

Public Holidays

Principal public holidays observed throughout Australia (unless otherwise noted) in 1989 include:

- New Year** — *January 1*
- Australia Day** — *January 26*
- Good Friday** — *Variable*
- Easter Monday** — *Variable*
- Anzac Day** — *April 25*
- Queen's Birthday** — *June 12*
- Christmas** — *December 25*
- Boxing Day** — *December 26*

Language

The principal language used in Australia is English.

Government Systems

The Commonwealth of Australia is a federal state within the British Commonwealth. It is made up of six states — New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania — and two territories — Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

The Commonwealth Constitution is largely based on the forms of government of Britain and the United States and provides for a House of Representatives, a Senate and a completely independent judiciary. The Commonwealth government at Canberra has power to legislate on such matters as defence, immigration, social services, financial institutions and overseas trade (exchange controls, foreign investment and export controls). In addition, each state has its own government whose legislative powers are confined principally to matters affecting that state.

The federal Parliament is composed of a 76-member Senate and a 148-member House of Representatives. Generally, the leader of the majority party in the House of Representatives holds the office of prime minister and heads a cabinet of ministers selected from parliamentary representatives of his/her party. The three main Australian political parties are the Liberal Party, the National Party and the Australian Labour Party.