

The Queen of Australia

Following a custom that Australia's lowest denomination banknote should depict our Monarch, the polymer five dollar bill issued from 1992 featured a portrait of Queen Elizabeth II. Although her role as Sovereign began in 1952, her life-long work of public service began in 1940 when (at the age of only fourteen) she made a wartime radio broadcast to encourage anxious and displaced children. Then on her 21st birthday she again spoke by radio and stated: *I declare before you all, that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service*.

In 1953 she was crowned in a Christian service that featured the same ceremony as applied during the previous 1,000 years. In that Coronation service, the Queen promised to apply *Law and Justice, in Mercy*. She was the first monarch to have a title of Australian sovereignty - *by the grace of God Queen of Australia*.

The Sovereign's principal ministry in Australia is to encourage gracious servant-leadership among all people and leaders. This involves setting an example of quiet and Godly governance, and providing a link to the Coronation, as the Monarch (on advice) appoints the vice-regal representatives: a Governor-General, and the State Governors. Serving at the pleasure of the Sovereign whom they represent, each Vice-Regal officer may exercise the traditional privileges of the Crown: *the right to be consulted, the right to encourage, the right to warn*.

While all who pledge to serve the Crown receive its ministry obligation, everyone can resolve to provide gracious community service, as promised by Her Majesty shortly after the 1999 republican referendum: *I shall continue faithfully to serve as Queen of Australia under the Constitution to the very best of my ability ....* The five dollar note may remind Australians about that servant-leadership ideal.



The Commonwealth Parliament

The five dollar bill depicts the Permanent Parliament House on Capital Hill. After Federation in 1901, the Parliament operated in Melbourne until 1927, when it moved to Canberra. There a provisional Parliament House was utilised, until the Permanent Parliament House was opened by Queen Elizabeth II in 1988. Recognising Australia's aboriginal heritage, the design featured two boomerangs.

Daily parliamentary proceedings since 1901 have included the Lord's Prayer, and the following prayer (read in the lower house, with similar words used in the Senate):

> *Almighty God, we humbly beseech Thee to vouchsafe Thy blessing upon this Parliament. Direct and prosper our deliberations to the advancement of Thy glory, and the true welfare of the people of Australia.*

By the centenary of Federation (in 2001) Australia had become the world's most democratic nation, as it alone applied compulsory voting - preferentially for the House of Representatives (the lower house), and proportionally for the Senate.

Compulsory voting helps to enlarge the participation of eligible electors, all of whom are important and valuable within the democratic process.

Preferential voting to elect the House of Representatives provides a voice to the majority within each local *federal electorate* or *division*, as those voters choose their preferred candidate to serve as the local federal Member of Parliament.

Proportional voting allocates Senate seats to majority and significant minority voices in proportion to their support by the voters. Further, each State has the same number of Senators, so Parliament cannot be ruled by the more populated States.