The Australian and Indonesian systems of government are both based on freely elected representatives deliberating to make laws for the whole nation. Both national parliaments have two chambers: a lower house representing the interests of regional communities and an upper house representing states or territories.

However, there are also differences between the two systems. Australia is a constitutional monarchy and Indonesia is a republic. The differences between the two systems can be seen in their overall structure and in their heads of state.
The Indonesian parliament is the People’s Consultative Assembly (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat – MPR). The MPR has two chambers: the People’s Representative Council (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat – DPR) and the Regional Representative Council (Dewan Perwakilan Daerah – DPD). Although the Indonesian parliament has two chambers it is not strictly a bicameral parliament because the DPD does not have a role in the law-making process. The DPR has the final decision to pass, amend or reject any bill.

The following sections compare and contrast key aspects of the Australian and Indonesian political systems.

Written constitution

A constitution is a set of rules by which a country is run. On 1 January 1901, when the Australian Constitution took effect, the British colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia peacefully united to become a nation. The movement toward federation had been driven by the belief a national government would be better able to handle the issues of trade, defence and immigration, as well as a growing sense of national pride.

The Australian Constitution includes details on the composition of the Australian Parliament, how Parliament works, what powers it has, how federal and state parliaments share power, and the roles of the executive government and the High Court. It has been amended (changed) eight times.

The Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (Undang Undang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 1945) – commonly referred to as the 1945 Constitution – was adopted when the Republic of Indonesia declared independence from the Netherlands on 17 August 1945. It was meant as a temporary constitution, to be replaced by a permanent constitution written by elected members of a national parliament. The Federal Constitution was adopted in 1949 but was replaced by the Provisional Constitution in 1950. The 1945 Constitution was reintroduced in 1959. It has been amended four times.

The 1945 Constitution created a nation based on the Indonesian people working together to achieve common goals through gotong royong (mutual assistance), musyawarah (deliberations of representatives) and mufakat (consensus). It includes the Pancasila; the composition and role of the MPR and the executive; the powers of the regional legislatures; the human rights of Indonesian citizens; and how changes can be made to the constitution.
The constitutions of Australia and Indonesia both contain details about the three branches of governance: the legislature (law-makers), the executive (high-ranking government decision-makers) and the judiciary (the federal courts). The power to make and manage federal law is divided between the three branches of governance. This division is known as the ‘separation of powers’. Under this principle, the power to make and manage laws is shared, to avoid any one branch misusing – or having too much – power.

Neither Australia nor Indonesia has a complete separation of powers. In both systems of governance the roles of the Parliament and executive overlap. In Australia the Prime Minister and ministers must be members of the Parliament, while in Indonesia both the President of Indonesia and the DPR (People’s Representative Council) must agree to a bill before it can become a law. Members of the judiciary (High Court of Australia and Supreme Court of Indonesia judges) are appointed by the Governor-General and President respectively.

**PANCASILA**

A major concern at the founding of the Republic of Indonesia was how to form the different peoples, religions, cultures and traditions of the Indonesian archipelago into a unified nation. In the discussions leading up to independence, a unifying political philosophy was developed combining the shared beliefs of the Indonesian people. Pancasila is the official principle upon which Indonesia is founded. It informs the 1945 Constitution, and the President and members of the MPR must abide by it.

1. **Belief in the one and only God**
   (Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa)

2. **Just and civilised humanity**
   (Kemanusiaan Yang Adil dan Beradab)

3. **The unity of Indonesia**
   (Persatuan Indonesia)

4. **Democracy guided by the inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations amongst representatives**
   (Kerakyatan Yang Dipimpin oleh Hikmat Kebijaksanaan, Dalam Permusyawaratan dan Perwakilan)

5. **Social justice for all the people of Indonesia**
   (Keadilan Sosial bagi seluruh Rakyat Indonesia)
## Indonesia

### Origins
- Indonesia proclaimed independence in August 1945 after the surrender of the occupying Japanese forces. The colonial power, the Netherlands, handed sovereignty to the Indonesian government in 1949.
- The 1945 Constitution was meant as a temporary constitution and was replaced in 1949. It was reintroduced in 1959.

### Executive power
- The Constitution gives executive power to the President.
- The President is head of state, head of government and Supreme Commander of the armed forces.
- The President is elected directly by the people of Indonesia.
- The President appoints ministers (Cabinet) and the heads of some government institutions, such as the heads of the armed forces. Ministers are not members of the MPR (People’s Consultative Assembly).

## Australia

### Origins
- The Australian Constitution was approved by the Australian people in a series of referendums.
- The Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act (UK) 1900 gained Royal Assent on 9 July 1900 and took effect on 1 January 1901.

### Executive power
- The Constitution gives executive power to the Queen, which is exercised by the Governor-General. In practice, executive power is exercised by the Prime Minister and Cabinet (high-ranking ministers).
- The Governor-General presides over the Federal Executive Council, which advises the Governor-General on the administration of the government. It is not a forum for policy debate. The Prime Minister and all ministers are members of the Council.
- The Prime Minister and Cabinet are not mentioned in the Constitution. By convention, the Prime Minister leads the party or parties with the support of the majority of the members in the House of Representatives, and is commissioned by the Governor-General to form a government.
### Australia

#### Separation of powers
- The Constitution separately describes the legislative, executive and judicial arms of Australian governance.
- Australia does not have a complete separation of powers because the executive is drawn from the Parliament (legislature), and members of the judiciary (High Court judges) are appointed by the Governor-General (on the advice of the executive).

#### Amending the Constitution
- A proposed amendment (change) to the Constitution must be passed by the Parliament.
- The proposal must then be approved by Australian voters in a referendum.
- For the change to be agreed to, a majority of voters in a majority of states, and a majority of all voters nation-wide (double majority) must agree to the proposal.
- The Australian Constitution was amended in 1907, 1910, 1929, 1946, 1967 and 1977 (three separate changes).

### Indonesia

#### Separation of powers
- The Constitution describes the legislative, executive and judicial arms of Indonesian governance.
- The DPR has the authority to make laws (legislative power) but in reality the DPR works with the President (through the executive) to negotiate laws.
- Members of the MPR are prohibited from holding executive office, including the presidency.
- Judges of the Supreme Court (Mahkamah Agung) are appointed by the President on the approval of the DPR.

#### Amending the Constitution
- A proposed amendment (change) to the Constitution must be proposed by one-third of MPR members (the DPR and DPD sitting together as one body).
- Two-thirds of MPR members must attend the session when the proposed amendment is discussed.
- To be agreed to, an absolute majority (more than half) of all MPR members must agree to the proposed amendment.

### Similarities

Both systems:
- Have written constitutions that describe the functions of the executive, legislative and judicial branches.
- Give legislative power to the elected representatives of the people sitting in a parliament.
- Have a procedure for amending the constitution.

*Both systems give legislative power to the elected representatives of the people.*
Election processes and systems of representation

Elections are fundamental to democracy. Both Australia and Indonesia have regular elections in which the constituents — citizens who vote — elect other citizens to represent them in a national parliament. In Australia these people represent their constituents in Parliament; in Indonesia these people represent their constituents in the MPR.

In Australia each electorate votes for one member of the House of Representatives and each state is represented by 12 Senators (plus two each for the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and the Northern Territory). In Indonesia each constituency (electorate) returns between three and 12 members to the DPR (People’s Representative Council). There are four representatives in the DPD (Regional Representative Council) for each province.

The following table provides an overview of the distinguishing features of both nations’ federal election processes.

### AUSTRALIA

**Frequency**
- Federal elections are held every three years, or earlier if requested by the Prime Minister and approved by the Governor-General.

**House of Representatives terms**
- The 151 members of the House of Representatives, which includes the Prime Minister, are elected for a maximum of three years, although this term may be shorter if the Prime Minister requests an earlier election.
- After a federal election, the party or parties with the support of the majority in the House of Representatives forms government.
- One member of the House of Representatives represents each electorate. Each electorate has a similar number of voters.

### INDONESIA

**Frequency**
- Elections for the DPR and DPD are held every five years.

**DPR terms**
- The 560 members of the DPR are elected for five-year fixed terms.
- Members of the DPR represent a constituency (electorate).
- Constituencies return between three and 12 members each to the DPR depending on the population of the constituency.

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Above: Voting for the President of Indonesia
Left: Voting for representatives in the Senate and House of Representatives
# ELECTIONS CONTINUED

## AUSTRALIA

### Senate terms
- Twelve senators are elected from each state for six-year fixed terms.
- Two senators are elected from the Northern Territory and the ACT for a maximum of three years. The terms of territory senators are the same as for members of the House of Representatives.
- State senators are elected on a rotating basis, with half of the senators elected every three years.

### Organisation of elections
- The qualifications of electors and members of parliament, and the power of the federal Parliament to make electoral laws are included in the Australian Constitution.
- Federal elections are conducted by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC).
- The *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* provides for a standardised national election procedure.

### Voting
- Voting in federal elections is compulsory for all Australian citizens aged 18 and over.
- Elections for the House of Representatives use a preferential voting system to elect one member for each electorate. Elections for the Senate use a proportional voting system to fill multiple vacancies in each state and territory.

## INDONESIA

### DPD terms
- The 132 members of the DPD are elected for five-year fixed terms.
- Members of the DPD represent a province.
- Four members of the DPD represent each province.

### Organisation of elections
- Articles 19(1), 22C(1) and 22E of the 1945 Constitution state that free and open elections must be held every five years.
- National elections are run by the General Election Commission (KPU) according to electoral law.
- The KPU determines which political parties can contest each election. Contesting parties must have branches around the country, not in only one or two provinces.
- Each party contesting seats for the MPR must include at least 30% female candidates.

### Voting
- Voting is not compulsory. Voters must register before an election in order to be able to vote.
- Citizens can vote when they are 17 years old or earlier if they are married.
- Elections for both the DPR and DPD use proportional representation voting systems to elect multiple members for each constituency.

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## SIMILARITIES

Both systems elect a uniform number of representatives to represent states/provinces

### Both systems:
- Organise electorates so each member of parliament represents a similar number of voters.
- Elect a uniform number of representatives to represent states/provinces, regardless of their size or population.
- Elect representatives for states/provinces for a fixed term.
- Use an independent government agency to conduct national elections according to a standard procedure.
Head of state

There are fundamental differences between the Australian and Indonesian political systems in regard to the head of state. Australia is a constitutional monarchy with the Queen as the head of state and the Prime Minister as the head of government. Indonesia is a republic with a President as the head of state. The President is also the head of government, with a central role in the legislative process.

The following table provides an overview of the distinguishing features of both nations’ processes for the appointment of the head of state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUSTRALIA</th>
<th>INDONESIA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Queen is the head of state.</td>
<td>• The President of the Republic of Indonesia is the head of state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Governor-General is the Queen’s representative in Australia.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appointment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Appointment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Governor-General is appointed by the Queen on the advice of the Prime Minister (who is the head of government).</td>
<td>• The President is elected for five years directly by the people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The appointment is ‘at the Queen’s pleasure’. This is usually for five years, although the term can be extended or shortened on the advice of the Prime Minister.</td>
<td>• The President can serve a maximum of two five-year terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Presidential and vice-presidential candidates (running as a team) must be nominated by a party or coalition of parties with at least 20% of seats in the DPR; or have received at least 25% of votes in the last DPR election.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To become President, a candidate must receive more than 50% of the national vote and more than 20% of the votes in more than half the provinces. If no candidate achieves this, the top two candidates contest a second (run-off) election.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Criteria for Presidential candidates include: Indonesian citizenship by birth; belief in one God; being a tax payer; being faithful to the Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution; and be over 35 years of age.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Above-left: The swearing-in ceremony of the Australian Governor-General
Left: The former President and former Vice President of Indonesia sign the oath of office in the MPR
### AUSTRALIA

#### Role
- The Governor-General of Australia:
  - is the Queen's representative in Australia;
  - signs bills agreed to by both chambers of the Parliament into law by giving the Royal Assent;
  - commissions the Prime Minister and, on the advice of the Prime Minister, ministers;
  - dissolves Parliament on the advice of the Prime Minister and starts the process of a federal (national) election;
  - is Commander-in-Chief of the Australian Defence Force, although the Governor-General only acts on the advice of the executive; and
  - represents Australia on the international stage.

#### Removal
- The monarch's position is hereditary. The monarch cannot be removed, though he or she may abdicate (step down from the position).
- The Governor-General may resign or be removed by the Queen on the advice of the Prime Minister.

#### Reform
- A referendum to change the Australian Constitution to make Australia a republic (and therefore change the head of state) was defeated in 1999.

### INDONESIA

#### Role
- The President of the Republic of Indonesia:
  - has a central role in the legislative process. The President proposes bills to the DPR, appoints ministers to negotiate bills, jointly agrees with the DPR on bills and signs bills into law;
  - proclaims regulations which a law allows the President to make (delegated legislation);
  - appoints and removes ministers;
  - is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces;
  - appoints Supreme Court judges approved by the DPR; and
  - represents Indonesia and the Indonesian government on the international stage.

#### Removal
- Article 7A of the 1945 Constitution describes how the President can be removed.
- The President can be removed by a two-thirds vote of the MPR. Before a charge of treason, bribery, immorality or inability to fulfil the role of President is brought before the MPR, the Constitutional Court must find the charge/s valid.
- If a President is removed, the Vice-President would then take on the role of the President.

#### Reform
- In the period 1966 to 1998 the Indonesian system of government was centralised in the President. Constitutional amendments have transferred some Presidential powers to the MPR.
- Prior to 2004 the President was elected by the MPR.

### SIMILARITIES

In both systems:
- No significant similarities exist between the Australian and Indonesian heads of state.
Roles of the executive

Leaders of the executive governments of Australia and Indonesia – the Prime Minister and the President respectively – share their responsibilities with members of their Cabinets. Each Cabinet member is a high-ranking member of the government and is responsible for the leadership of a government department or policy area.

The following table provides an overview of the distinguishing features of both nations’ executive governments.

**AUSTRALIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Executive government consists of the Prime Minister and ministers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ministers can be members of the House of Representatives or the Senate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Prime Minister and high-ranking ministers meet in Cabinet. The deliberations of Cabinet are confidential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Each minister is responsible for the management of their department.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appointment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The Prime Minister is the leader of the party – or coalition of parties – which forms government. The leader is chosen either by a vote of the parliamentary members of the party or all members of the party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Prime Minister selects ministers, who are then commissioned by the Governor-General.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The executive is responsible to the Parliament and each minister must answer to the Parliament for the operation of their department, and the laws they introduce and administer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The executive can be scrutinised in both the House of Representatives and Senate, particularly in Question Time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The executive can also be scrutinised by parliamentary committees which examine laws, the conduct of public administration and policy issues. Senate Estimates Committees examine government spending.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INDONESIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Executive government consists of the President, Vice-President and ministers responsible for a particular area of government activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The President, Vice-President and high-ranking ministers meet in the Kabinet Indonesia Bersatu (United Indonesia Cabinet).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ministers cannot be members of the MPR.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appointment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The President selects and removes ministers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ministers are usually members of the President’s own party, members of the party/ parties in coalition with the President’s party or are policy area experts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Ministers are responsible to the President and must answer to the President for the operation of their ministry (department) or policy area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ministers have responsibility for representing the government in negotiations with the DPR over bills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ministers can be questioned by DPR commissions (committees) about the conduct of their department and government spending.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AUSTRALIA

Size

- Executive government, which is also known as the ministry, is made up of no more than 30 ministers.
- High-ranking ministers, who are often in charge of major departments, form the Cabinet.
- Junior ministers are not members of Cabinet, though they do attend Cabinet meetings from time to time.

Removal

- The Prime Minister may be replaced if members of the government or the Prime Minister’s party elect a new leader, or if the government loses the support of the majority of members in the House of Representatives.
- Ministers lose their appointment if the Governor-General withdraws their commission. This can occur on the advice of the Prime Minister or if the ministers vacate their seat in Parliament or fail to retain it in a federal election.

INDONESIA

Size

- The Cabinet is made up of the President, Vice-President and high-ranking ministers. These comprise:
  - coordinating Ministers who draft bills and assist department ministers in their negotiations with the DPR over bills;
  - ministers responsible for departments, including the Ministers for Home Affairs, Finance, Religious Affairs, and Justice and Human Rights; and
  - Ministers of State responsible for policy areas which cover several departments, such as the environment, female empowerment and child protection, and research and technology.
- Six other positions have been given Cabinet-rank status. These include the Attorney-General (chief public prosecutor), Indonesian National Police Chief and the head of the State Intelligence Agency.
- The number of ministers can change.

Removal

- The President is replaced if they are not re-elected or may be removed by the MPR.
- Ministers can be removed by the President. Their appointment is terminated if the President is not re-elected.

SIMILARITIES

In both systems:

- the day-to-day running of the nation is carried out by the executive government.
- Cabinet meetings are secret (unlike the legislature) and are not subject to public scrutiny.
- ministers and secretaries are responsible for the operation of major departments and high-ranking ministers make up the Cabinet.

Above: The Australian Cabinet in session
Right: Kabinet Indonesia Bersatu (United Indonesia Cabinet)
Operation of the legislature

Making laws (legislating) is one of the primary functions of both Parliament and the DPR (People’s Representative Chamber (Dewan Perwaiklan Rakyat)). In Indonesia this function is shared between the President and the DPR.

Although the Indonesian parliament comprises two chambers – the DPR and DPD – only the DPR has a role in law-making. The DPD (Regional Representative Council (Dewan Perwakilan Daerah)) cannot introduce bills (proposed laws) or vote on bills. It can, however, propose, debate and make recommendations to the DPR on bills relating to regional issues.

In the Australian Parliament a bill (proposed law) must pass through both houses in identical form before it becomes law. In each of the chambers the bill is debated and voted on by the whole chamber. In the DPR most of the work and debate on a bill happens in commissions (committees) of small groups of DPR members, away from the public gaze. Votes are rarely taken in the DPR; most decisions are made by consensus. That is, bills are passed by all members either agreeing to support the bill or to not oppose the bill. Musyawarah mufakat (consensus through the deliberation of representatives) is highly valued in the Indonesian political system and is the basis for the process of making laws.

The following table provides an overview of the distinguishing features of both nations’ legislatures.

### AUSTRALIA

**Composition**

- The House of Representatives has 151 members. Each member represents an electorate.
- The Senate has 76 senators. Each state is represented by 12 senators, and the Northern Territory and ACT are represented by two senators each.
- The number of members of the House of Representatives is as close as practicable to twice the number of Senators.

### INDONESIA

**Composition**

- The MPR is comprised of two chambers:
  - DPR (People’s Representative Chamber) has 560 members.
  - DPD (Regional Representative Chamber) has 132 members – four for each of the 33 provinces.
- The number of DPD members is limited to one-third of the total members of the DPR.
PARLIAMENT AND MPR

AUSTRALIA

Bills
- Bills are usually introduced by a minister (government bills) in the House of Representatives. Bills can also be introduced in the Senate.
- A small number of bills are introduced by other members of Parliament (private member bills), although few become law.
- Bills must be introduced, debated and agreed to by both houses.
- Bills may be changed (amended) by both the House of Representatives and the Senate, although changes must be agreed to by both houses to become law.
- There are some restrictions on the types of bills that can be introduced by private members or in the Senate; and on the amendments the Senate can make to money (budget) bills.

INDONESIA

Bills
- The DPD cannot introduce or vote on bills. It is advisory only.
- The 1945 Constitution states that laws are made by ‘joint agreement’ between the President and the DPR.
- Bills can be introduced in the DPR by a member of the DPR with the support of at least 10 other members. However, most bills are introduced by the executive (government bills).
- Bills are sent to a DPR commission (committee) which is responsible for its passage through the DPR. The members of the commission, who represent each party in the DPR, and the relevant minister meet to discuss the bill.
- The bill may be changed (amended) so the commission and minister can reach agreement on the bill.
- When the members of the commission and minister reach agreement on the bill it is presented to the full DPR. A report on the work of the commission is read to the house. Because the bill has already been agreed to by the parties in the DPR and the executive (in the commission), the bill will almost certainly be agreed to by the full DPR.
AUSTRALIA

Committees
• Bills may be referred to committees for further scrutiny and recommendations.
• Both houses use committees to investigate bills and other issues in more detail than is possible in the chamber. In practice, Senate committees look into more bills than House committees.
• Each committee oversees a specific policy area or issue, such as the Joint Standing Committee on Migration.

Assent
• When a bill has been passed by the Parliament, it is presented to the Governor-General for signing into law. This final step in the process of establishing an Act of Parliament, or law, is known as ‘Royal Assent’.
• The Governor-General, on the advice of the government, may request that the Parliament amend (change) a bill, but this is rare.

SIMILARITIES
In both systems:
• any member of Parliament or DPR may introduce a bill, although in the DPR the bill must have support from other members.
• changes can be made to bills.
• members of Parliament and DPR serve on committees/commissions to conduct detailed work – including scrutinising bills and investigating current issues – before making detailed recommendations.

INDONESIA

Committees
• The committees of the DPR are called commissions.
• Every bill is referred to a commission for study and development before being presented to the DPR.
• The 11 commissions oversee specific policy areas. Special commissions can be formed to investigate a particular issue, for example the Commission to Eradicate the Crime of Corruption.
• Commissions include representatives of all parties (factions) in the DPR. The decisions made by these members are accepted by all the party members in the DPR, meaning that when agreement has been reached on a bill in a commission, it will almost certainly be accepted by the whole DPR.

Assent
• When a bill has been passed by the DPR, it is presented to the President for signing into law.
• The President may refuse to sign a bill but after 30 days it automatically becomes law.
• To block the passage of a bill the President may refuse to name a minister to participate in negotiations over the bill, or delay those negotiations.
• If no agreement can be reached on a bill between the DPR and executive, the bill cannot be reintroduced during the term of the DPR.
Party system

Political parties exist to represent the interests of different groups and individuals in society. Their ultimate goal is to have members elected to the legislature to represent these interests. Two major parties compete in the Australian political system, with smaller representation by minor parties and independent members. The Australian Labor Party has been represented in the federal Parliament since 1901 and the Liberal Party of Australia since the 1940s.

Indonesian politics is contested by a large number of large and small parties. Some parties have strong historical, cultural and/or religious foundations; others are relatively new. The fear of instability due to short-term coalitions and a striving for unity has led to restrictions on the size and number of parties permitted to contest Indonesian national elections. Only parties large enough to have branches in all provinces are able to contest national elections.
The following table provides an overview of the distinguishing features of both nations’ party systems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUSTRALIA</th>
<th>INDONESIA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Major parties</strong></td>
<td><strong>Major parties</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The two major parties are the Liberal Party of Australia (LP) and the Australian Labor Party (ALP).</td>
<td>• Party representation in the MPR can change substantially from election to election.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other parties include the Nationals, the Australian Greens, the Country Liberal Party and Palmer United Party.</td>
<td>• Parties are divided along religious and cultural lines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Party discipline</strong></td>
<td><strong>Party discipline</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Party discipline is very strong and party members are expected to vote with their party.</td>
<td>• Some of the largest national parties are:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The ALP is the only party that has formal party rules to discourage its members voting against the party, or ‘crossing the floor’.</td>
<td>– Indonesia Democratic Party – Struggle (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia – Perjuangan – PDIP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independents</strong></td>
<td><strong>Independents</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Both houses may contain independent members of parliament.</td>
<td>– Functional Groups Party (Partai Golongan Karya – Golkar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Great Indonesian Movement Party (Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya – Gerindra)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Democratic Party (Partai Demokrat – PD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– National Mandate Party (Partai Amanat Nasional – PAN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– National Awakening Party (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa – PKB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A candidate from a political party may win the presidency but have a minority in the DPR.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SIMILARITIES**

**In both systems:**

• Parties must gain nationwide support in order to have strong representation in the parliament.
• Independents are members of the parliament.

**Party discipline**

• Party discipline is weak. The President is the leader of their party but can have weak leadership of their party and in the DPR. Within the MPR party discipline is also weak.

**Independents**

• Only candidates nominated by an approved party can contest the DPR.
• Members of the DPD are elected as individuals. Political parties are banned from contesting DPD elections.
**Point summary**

Australia and Indonesia have unique and rich histories, with similarities and differences in their political systems. One of the most important differences between the two nations is that Australia is a constitutional monarchy with the Queen as head of state and Indonesia is a republic with the President as head of state. The President of Indonesia is also the head of the government.

Because the Indonesian President is both the head of the Indonesian government and head of state they both propose and negotiate bills (through the executive) and sign them into law.

In Australia the Governor-General (representing the Queen) signs bills into law but takes no part in negotiating their passage through Parliament.

There are also several similarities between the systems of the two countries. Both have political systems with highly structured legislatures. The executive governments of Australia and Indonesia both lead their nation as well as representing them on the world stage. Australia and Indonesia both have independent judiciaries to interpret the law. All of these elements are detailed in written constitutions.

* Although the Indonesian parliament does have two chambers, the DPD does not vote on bills. Therefore, only one chamber is part of the law-making process.

Information is correct at time of publishing
More information

PEO resources

Videos

Fact Sheets

Pocket Constitution

Other resources

The Australian Constitution

Australian Electoral Commission
www.aec.gov.au

House of Representatives Infosheets

Senate Briefs

Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia

Indonesian Government Portal
www.indonesia.go.id/en

Dewan Perwakilan Daerah – DPD
www.dpd.go.id