

## GOVERNOR-GENERAL

The Governor-General is the Queen's representative in Australia, and is appointed by the Crown (the Queen) on the advice of the Australian Prime Minister. The appointment is usually for five years. The Governor-General has some of the responsibility for ensuring that Australia is governed according to the rules set out in the Constitution.

The Constitution describes some specific tasks for the Governor-General. A major task is to give Royal Assent to bills that Parliament has recently passed. Royal Assent is when the Governor-General signs a new bill, and it becomes a law for Australia.

Another occasion when the Governor-General uses constitutional power is when he or she opens the new Parliament after an election.

The Governor-General also uses constitutional power when the Prime Minister requests the Governor-General to dissolve Parliament and start the process for an election. The Governor-General usually agrees to do so.

When official visitors such as presidents and monarchs from foreign countries visit Australia, they are met and welcomed by the Governor-General. The Governor-General often invites famous Australians and official visitors to visit the official residence in Yarralumla, Canberra.

The Governor-General frequently travels throughout Australia meeting people, opening events and making speeches. Sometimes the Governor-General travels overseas to represent Australia internationally, but does not have the authority to make decisions on behalf of the government.

Whenever the Governor-General makes a public statement, he or she avoids personal opinions and does not comment on political and other controversies.

The first Australian-born Governor-General was Sir Isaac Issacs (1931–1936).

The current Governor-General of Australia is Ms Quentin Bryce. She is the first female Governor-General of Australia.



The Governor-General engaging in official duties