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Five Things to Know about the Australian Constitution

Have you ever wanted to know:

- Who really had the power to commit Australia's troops to Iraq?
- How the government can detain asylum seekers without trial?
- Who would be in charge in a national emergency?
- Why the Senate would be weakened if the double dissolution provisions were removed?
- Whether it would be unconstitutional to ban flag burning?

In this excellent new book, Helen Irving delves into the mystery that is the Australian Constitution by discussing the major national debates of recent years. Many people want to understand and take part in the debate about constitutional issues but they face a significant hurdle: the Constitution is almost impenetrable. In many of its sections, it does not mean what it says, nor does it say what it means. There are many myths in circulation about what the Constitution says and as many assumptions about what it does. Helen Irving, one of this country's foremost constitutional experts, shows where the mystery lies, putting various constitutional confusions to rest, and inviting a general audience into an understanding of the issues that were once reserved for experts.

Helen Irving is one of this country's pre-eminent commentators on constitutional matters. She is the author and editor of several books including *To Constitute a Nation*; *The Centenary Companion to Australian Federation*; *Unity and Diversity: A National Conversation* and, with Stuart Macintyre, *No Ordinary Act: J. A. La Nauze on Federation and the Constitution*. She is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Law at the University of Sydney, where she teaches constitutional law and theory.

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