CRIMINAL LAW JOURNAL

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The High Court cases on s 80 of the <i>Constitution</i> confirm that the Commonwealth Parliament is empowered to determine whether trial by jury will apply to Commonwealth offences. However, several High Court judges have argued that this power is limited by reference to the seriousness of an offence. This has triggered a debate about whether s 80 allows Parliament to unconditionally determine whether an offence will be tried by jury. Because the s 80 debate focuses on the High Court's interpretations of s 80, it ignores any consideration of the limits that Parliament has imposed upon itself when it has ascribed trial by jury to Commonwealth offences. By investigating the jury trial benchmark limits that Parliament has an unlimited power to deny a defendant the right to a trial by jury. It concludes that the federal courts have an important role to play in protecting the	

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