

Australian Law Enforcement

In Australia, no one is above the law and all are subject to the law. This is called the rule of law.



For the rule of law to be effective, it requires the law of the land to be known and followed by all citizens. An important component of maintaining Australia's justice system is law enforcement, which ensures that everyone follows the law.

Federal, state, and territory law enforcement services protect the community by preserving the peace, upholding the law, develop and run programs in crime prevention, aid in emergencies, and manage emergency incidents.

Law enforcement agencies are subject and accountable to the law and have a responsibility to enforce *legislation*, which is passed through the different levels of governance in Australian society. Their origins began with the arrival of convicts on the First Fleet from England, back in 1788. And whilst the new settlement began as a penal colony, the evolution of the colony into a free society began developing as early as two weeks, when legal processes were put into effect to resolve any disputes and grievances that had arisen amongst the new inhabitants, including convicts.

[Australia's First Cops Were All Criminals](#)

Today, there are three main levels of law enforcement available in Australia which serves to protect citizens. They are:

Federal
State/Territory
Local

In addition to these levels, there are several other agencies that have powers to enforce Australian law in specific areas. Some examples include:

- Australian Border Force - customs and immigration
- Australian Defence Force – military police
- Australian Securities and Intelligence Organisation – national security

Each level has its own requirements and expectations, which all citizens in society are expected to know and follow. Citizens who do not abide by the law face consequences and penalties.



AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

The main law enforcement agency is the *Australian Federal Police (AFP)*. Its Headquarters is located at the *Edmund Barton Building* in the nation's capital, Canberra.

This agency was founded by the Australian Parliament in October 1979 and its *jurisdiction* covers all matters of national interests throughout Australia, particularly regarding criminal law in relation to crimes against the Commonwealth.

Prior to this, there were two main agencies of law enforcement in Australia; the *Commonwealth Police* (formed in 1917) and *Australian Capital Territory Police* which operated only in the ACT.

The AFP provide many services across a wide range of fields, including investigation services for the Australian government and building positive relationships through community engagement.

Its criminal investigation responsibilities can include:

- Child protection
- Cyber crime
- Drug crime
- Family law



- Airport Operations
- Fighting terrorism and
- Investigating counterfeit crimes

In a global environment, it is important and expected that all levels of law enforcement cooperate with each other in sharing information, including beyond the Australian border at an international level. To do this, the AFP has officers stationed in other countries working with other law enforcement agencies overseas. Criminals have become increasingly more mobile in travelling between borders, and investigations are often stretched across numerous jurisdictions. Increasing advances in technology has dramatically improved investigative capabilities to enable sharing of information between agencies across a state, federal, and international level. It is now more difficult for criminal activity to go unnoticed, which results in higher arrest and conviction rates.

Sharing information with other law enforcement agencies around the world is a vital improvement in protecting global citizens by making it harder for criminals to escape their crimes.

STATE AND TERRITORY POLICE



All state and territory police agencies are responsible for managing and enforcing laws regarding community safety and protection. This involves investigating and preventing crime, enforcing road and traffic rules, preserving the peace, dealing with missing persons reports, assisting in personal emergencies, and managing and coordinating emergency incidents.

The following images show different divisions Australian law enforcement operate under as federal, state and territory police carry out their roles and responsibilities. In the space provided, explain how and where each group perform their day to day duties in upholding the law as they serve the Australian public:









Each law enforcement organisation has their own badge which represents their agency. This is the badge for the AFP.

Can you find all the state and territory badges that are related to law enforcement organisations?



LOCAL GOVERNMENT LAWS

Local councils and municipalities have the power to pass and enforce local laws which regulate matters in cities and towns. These laws are called *by-laws*.



By-laws are secondary laws made by a *non-sovereign body*, such as a council, which has the power to regulate itself as it responds to issues and community needs. Local laws cannot duplicate or contradict a federal or state law.

Local laws are designed to make sure that the actions of an individual or group do not adversely affect the rest of the community, and only apply within the local area that council manages. Once a local law is passed, it has a 10-year life, unless it becomes *obsolete* or it needs to be renewed to remain *valid*. This ensures that local laws remain current and suitable to the purpose for which they were originally made.

Investigate what *by-laws* these two pictures represent.

Write a brief explanation to demonstrate your understanding of why these *by-laws* are important in your local community.



For more information, go to: <http://www.peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/how-parliament-works/three-levels-of-government/three-levels-of-government-governing-australia/>



TASK 1

Complete this table by inserting the statements listed below into the right column:

Correct	Incorrect

- Police run red lights because they're late for a dental appointment
- Police officers can break the law because they are the law
- Police officers provide aid in emergencies
- Police can run red lights if they are responding to an emergency
- Police help to enforce the laws
- Police officers are also subject to the laws and can be charged if they break the law
- Police only respond to emergencies on weekends
- The police make the law

TASK 2

A motto is a short sentence or phrase that captures the beliefs or ideals of an individual, family, or organisation. For law enforcement, mottos are centred around upholding the rule of law. For example, the universal motto for all police officers around the world is

To Protect and Serve

Did you know..... that each Australian law enforcement agency, both federal and state have their own motto to aim the purpose of their work?

Draw a line to match the following mottos with the correct law enforcement agency:

<i>Punishment follows closely upon the heels of crime</i>
<i>Uphold the Right</i>
<i>With honour we serve</i>
<i>Keeping SA safe</i>
<i>If Necessary</i>
<i>To serve and protect</i>
<i>Fight crime together and win</i>

Queensland Police Service

Victorian Police

South Australia

Tasmania Police

Australian Federal Police

NSW Police

Northern Territory



TASK 3

The Dog Poo Fairy

Visit this website site and read the article about the dog poo fairy:

<https://mosman.nsw.gov.au/residents/Pets/dog-poo-fairy>

Why do you think a Sydney Council chose to send their message in this way?

Create a poster that can help deliver this message in and around your own local community. Your goal is to help educate citizens into doing the right thing when it comes to responsible pet ownership.



ANSWERS

TASK 1

Correct	Incorrect
Police officers provide aid in emergencies	Police only respond to emergencies on weekends
Police can run red lights if they are responding to an emergency	Police run red lights because they're late for a dental appointment
Police help to enforce the laws	The police make the law
Police officers are also subject to the laws and can be charged if they break the law	Police officers can break the law because they are the law

TASK 2 ANSWERS

<i>Punishment follows closely upon the heels of crime</i>	<i>NSW Police</i>
<i>Uphold the Right</i>	<i>Victorian Police</i>
<i>With honour we serve</i>	<i>Queensland Police service</i>
<i>Keeping SA safe</i>	<i>South Australian Police</i>
<i>If Necessary</i>	<i>Tasmania Police</i>
<i>To serve and protect</i>	<i>Northern Territory Police</i>
<i>Fight crime together and win</i>	<i>Australian Federal Police</i>

