



Teacher Reference Document 3



AUSTRALIAN
CONSTITUTION
CENTRE

Unit 1: Rules and Laws in Australia today – Year 4 – Civics and Citizenship
(C & C) Strand: Laws and Citizens

Topic 4.1: The difference between rules and laws and why laws apply to everyone in our society

Respecting and changing rules and laws

Rules and laws are usually there for a reason. Sometimes the reason is not obvious. Sometimes this can make people frustrated. They might think they are being stopped from doing something for no reason at all. Sometimes they decide to break the rule or law because they don't realise what the consequence might be, such as harming others or even ourselves. For example, laws which ensure that cars drive very slowly in school zones and stop at pedestrian crossings are there to protect the safety of people who are walking. Similarly, we have to wear seat belts and bike helmets to protect ourselves in case we are in an accident.

We can all think of other examples. What about those signs that say 'do not block this door' because it is a fire exit? Sure, a fire is unlikely to happen, and maybe it is a convenient space to leave something you are going to pick up later. But if a fire happens and people couldn't get out, how would you feel? Disobeying a road sign such as 'no parking in a bus zone' might result in a person getting injured getting off their bus because it could not stop in a safe place.

Sometimes we treat rules and laws with disrespect because we only care about what is convenient for us. Adults might be in a hurry and decide that it is OK to speed in the car – but this puts the lives of others at risk. Often we need to pull ourselves up and remind ourselves that obeying rules and laws is not just about avoiding punishment. It's actually about respecting the rights of others and caring about their well-being. Laws and rules benefit us all and are an essential part of making our community function fairly for all people.

School attendance laws

It is compulsory for young Australians to attend school. You might not agree with this law, and not all countries have it, but our governments and society highly value education and learning.

The law requires you to go to school because you need to learn enough skills and knowledge to be able to get a good job and to contribute to Australia - both as a good worker and good citizen.

But sometimes circumstances change. In 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic meant that in some States, particularly in Victoria and New South Wales, schools had to be closed for a while and teaching was done online. The purpose was to prevent the virus from spreading through schools and then being brought into family homes, where it could affect the vulnerable, like elderly grandparents. School closures were often accompanied by lockdowns which prevented people from travelling outside their neighbourhood or even away from their home.

You might be able to remember how these emergency laws affected your own life. Many people were very distressed because the States often closed their borders and this meant that some families couldn't see each other for a long time. There were also restrictions on travelling into and out of Australia. But once vaccines were discovered and distributed to most of the population, the restrictions began to lift. When schools reopened many students were grateful and possibly for the first time realised the benefit of attending school in person.

The COVID-19 experience also showed us that even rules and laws we take for granted each day, such as being able to go to school, might have to be changed in an emergency.

Changing rules

Sometimes you might think that a rule or law is silly or wrong and should be changed. How should you go about that?

First, try to find out what its purpose is. Maybe there is a good reason for it and you might change your mind about it once you know it. If it's a rule at home or school you could ask your parent/s, teacher or adult in charge, in a polite and interested way, what the purpose behind the rule is. What are they trying to achieve? Once you understand the aim of the rule, you are in a better position to possibly negotiate a change that achieves the same aim, but in a way that better suits your wishes too.

Second, you could ask the adult in charge for a time to discuss the rule and how it might be altered to everyone's benefit. Offer up positive alternatives, perhaps in writing, and be prepared to compromise. Show that you are approaching the issue from a reasonable and fair position. The adult in charge may be so impressed by this approach and your presentation that they will be more flexible and willing to alter the rule.

Third, you can try to put yourself in the shoes of the other person you are hoping to persuade. Try seeing things from their perspective, and then try to think of an alternative that could better suit you both. An outcome that improves things for everyone – known as a 'win-win' solution – is usually the best outcome.

Changing laws

What about changing laws? This is harder, because a change in a law usually has to be passed by the Federal or State/Territory Parliament. (In the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory the Parliament is called an Assembly). That involves persuading politicians and political parties to support change.

First, you again need to understand the purpose of the existing law you want to change. Why was it put there? Is it achieving its purpose? Perhaps it is failing to achieve its purpose and having an unfair effect on people. This is where you need to build a case. You need to put together facts, such as examples of how the law is operating, to show people that it is unfair or causing disadvantage, rather than fulfilling its purpose. You can put together 'case studies' to show how the law has operated badly in particular circumstances. You can make positive suggestions about how the law could be changed to make it work better.



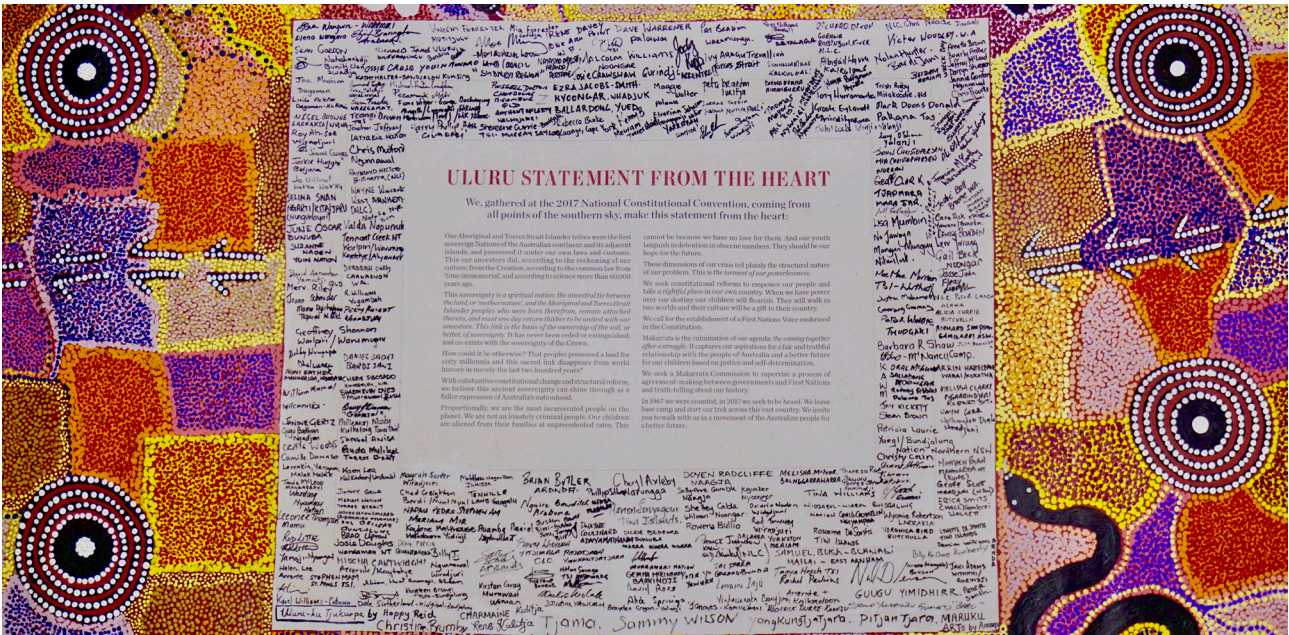
Prime Minister Albanese formed his first government in May 2022
Source: Albanese Twitter

Second you need to influence those who have the power to make the change. You can do this by contacting your local Member of Parliament and raising your concerns with them. If a parliamentary committee is inquiring into the matter, you can make a written submission to it (i.e. you can write to the committee explaining why the law needs to change). You can also write to the Minister who is in charge of the law and to the officials who apply the law, explaining how it is failing to work and needs fixing.

Third, you might like to form a community group of people who are also concerned about the law and want to change it. You can use social media or have local meetings to encourage a wider range of people to contact Members of Parliament to seek change. You can [petition](#) Parliament.

Fourth, you can protest or campaign publicly for change, as long as you follow the relevant laws. Our Constitution protects freedom of political communication, but laws can still limit protests, particularly if the restrictions are for a legitimate purpose such as protecting public safety.

Violent protests lose public support. It is more effective to be creative and clever in your protest, because simply chanting that you want something and you 'want it now' is not very persuasive. If you want to achieve change, you will be more effective if you gain respect and understanding through persuasion. The more public support you achieve, the greater the pressure on politicians to make the change you are seeking.



Uluru Statement of the Heart Source: National Museum of Australia

Fifth, you can (once you are old enough) join a political party and work for change from within a political party. Alternatively, you can join an established group, such as a charity or community group that deals with the area in which you are interested (eg an environmental group or a social justice group), and persuade it to join you in campaigning for change.

Sixth, you can become involved with national debates concerning proposals to alter the Australian Constitution through a referendum. Usually there are passionate arguments on both sides of these debates. One contemporary debate is whether Australia should remain a constitutional monarchy or become a republic.

The more voices arguing for change, the more likely it will be achieved. But to get there, it is better to persuade people, rather than demand. You need to have good reasons and facts to support you, and you need to be open to compromise and seeing the points of view of others.

On election night in May 2022 the incoming Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, committed the Government to holding a referendum, which if successful, would add an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to the Australian Constitution.

This comes after many decades of using the techniques above to persuade people to become involved, build support for the Voice and campaign to change the Constitution.

It will now be up to the Australian people, who must vote in the referendum, to decide whether to make this change. The rules for a referendum are set out in [section 128](#) of the Constitution. To pass, the constitutional change must be approved by a majority of voters across the country as well as by a majority of voters in at least four out of the six States.

Teachers and students will be able to follow the national debate about the proposed change as it evolves.



Topic 4.1: Lesson Five

Respecting and Changing Rules and Laws: What happens when people don't agree with laws?



AUSTRALIAN
CONSTITUTION
CENTRE

Time/Lesson	Assumed Prior Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none">1 hour	Students' understanding of general laws observed by themselves, family members and people they know.
Rationale	Learning Goal
To understand that laws can affect Australian citizens in different ways. As a democratic country, there are opportunities for Australian citizens to work together to change laws.	To <u>identify</u> the impact of laws on Australian citizens from multiple perspectives and <u>understand</u> that people can work together to have laws that they don't agree with changed.
Teaching Reference Document	Success Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Smartboard with access to PowerPoint to guide discussionsWhiteboard, Whiteboard markersTalking ball/talking stickResource #1The Flipside of Bike Helmet Laws https://vimeo.com/104690926Teacher Reference materials	Students can articulate how laws impact people from multiple perspectives and how to work with other people to change the law or have new laws made. Students are introduced to the Uluru Statement of the Heart and understand there will be a referendum held in 2023 on whether there should be constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
Resources	
<u>TRD 3 Respecting and Changing Rules and Laws</u> "Laws and rules benefit us all and are an essential part of making our community function fairly for all people." (However) "Sometimes you might think that a rule or law is silly or wrong and should be changed. How should you go about that?" Students study the teaching reference document before moving into exercises that demonstrates how their voices can be heard to change rules and laws	
Tuning In	
<u>Activate Prior Knowledge</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teacher revisits previous lessons for this topic by referring back to worksheets and displays. 'Thoughts' around rules, and the 'big juicy questions' they have posed about rules might be revised.Teacher explains to the students that today they are going to explore how laws affect different Australian citizens. Just as rules in our classroom or school or at home can make us frustrated, laws can also make us feel that way too.	

Teacher Instruction

- Teacher displays the law 'Everyone must wear a helmet when riding a bicycle or scooter.' (4.1. Lesson 5. Resource 1). Teacher asks students to turn to their knee-partner and discuss their thoughts and feelings about this particular law.
- Teacher may like to pose leading questions such as:
 - 'How does this law make you feel?'
 - 'How does it affect you?'
 - 'Do you know of anyone who doesn't like this law?'
 - 'Why is it a law?'
 - 'Who made this law?' (Note - each State has its own law about bicycle helmets. In NSW, for example reg 256 of the Road Rules 2014 (NSW) says that the 'rider of a bicycle must wear an approved bicycle helmet securely fitted and fastened on the rider's head...')
- Teacher explains that there are people who believe this law is VERY important and they have good reasons to support this law, however there are other people who DON'T agree with this law, and they also have very good reasons. So what happens then? Teacher shows the students the video '[The Flip Side of Bike Helmet Laws.](#)' (4.1 Lesson 5: Resource 2)
- Students and teacher reflect on the video, by identifying the two 'sides' of the argument when it comes to the law 'You must wear a helmet when riding a bicycle or scooter' using a 'T chart.' (4.1. Lesson 5: Worksheet 1).
- Teacher then asks the students to consider their point of view. Do they agree or disagree with the bicycle helmet law or are they not quite sure about it and would like more information. Teacher does this by placing these three headings on the floor in a line, and students stand on the point of view they agree with. It is important to encourage students to think for themselves about what they really believe, rather than what their peers believe. It is important to be able to express an opinion, particularly in Australia as we are a democratic nation, but it also important to be informed. (4.1. Lesson 5: Resources 3(a), 3(b), 3(c)).
- Teacher leads class discussion as students remember how the rules and laws that were changed through COVID-19 lockdowns impacted upon their lives. The students write down some of those laws and rules and how their daily home routines changed. If schools in your local area were not closed, were there any other changes to the students' lives? Written and artistic contributions can be made into a class booklet which may be of great interest to future generations of students.

Group Independent Learning

- Teacher creates a mind map with the students about Sue, answering key questions about her arguments and willingness to change bike helmet laws. (4.1. Lesson 5: Resource 4).
- Teacher asks students to refer to one of the laws they have explored in the last lesson, and think about why they might like to change it. Students work independently through 'Changing Laws' (4.1. Lesson 5: Worksheet 2a & b), Step 1, to determine the purpose of the law, who made it, who enforced it and what the punishment might be. The students will need to build their case, by thinking of three reasons, examples or pieces of evidence that support their perspective.
- Teacher steps students through Step 2, where the students will write a persuasive letter to their Member of Parliament (Federal or State/Territory). Depending on the issue the teacher will need to know the name of their electorate, the boundaries of both the State/Territory and Federal electorates and the name of the appropriate Member of Parliament). Students then work independently to use their knowledge about persuasive writing, to state their case. (4.1. Lesson 5. Worksheets 3,4, 5 & 6).
- Teacher then allows students the opportunity to share their thinking with members of their triad group, to ensure they have stated their case persuasively and clearly.
- Teacher gathers students together, and shows them how they might go about continuing their case for change, by guiding through and discussing the last 3 steps. Ideas include making petitions and gathering signatures, making signs, using the media, organising an event and debating the issue.

Contemporary Debate

Students are introduced the Uluru Statement of the Heart and investigate some of the Yes and No arguments as to whether First Nations People should be recognised in the Australian Constitution by the establishment of a Voice to the Parliament and Executive Government. Students identify different techniques used to persuade voters to vote 'Yes' or 'No'.

Wrapping It Up

- Students sit in a circle, and using a talking ball/stick, spend time answering the question 'A law I support is...' or 'A law I'd like to change is...'
- Look at the questions posed in the first lesson, and ask students if they have managed to answer any of the questions during today's lesson.

Differentiation/Enrichment

Support

Prepare your triad groups ahead of time, to ensure students who need social or academic support are paired with a team who are able to assist or guide these students. Alternatively, you could give students choice on their triad group.

Students who find it difficult to write a letter to their Member of Parliament, may benefit from creating a poster that they could send to them instead, with images and key persuasive points and ideas.

Extension

Ask students to conquer more complex laws that may be different in each state and territory, drawing on research and evidence.

Assessment Strategies

There are plenty of opportunities to draw upon HASS skills in this lesson, and this can be observed through a whole class checklist ([Teacher Resource 1](#)) or individual Assessment Rubric that is used throughout the entirety of the unit ([Teacher Resource 2](#)).



AUSTRALIAN
CONSTITUTION
CENTRE

Everyone **MUST** wear
a helmet when riding a
bicycle or scooter.





AUSTRALIAN
CONSTITUTION
CENTRE





What are the arguments?

Cool Kids Wear Lids!

It's my right to choose!

--	--





Agree

Everyone **SHOULD** wear a helmet when riding
a bicycle or scooter.





Not Sure

I'm not sure if everyone **SHOULD** wear a helmet when riding a bicycle or scooter and I would like more information





Disagree

I believe that it should be someone's choice to wear a helmet when riding a bicycle or scooter.





What was the law she wanted to change?



AUSTRALIAN
CONSTITUTION
CENTRE

Why did she want to change the law?

What happened when she didn't follow the law?

SUE

What is she doing to change the law?

Who told her that she needed to work with politicians to get the law changed?

What would the new law be, if she was able to change it?





Changing Laws

You are going to be working on changing the law about ____ Let's work through the steps together.

1. Understand the purpose of the law, and have evidence and examples of how this law is operating. Build a Case.

Reason for the law	Law	What is the problem?	Examples and evidence	How could the law be improved?

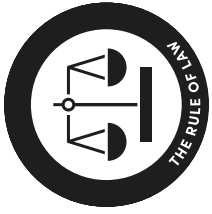




Three key arguments or evidence

-
-
-

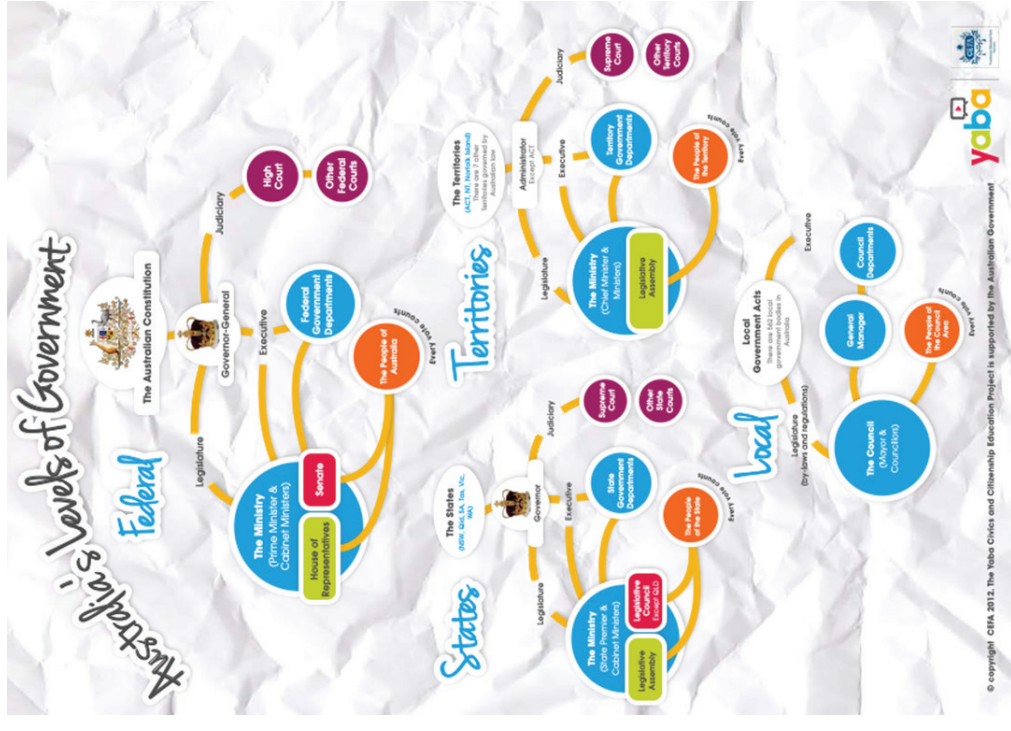




Changing Laws

2. You need to influence those who have the power to make a change. Let's contact our local Member of Parliament to raise our concerns by writing a persuasive letter that outlines your point of view, three main reasons (with examples or evidence) and a good strong conclusion

https://www.apf.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Guidelines_for_Contacting_Senators_and_Members





AUSTRALIAN
CONSTITUTION
CENTRE

Changing Laws

3. You can form a community group of people who are also concerned about the law and want to change it. You can use media, social media or you can petition parliament.

<https://www.aph.gov.au/e-petitions>





AUSTRALIAN
CONSTITUTION
CENTRE

Changing Laws

4. You can campaign publicly for change in a peaceful and respectful way. This

can be done by:

- Making signs
- Talking with people you know and others about the law you would like to change
- Contacting newspapers and other media outlets to gain a bigger audience
- Organising an event where you can gather more attention for your case.





AUSTRALIAN
CONSTITUTION
CENTRE

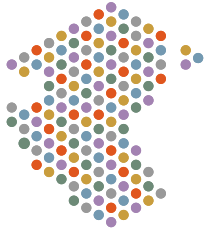
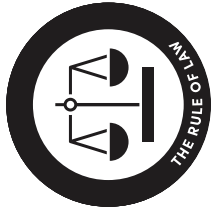
Changing Laws

5. When you are old enough, you can join a political party and work for change within that party. Or you can join a charity or community group through which people can work together towards change.

Once you are 18 you will vote in elections for candidates who may propose new laws in their election campaign.

Finally, you can lobby your local Member now if you want to change a law that affects you, your family, your school or your local community.

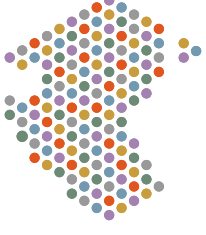




**AUSTRALIAN
CONSTITUTION
CENTRE**

HASS Skills Observations

Name of Student	Interact with others with respect to shared points of view (ACHASSI080 - Scootle)	Record, sort and represent data and the location of places and their characteristics in different formats, including simple graphs, tables and maps, using discipline-appropriate conventions (ACHASSI075 - Scootle)	Interpret data and information displayed in different formats, to identify and describe distributions and simple patterns (ACHASSI078 - Scootle)	Draw simple conclusions based on analysis of information and data (ACHASSI079 - Scootle)	Present ideas, findings and conclusions in texts and modes that incorporate digital and non-digital representations and discipline-specific terms (ACHASSI082 - Scootle)



HASS Skills Rubric

	A	B	C	D	E
Questioning	Pose questions to investigate people, events, places and issues (ACHASSI073 - Scootle)				
Researching	Locate and collect information and data from different sources, including observations (ACHASSI074 - Scootle) Record, sort and represent data and the location of places and their characteristics in different formats, including simple graphs, tables and maps, using discipline-appropriate conventions (ACHASSI075 - Scootle) Sequence information about people's lives and events (ACHASSI076 - Scootle)				
Analyzing	Examine information to identify different points of view and distinguish facts from opinions (ACHASSI077 - Scootle) Interpret data and information displayed in different formats, to identify and describe distributions and simple patterns (ACHASSI078 - Scootle)				
Evaluating and Reflecting	Draw simple conclusions based on analysis of information and data (ACHASSI079 - Scootle) Interact with others with respect to share points of view (ACHASSI080 - Scootle) Reflect on learning to propose actions in response to an issue or challenge and consider possible effects of proposed actions (ACHASSI081 - Scootle)				
Communicating	Present ideas, findings and conclusions in texts and modes that incorporate digital and non-digital representations and discipline-specific terms (ACHASSI082 - Scootle)				