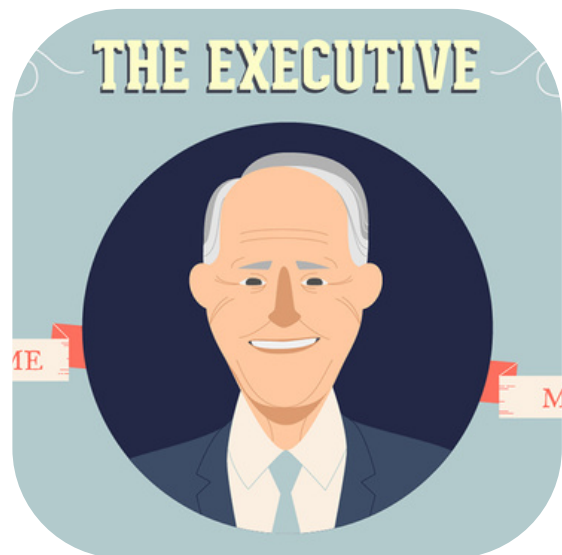


# The Executive

The principle of the separation of powers is that, in order to prevent oppressive government, the three powers of government should be held by separate bodies which can act as checks and balances on each other. The three powers of government in Australia are the Legislature (often referred to as the Parliament), the Executive (often called the government) and the Judiciary (the courts).



## What does the Executive do?

The Executive is the part of the Australian government that carries out the day-to-day work. It is responsible for making important national decisions, developing policy, introducing bills (proposed laws), putting laws into action and managing government departments. In government departments and agencies, the public service (the name given to the people who work in the departments and agencies) work to put laws into operation and uphold laws once they have begun to operate.

## Who makes up the Executive?

The Australian Constitution says that the Executive is made up of the Head of State (the Queen, represented by the Governor-General), Prime Minister and Ministers. The reality is a little bit different. In practice, the Executive is actually made up of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (senior Ministers). They have special responsibilities for different areas of the law.

## What is a Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister of Australia is the head of the Australian Government and is the leader of the nation. They are also the head of the ruling political party. The Prime Minister chairs Cabinet and is, in practice, the Head of the Executive.

## What is Cabinet?

Cabinet is a group of senior Ministers in charge of larger or more important government departments. They are responsible for making decisions about major proposals to change policies and laws. The Cabinet is not recognised by the Constitution, but in practice, it is the heart of the Executive Government.

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