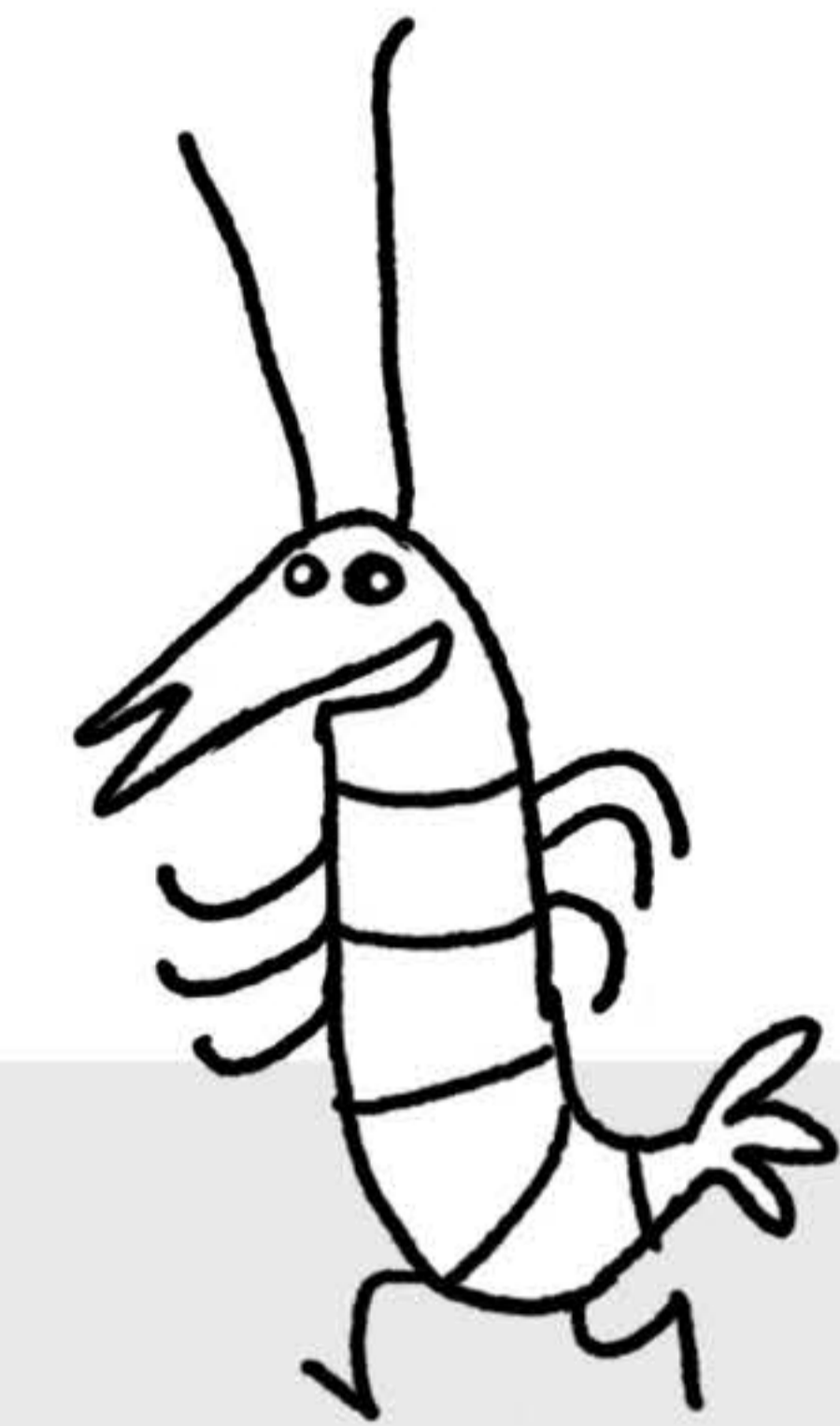




# CONTENTS

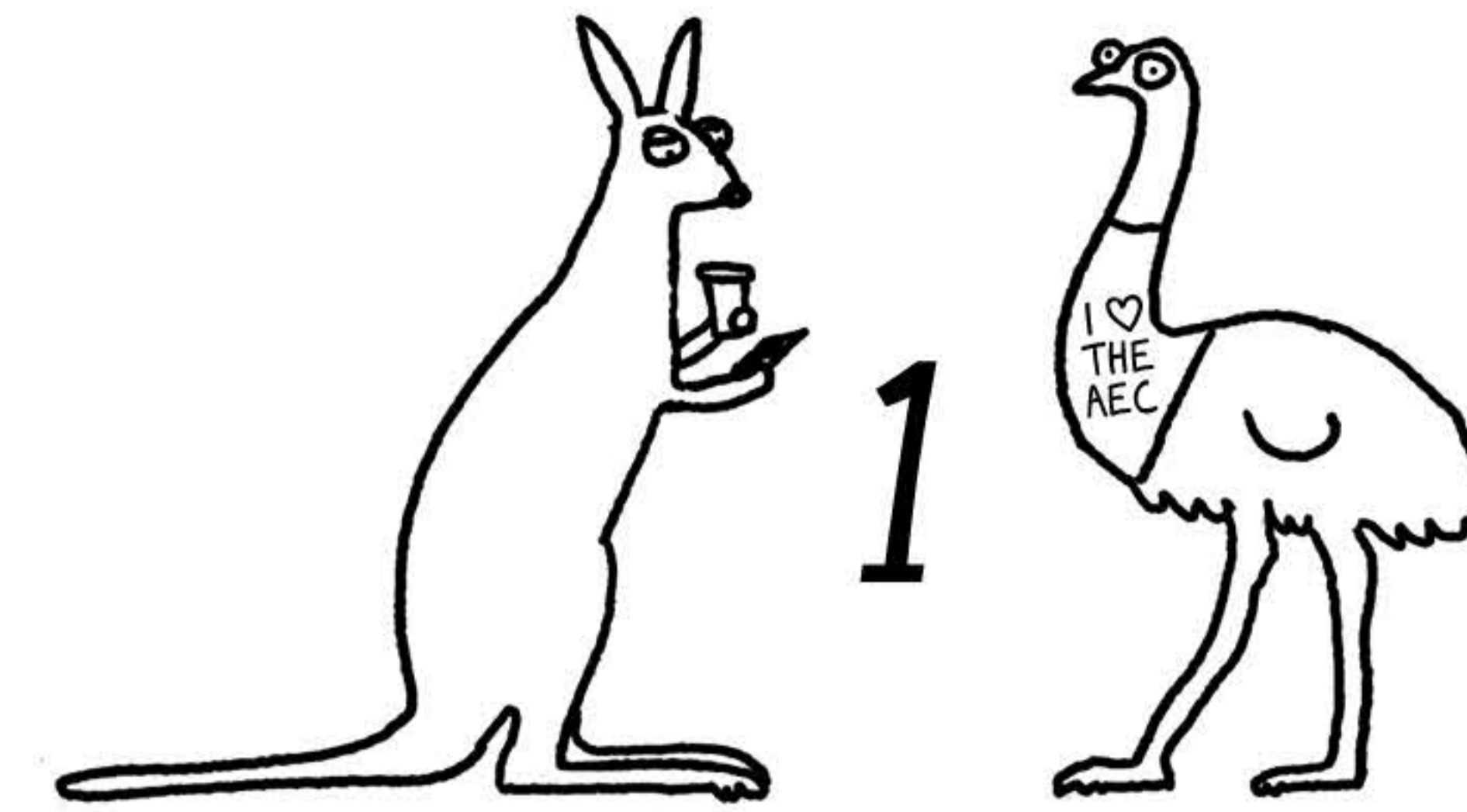


- An Introductory Note from Shawn** ..... 1
- Chapter 1**
- Welcome to Parliament House ..... 5
- Chapter 2**
- How Did We Get Here? ..... 29
- Chapter 3**
- The Constitution ..... 51
- Chapter 4**
- Why Do We Vote? ..... 81
- Chapter 5**
- Ministers and Departments ..... 107
- Chapter 6**
- The Press and Parliament House ..... 129



- Chapter 7**
- Making Laws ..... 161
- A Final Word from Shawn** ..... 203
- Glossary** ..... 207
- What to Spot in Parliament House** ..... 215
- Timeline of Australian Prime Ministers** ..... 219
- Sources** ..... 221
- Further Reading** ..... 223
- Acknowledgements** ..... 225
- About the Creators** ..... 227
- Index** ..... 230

*Any words in bold with an asterisk have been added as a definition in the glossary at the back of the book. Check it out!*



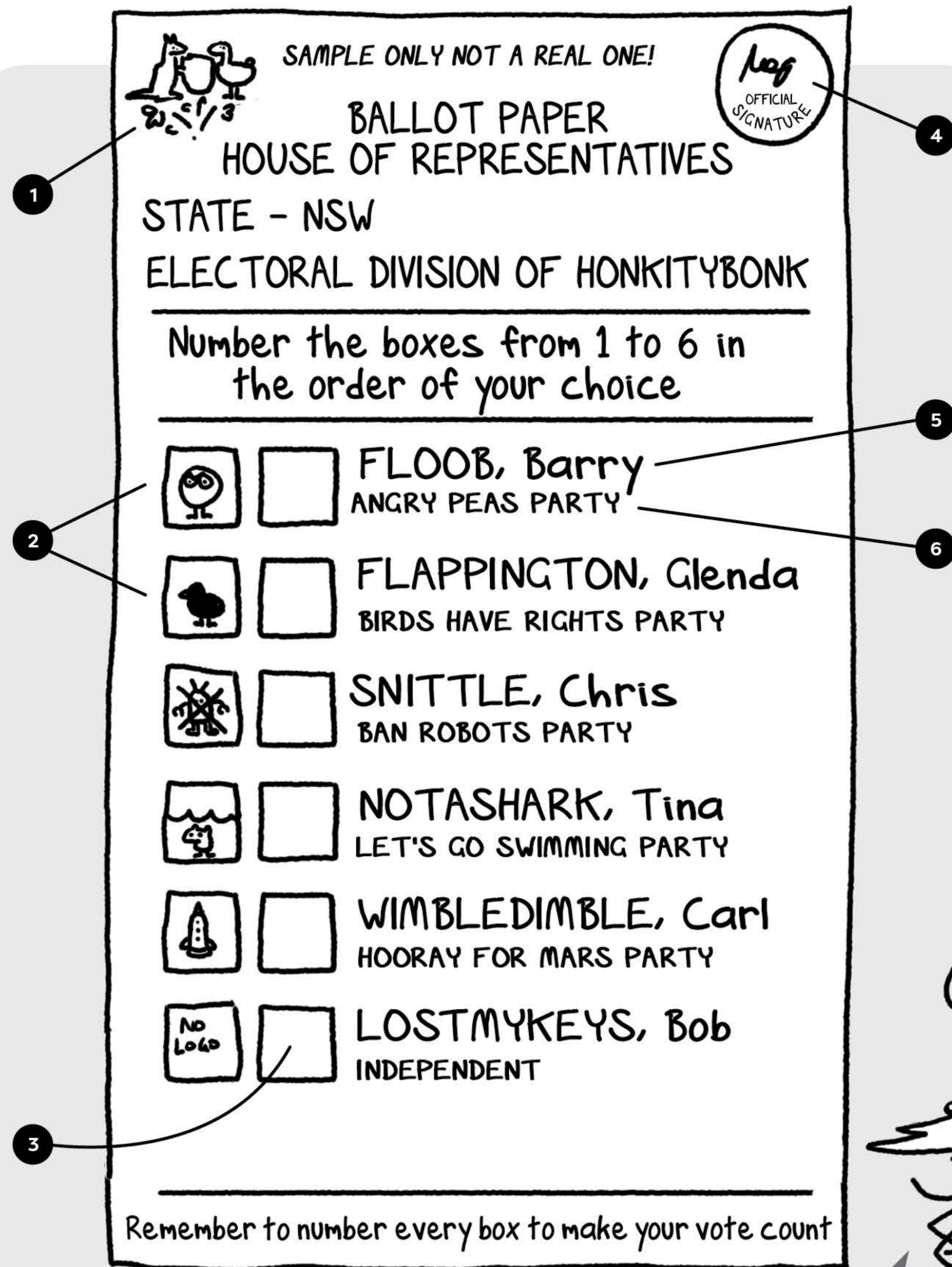
# WELCOME TO PARLIAMENT HOUSE

**A**ustralia's government is a democracy. And the whole idea of democracy is that big groups of people – in order to make things easier – elect a small group of representatives to get together and make decisions on behalf of everyone else. We call that group of representatives our Parliament.

Our Parliament is made up of two 'Houses'. They're called the **House of Representatives\*** (or the Lower House), and the

*A parliament with only one chamber is called a unicameral parliament,\* which makes it sound more like a mythical horse than it really is.*

**Senate\*** (or the Upper House). This makes the Australian Parliament a **bicameral parliament.\*** Actually, the 'Houses' are just big grand rooms, both found inside the enormous flag-topped building that we call 'Parliament House'.



### Key

- 1 Coat of Arms
- 2 Party logos
- 3 Boxes to put your numbers in
- 4 Signature of electoral officer
- 5 Candidate surname (and given names)
- 6 Party name

*House of Representatives ballots are always GREEN. But this book is black-and-white, so you will just have to imagine it!*

The green House of Representatives voting paper you get handed when you walk into the voting station has a list of names with boxes next to them. They are the names of the candidates – that’s what we call the people who have put their hand up to be the member for the electorate you live in. In the Australian system of voting, which is called **‘preferential voting’**, you have to put a number in every box, ranking the candidates in your order of preference. So if there are six candidates, you put a ‘1’ next to the person you like the most, a ‘2’ next to the person you like second-best, all the way through to number 6, which is what you put next to the name of the person you think is absolutely the biggest wally of all the options presented.

### Preferential Voting

Of all the things that make the Australian voting system unusual, this is the biggie – we have preferential voting. We’re the only nation in the world to use it so enthusiastically and thoroughly as a national standard. In Britain, for instance, they use a much simpler system called ‘First past the post’. It’s a bit misleading because there isn’t actually a post! If you have six candidates in a ‘first past the post’ system, all it means is that each voter votes for just one candidate, and the candidate with the highest number of votes wins.

# SEPARATION OF POWERS

## THE PARLIAMENT



The King, who is represented by

(NOT ACTUAL PICTURE OF GOVERNOR-GENERAL)



the Governor-General



The Senate



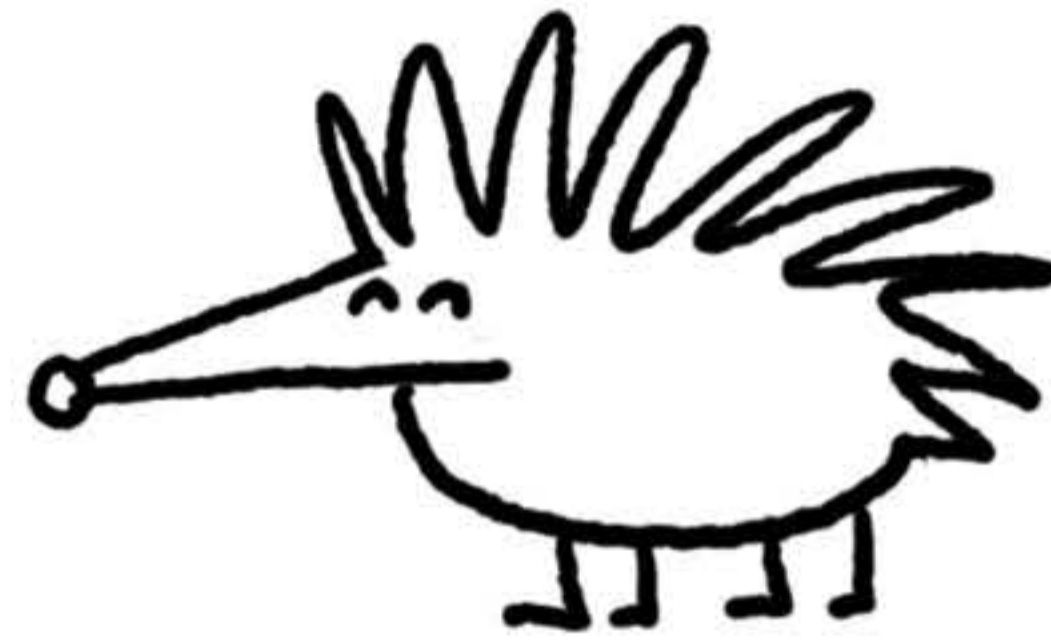
The House of Representatives

## THE EXECUTIVE

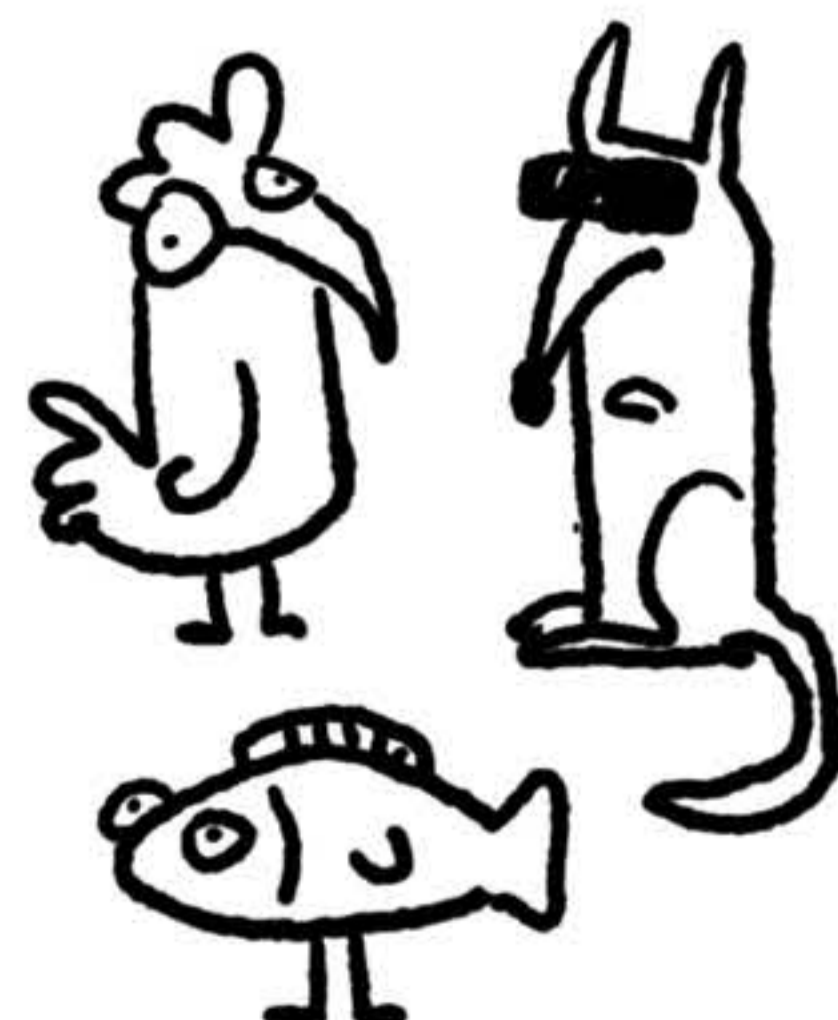


The King (again), represented by the Governor-General

NO ECHIDNA HAS EVER BEEN GOVERNOR-GENERAL BUT I LIKE THIS DRAWING



The Prime Minister



Ministers

## THE JUDICIARY

The High Court of Australia



JUDGE

Federal Courts



OTHER JUDGES

the power to block or cancel laws that go beyond the powers of the Parliament.

All in all, the system is supposed to ensure that nobody ever gets so much power that they become a **dictator**.\*

*If you think this is a confusing system, then pity the United States of America, where the Senate and the Congress and the President all have separate and sometimes conflicting powers! That can get extremely messy.*

# SHOW ME THE MONEY

Now we have a rough idea of how the Commonwealth Government is organised. But who pays for all this, I hear you ask?

It's a very good question.

Once a year, sometime in May, you might notice politicians out and about arguing loudly about something called the **Federal Budget**. Is it a good Budget? Is it a horror Budget?

*Sometimes younger kids get confused and think that there is some big argument going on about a budgie. But you won't ever make that mistake, my friend.*