Conventions are fundamental to the constitutional systems of parliamentary democracies. Unlike the United States, which adopted a republican form of government – with a full separation of powers – and codified constitutional structures and limitations for executive and legislative institutions and actors, the United Kingdom and subsequently Canada, Australia and New Zealand have relied on conventions to perform similar functions. The rise of new political actors has disrupted the stability of the two-party system, and in seeking power the new players are challenging existing practices. Conventions that govern constitutional arrangements in the United Kingdom and New Zealand, and the executive in Canada and Australia, are changing to accommodate these and other challenges of modern governance. In Westminster democracies, constitutional conventions provide the rules for forming government; they precede law and make law-making possible. This prior and more fundamental realm of government formation and law-making is shaped and structured by conventions.

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CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTIONS IN WESTMINSTER SYSTEMS

Controversies, Changes and Challenges

Edited by
BRIAN GALLIGAN
and
SCOTT BRENTON
## CONTENTS

*Notes on contributors* vii
*Acknowledgements* xii

**Introduction** 1

1 **Constitutional conventions** 8  
*BRIAN GALLIGAN AND SCOTT BRENTON*

2 **Law and convention** 24  
*NICHOLAS ARONEY*

3 **Executive conventions** 51  
*BRIAN GALLIGAN*

4 **Cabinet government** 72  
*PATRICK WELLER*

5 **Caretaker conventions** 91  
*JENNIFER MENZIES AND ANNE TIERNAN*

6 **Minority and multi-party government** 116  
*SCOTT BRENTON*

7 **Parliament** 137  
*J. R. NETHERCOTE*

8 **Upper houses** 157  
*CAMPBELL SHARMAN*

9 **The United Kingdom** 173  
*ROBERT HAZELL*

10 **Canada** 189  
*ANDREW C. BANFIELD*
# CONTENTS

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Australia 204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nicholas Barry and Narelle Miragliotta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>New Zealand 217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grant Duncan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Codifying conventions 233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peter H. Russell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Constitutional reform 249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Andrew Blick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusion 261</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Index* 266
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