



The

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Why is the House of Representatives a soft shade of green?

What colour is the Senate, and why is it this colour?



How to make a Parliamentary chatterbox:

Page 3 of today's edition of *The Wonder Weekly*.

On which side of the speaker do Government members sit?



ORDER IN THE HOUSE: The House of Representatives at Parliament House in Canberra. The Speaker sits in the raised chair in the middle of the U-shaped room. Picture: iStock/ SunflowerEY

POLITICS

HOW DOES IT WORK IN AUSTRALIA?

HOW much do you know about politics in Australia?

No doubt you have seen and heard politicians in the media.

Perhaps you have seen them speak at an event, or even met one.

Have you wondered what they do, or how they became involved in politics?

There are three levels of government in Australia - federal, state and local.

Federal Parliament is responsible for issues that affect all Australians, such as communications, immigration and defence.

A federal politician has been elected to the Australian Parliament, either the Senate or



the House of Representatives.

There are 151 elected members in the House of Representatives, and they represent 'electorates' from all around Australia. An electorate is a designated area in which people live.

In Tasmania, there are five federal electorates - Bass, Braddon, Clark, Franklin and Lyons.

One candidate from each of these electorates is elected to the House of Representatives.

These politicians not only represent their electorates, most are members of political parties.

The party, or coalition of parties, with the support of most members in the House of Representatives is given the opportunity to govern the country.

The current Government of Australia is a Coalition of the Liberal Party of Australia, The Nationals and the Country Liberal Party.

The Coalition currently has 76 members, the Australian Labor Party has 68, while four minor party members and three Independents (elected members who are not aligned to any party) hold the other seven seats between them.

The parties choose a leader in the Parliament, and when they are the Government that leader is the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister is the most powerful person in the Australian Parliament, and has many responsibilities.

When in the House of Representatives, the Prime Minister sits at the central table in front of the government and directly opposite the Leader of the Opposition.

But the House of Representatives, which is known as the Lower House, is just one part of the Australian Parliament.

It also consists of the Queen (represented by the Governor-General), and the Senate.

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"Education perhaps more than anything else is a passport to a better life." - Peter Underwood AC

Electorate challenge

From Page 1

The Senate is made up of 76 Senators - 12 for each state, and two Senators for each of the Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory.

There are also members of parties in the Senate.

National laws are made by debating and voting on Bills (proposed laws).

Most Bills are introduced in the House of Representatives, but must be agreed to by both houses and have the assent of the Governor-General to become law.

Australia is a constitutional monarchy.

This means the Queen is Australia's head of state (and gives her powers to the Governor-General), but those powers are limited by the Australian Constitution.

The Constitution is the set of rules by which Australia is run.

It came into effect on 1 January, 1901, and created Australia as a federation.

Before this, we were six separate colonies.

As well as recognising the Queen of England as Australia's head of state, the Constitution states members of Parliament must be elected.

This makes Australia a representative democracy.

Some of our rights as citizens are protected by the Constitution.

Another really important thing about the Constitution is it gives powers to the Parliament, the Government and the Judiciary (the High Court and other federal courts) to make and manage laws.

This is known as 'the separation of powers', and avoids a situation where one group might have too much power.

The Australian Constitution can only be changed by the Australian people through a special vote known as a 'referendum'.

Another interesting thing about the Australian Constitution is that it makes no mention of the Prime Minister.

The framers of the Constitution did not believe this was needed because Australia adopted many aspects of the British (or Westminster) system of government.

Follow this link to the Parliamentary Education Office on the Parliament of Australia website to access some other great resources, and learn more about Australia's Parliament and system of government: peo.gov.au/

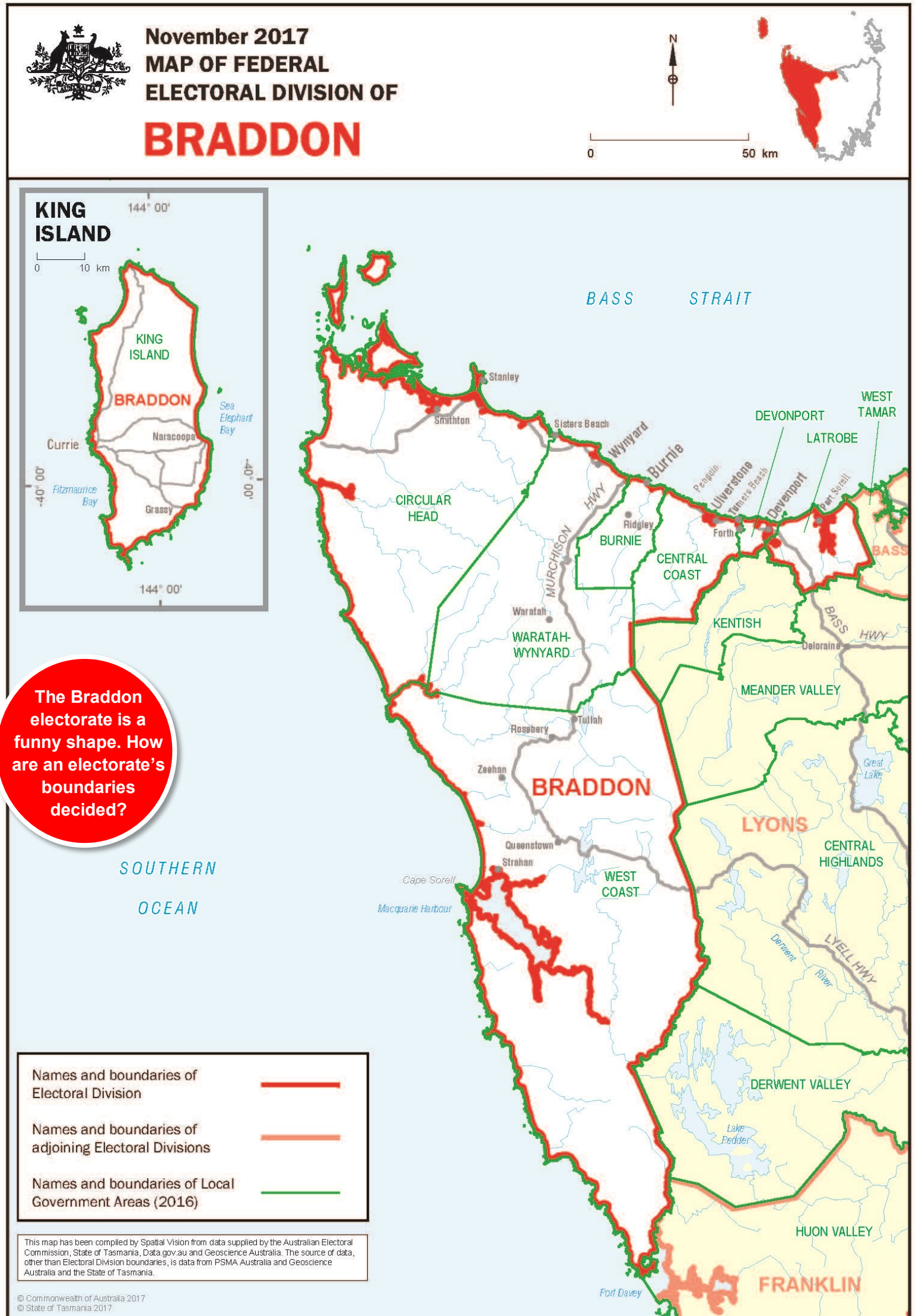
You should also be able to find answers to some of the red circle questions asked in this edition.

But let's return to electorates.

When a federal election is called, all Australian citizens aged 18-years and older are required to vote.

After an election, the House of Representatives can not last longer than three years before another election must be called, and members who wish to return must stand for re-election.

Senators generally serve for six years, but elections for half the Senate take place every three years.



There are close to the same number of voters in each federal electorate.

We have included a map of the Braddon electorate in today's edition of *The Wonder Weekly*.

As you can see, if you live on the North-West Coast of Tasmania, or the West Coast, you are in the electorate of Braddon.

Your challenge is to find out which electorate you live in, and discover any

information you can about this electorate.

For example, who is the member for your electorate in the House of Representatives?

Which cities/ towns are part of your electorate?

What do you think is important to the people who live in your electorate?

If you have online access, you could research the Australian Bureau of Statistics Electorate profiles, and

Australian Electoral Commission website: electorate.aec.gov.au/

Present your findings in a creative way. For an additional challenge, have fun making the Australian Parliament chatterbox from the template provided on page 3 of today's edition of *The Wonder Weekly*.

Children's University Tasmania members can earn stamps in their passports for these challenges, at the discretion of their school coordinator.

1. Print double sided.

2. Cut around the dotted line above.

3. Fold in half and in half again.

4. Open out, turn over so this side is face down and fold each corner into the cross in the middle +

5. Turn over and repeat.

6. Turn over so you can see the pictures.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR CHATTERBOX



7. Slide your thumb and your finger behind two of the pictures and press together so they bend around and touch.

8. Turn over and repeat with the thumb and finger for the other hand for the other two pictures.

9. All the pictures should now be at the front with centres touching. Now you are ready to use your chatterbox!