

State government

A **state government** or **provincial government** is the government of a country subdivision in a federal form of government, which shares political power with the federal or national government. A state government may have some level of political autonomy, or be subject to the direct control of the federal government. This relationship may be defined by constitution.

The reference to "state" denotes country subdivisions which are officially or widely known as "states", and should not be confused with a "sovereign state". Provinces are usually divisions of unitary states. Their governments, which are also *provincial governments*, are not the subject of this article.

The United States and Australia are the main examples of federal systems in which the term "state" is used for the subnational components of the federation. In addition, the Canadian provinces fulfil a similar role. The term for subnational units in non-English-speaking federal countries may also often be translated as "state", e.g. States of Germany (German *Länder*).

Contents

Australia

Government structure

India

Nigeria

Pakistan

South Africa

United States

See also

References

Australia

The Commonwealth of Australia is a federal nation with six states (and two mainland territories). Section 51 of the Australian Constitution sets out the division of legislative power between the states and the Commonwealth (federal) government. The Commonwealth government is given a variety of legislative powers, including control of foreign policy, taxation (although this cannot discriminate between states or parts of states), and regulation of interstate commerce and corporations.^[1] Since the original ratification of the constitution, the High Court of Australia has settled a number of disputes concerning the extent of the Commonwealth's legislative powers, some of which have been controversial and extensively criticised; these included a dispute in 1982 over whether the Commonwealth was entitled to designate land for national heritage purposes under United Nations agreements,^[2] as well as numerous disputes over the extent of the Commonwealth's power over trade union and industrial relations legislation.^[3]

One difference between the Australian and United States models of federalism is that, in Australia, the Commonwealth Parliament has explicit constitutional power over marriage legislation; this has been a focal point for recent controversies over same-sex marriage.^[4]

Government structure

Each state of Australia has a Governor, who represents the Queen of Australia (currently Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom) and performs the ceremonial duties of a head of state. Every state also has a parliament; most states have a bicameral parliament, except for Queensland, where the upper chamber (the Legislative Council) was abolished in 1922!^[5] Unlike their United States counterparts, Australian states have a Westminster system of parliamentary government; the head of government, known in each state as a Premier, is drawn from the state parliament.

India

In India, the state governments are the level of government below the central government. India is a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic with a Parliamentary system of government. The Republic is governed in terms of the Constitution. Sovereignty is shared between the centre and the state government, but the central government is given greater powers. The President is the constitutional head of Executive of the Union. Real executive power vests in a Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister as head of government. The State resembles the federal system. In the states, the Governor is the head of Executive, but real executive power vests with the Chief Minister who heads the Council of Ministers. The judicial setup of the country is headed by the Chief justice, who presides over one of the largest judicial apparatus dispensing criminal, civil and all other forms of litigation. The government head of its legal wing is the Attorney General of India. The Prime minister is after the Governor General.

Nigeria

In Nigeria, States are constituent political entities, which shares sovereignty with the Federal Government of Nigeria. In the Nigerian Constitution all powers not granted to the States are reserved to the Federal Government.

Pakistan

In Pakistan, the provincial governments are the level of government below the federal government. Pakistan is a Sovereign Islamic Republic and a unitary Parliamentary Multi-party system form of a National Government

South Africa

South Africa is divided into nine provinces which have their own elected governments. Chapter Six of the Constitution of South Africa describes the division of power between the national government and the provincial governments, listing those "functional areas" of government that are exclusively reserved to the provincial governments and those where both levels of government have concurrent powers; the remaining areas not listed are reserved to the national government. In areas where both levels have concurrent powers there is a complex set of rules in the event of a conflict between national and provincial legislation. Generally in such a case the provincial legislation prevails, but national legislation may prescribe standards and frameworks for provinces to follow, and may prevent provinces from adversely affecting national interests or the interests of other provinces. The functional areas in which the provincial governments have powers include agriculture, arts and culture, primary and secondary education, the environment and tourism, health, housing, roads and transport, and social welfare.

The provincial governments are structured according to a parliamentary system in which the executive is dependent on and accountable to the legislature. The unicameral provincial legislature is elected by party-list proportional representation, and the legislature in turn elects one of its members as Premier to head the executive. The Premier appoints an Executive Council (a cabinet), consisting of members of the legislature, to administer the various departments of the provincial administration.

United States

Under the 10th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, all governmental powers not granted to the Federal government of the United States nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively or to the people.

See also

- [State \(sub-national\)](#)
- [Subnational entity](#)
- [List of U.S. state legislatures](#)

References

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 5. The Legislative Council of Queensland(<http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/view/historical/historical.asp?area=council&LIndex=6&SubArea=presidents>) Queensland Parliament website
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