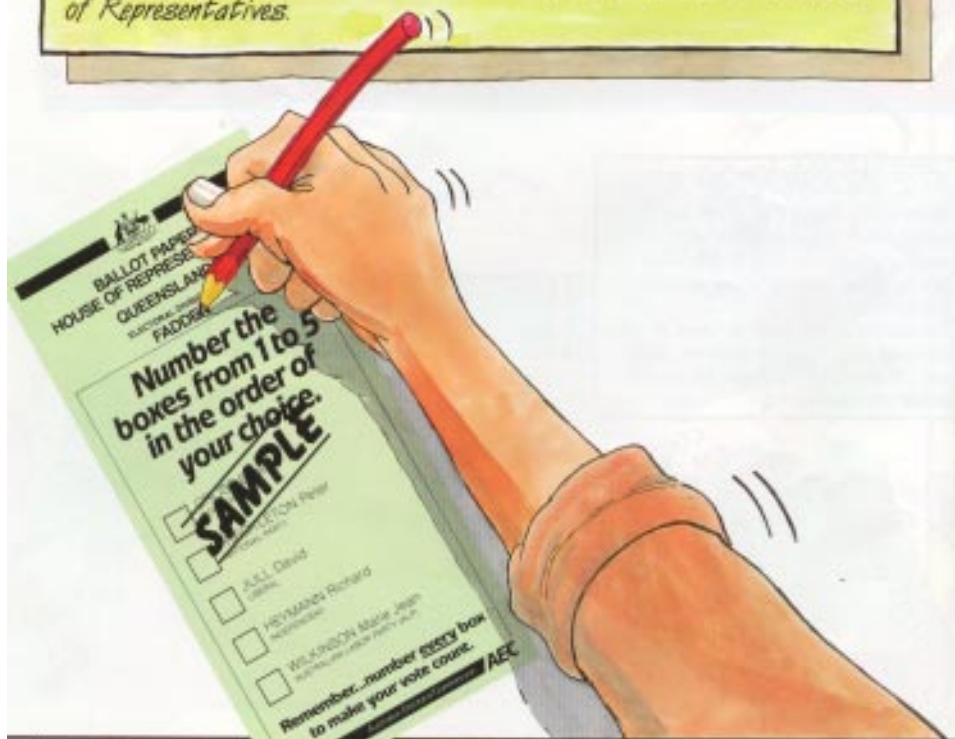
The preferential system of voting is used for House of Representatives elections.

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

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

To be elected a candidate must receive an absolute majority ie at least 50% + 1 of all the formal votes cast.

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



COUNTING THE VOTES...

THE SCRUTINY

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

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

If when the first count is completed one candidate has gained an absolute majority (at least $50\% + 1$) then that candidate is elected to represent the electors of the division in the House of Representatives.

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

EXAMPLE

DIVISION OF "OZ"

THREE CANDIDATES, RICK, DANNY AND MEGAN stand for election in the division of "OZ". After the election the ballot papers are counted and there are 60,000 formal votes. Therefore the absolute majority needed to win the seat is at least 30,001 votes ($50\% + 1$).

AT THE
FIRST
COUNT



15 000



25 000



20 000

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

AT THE
SECOND
COUNT



25 000
+ 5 000
20 500

Danny gained
5 500 second
preferences



20 000
+ 10 000
30 000

Megan gained
10 000 second
preferences

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



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



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

You will all be doing the same thing so we want to be sure to please more than half of you (at least 50% + 1).

BALLOT PAPER

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

☐

CAMPING

☐

SKIING

☐

**WIND-
SURFING**



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

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

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

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



RESULTS OF YOUR PREFERENTIAL VOTING EXERCISE

In your election there were 3 excursion candidates to choose from. After the election the ballot papers were counted and there were..... formal votes. Therefore the absolute majority needed to win is..... (absolute majority = at least 50% + 1 formal vote).

AT THE
FIRST
COUNT



CAMPING



SKIING



WINDSURFING

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

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

AT THE
SECOND
COUNT



CAMPING



SKIING



WINDSURFING

The excursion chosen is

This excursion was chosen at thecount.



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

**MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES ARE KNOWN
AS LOCAL MEMBERS**

LOBBY!

LOBBY!

LOBBY!

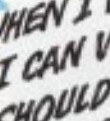
I CAN...

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

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

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

VOTE!



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

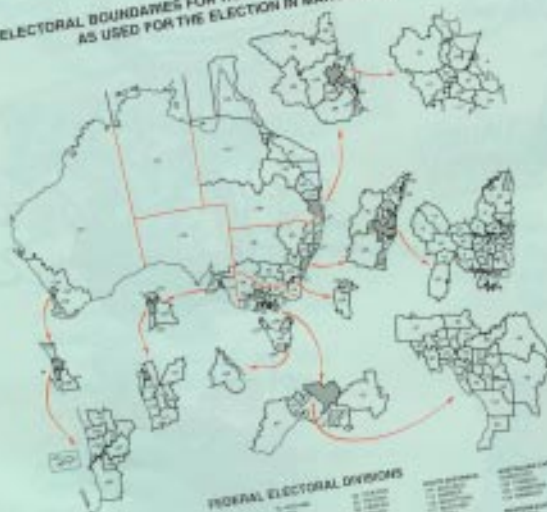
VOTE!

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

VOTE!

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

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES FOR THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
AS USED FOR THE ELECTION IN MARCH 1996



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

At present there are 148 electoral divisions, each represented by 1 Member in the House of Representatives.

BALLOT

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

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



SWINGING VOTERS

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



DONKEY VOTERS

Donkey voters don't seem to care about who they want elected. They just number the ballot paper from the top to the bottom. Question - Is a donkey vote formal?

Answer



PUMP FLESH

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



HUNG PARLIAMENT

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



LOBBY

A word to describe groups of people who feel so strongly about particular causes that they try to persuade the government to make decisions which support their causes. The word lobby not only describes the groups themselves but the tactics they use to influence powerful people and government. Some examples of lobby groups are the environmental lobby and the mining lobby. Can you think of any more lobby groups?



