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978-1-107-10024-4 - Constitutional Conventions in Westminster Systems: Controversies, Changes and Challenges

Edited by Brian Galligan and Scott Brenton

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CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTIONS IN WESTMINSTER SYSTEMS

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.

BRIAN GALLIGAN is a professor of political science at the University of Melbourne. He is the author or co-author of eight books on Australian politics and political economy, including *Beyond the Protective State* (1992), *A Federal Republic* (1995), *Citizens without Rights* (1997) and *Australians and Globalisation* (2001). He is the joint author of *Australian Citizenship* (2004) and *Becoming Australian* (2014) and co-editor of *The Oxford Companion to Australian Politics* (2007) and *Human Rights in Asia* (2011).

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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107100244

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First published 2015

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Constitutional conventions in Westminster systems : controversies, changes and challenges / edited by Brian Galligan, Scott Brenton.

pages cm

ISBN 978-1-107-10024-4 (Hardback)

1. Constitutional history--Australia. 2. Constitutional history--Canada.
 3. Constitutional history--Great Britain. 4. Constitutional history--New Zealand.
- I. Galligan, Brian, 1945- editor. II. Brenton, Scott, editor.

K3161.C665 2015

342.02'92--dc23 2015005491

ISBN 978-1-107-10024-4 Hardback

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the generous financial support provided by the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia and the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Melbourne. Scott Brenton was also supported by a University of Melbourne Early Career Researcher grant.

We are grateful to our contributors and workshop participants as these ideas and debates have developed over a number of years and through numerous productive exchanges. Our tireless Research Assistant, Angela Merriam, has been invaluable in the final stages. Finally, the editors and assistants at Cambridge University Press have been great to work with.