

Civics and Citizenship Level 9

Chapter 3 — resilience, cohesion and media

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Taking part in civic life: individuals, groups and global citizenship

Curriculum trace — *Knowledge and Understanding · Citizenship, diversity and identity · VC2HC10K09.*

Elaborations this section draws on (ids in VCAA export order): - VC2HC10K09.E01 -

VC2HC10K09.E02 - VC2HC10K09.E03 - VC2HC10K09.E04

Key ideas

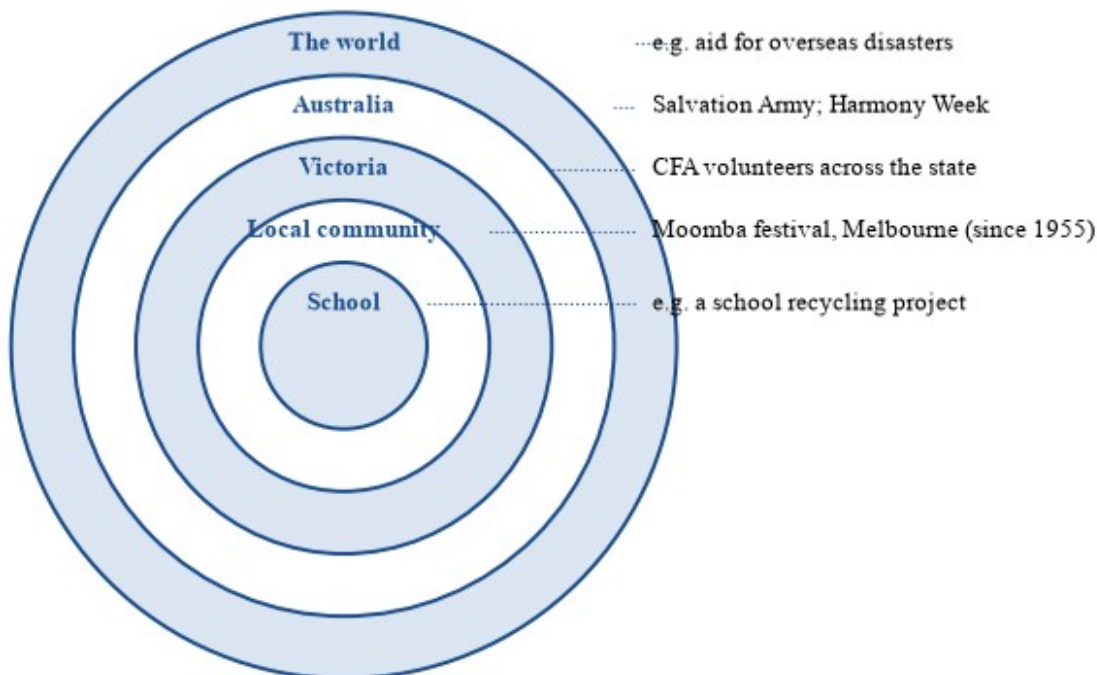
What is civic life? In this section, *civic life* means the shared life of a community that people take part in as members of it — not just as customers or viewers, but as people who act. It runs from the school and the street to the whole world, and it is carried by individuals, by organised groups (clubs, faith groups, charities, unions, companies) and by governments. Two terms in the curriculum title need defining before they can be used:

Defined term — *diaspora*. The Victorian Curriculum uses the word *diaspora* but does not define it. This section treats it as: *people living outside the country their community comes from, who keep active ties with that country and its culture*. Other definitions exist and are not interchangeable with this one.

Defined term — *global citizenship*. The curriculum also uses *global citizenship* without defining it. The term is contested: there is no global government, so nobody can be a legal citizen of the world the way they are a citizen of Australia. This section therefore treats global citizenship as: *acting as a member of a wider community than your own country — making choices and taking part in ways that consider people beyond Australia's borders, alongside your Australian citizenship*. Every question in this section is answerable on that definition alone.

1. Civic life has scales, and participation happens at all of them

A single person can act at several scales at once. Figure 1 shows the five scales this section uses, with one Australian example on each ring.



Participation happens at every scale — the same person can act at all five.

Concentric rings showing the five scales of civic life — school, local community, Victoria, Australia and the world — with an Australian example beside each ring

Figure 1 — The scales of civic life. The examples on the right are real ones where named; where marked “e.g.” they are patterns you could copy.

Participation is not only voting. Voting is one civic act; this section is about the rest. Figure 2 lines up five real Australian cases.

Five real cases of participation in Australian civic life

Group or event	What they do	Scale	How people take part
Country Fire Authority (CFA)	Protects lives and property; responds to emergencies and helps communities prepare	Victoria	Tens of thousands of volunteers work in person
Salvation Army	Food and housing help, employment support, aged care (active in Australia since 1880)	National	Volunteering, donating, and paid service
BlazeAid	Runs volunteer camps that clear debris and rebuild fences after bushfires, floods and cyclones	National	Volunteers join camps and work in person
Moomba festival	Free community festival held in Melbourne since 1955; Australia's largest free community festival	Local	Attending, performing, helping run events
Harmony Week	National week of events held on and around 21 March (since 1999; expanded in 2019)	National	Schools and community groups host events

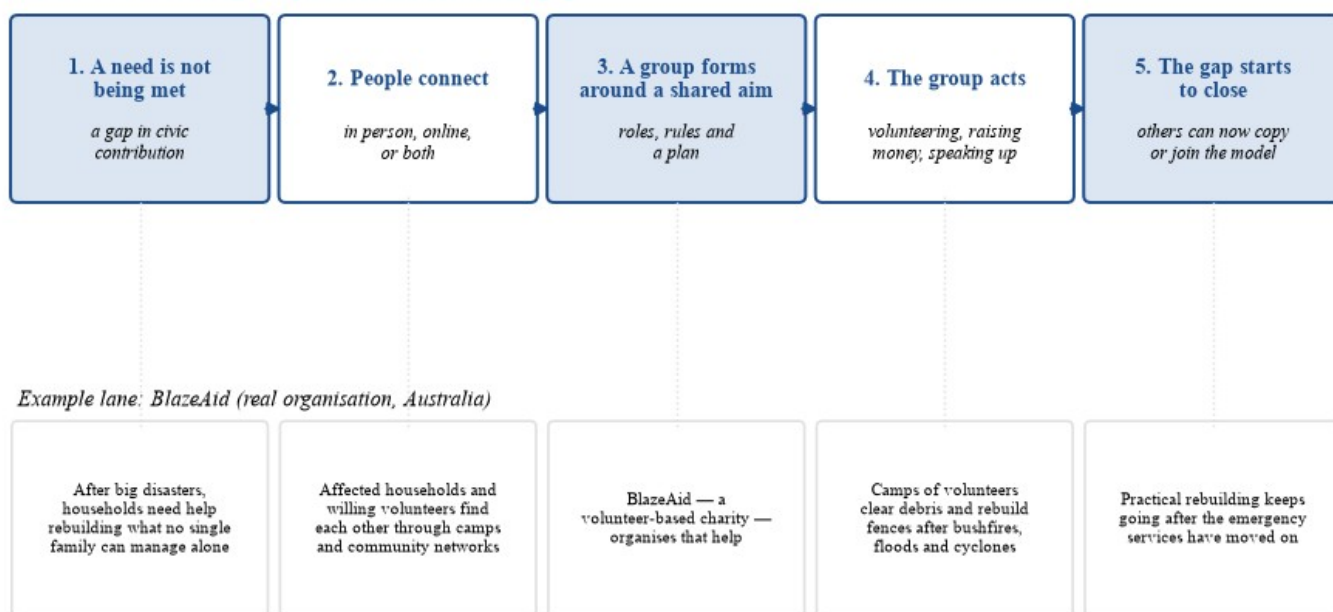
Mix of in-person and organised action; none of these depends on voting, though the people involved may vote as well. Participation and voting are two different civic acts.

Table of five real cases of participation in Australian civic life — the CFA, the Salvation Army, BlazeAid, the Moomba festival and Harmony Week — with what each does, its scale and how people take part

Figure 2 — Five real cases of participation. Note the mix: some of these are religious groups (the Salvation Army began as a Christian church mission and has been active in Australia since 1880), some are cultural events (Moomba, held in Melbourne since 1955), and some formed specifically to fill a need no one else was meeting (BlazeAid).

Gaps in civic contributions. Because participation is something people choose, there are always needs that no group is yet meeting — *gaps in civic contributions*. A gap can sit in person (“nobody runs a homework club here”), online (“there is no page where new families can find local sport teams”), or both. Figure 3 shows how a new group can form to close one.

How a new civic group can form to fill a gap

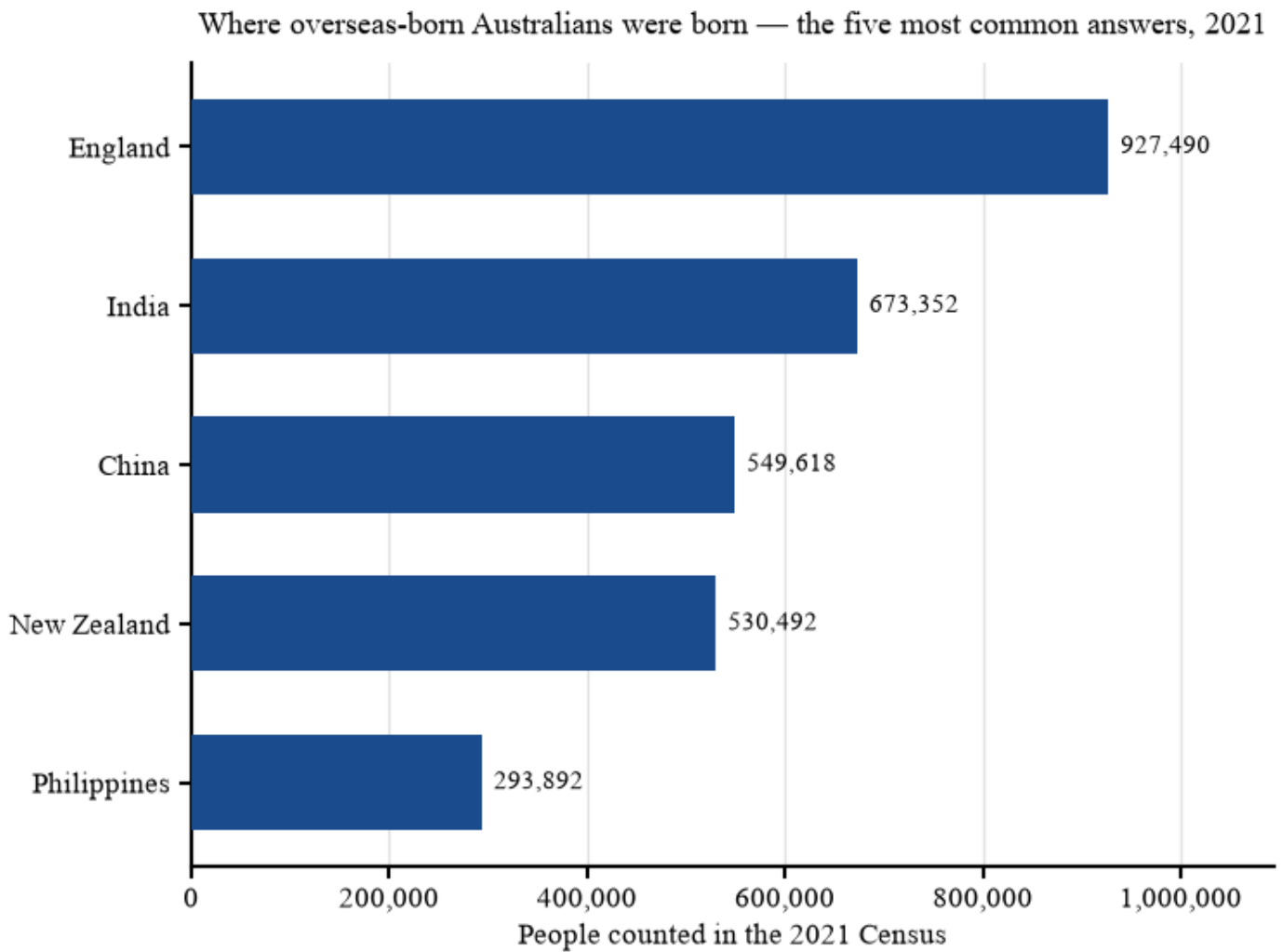


Flow diagram of five steps — a need is not being met, people connect, a group forms around a shared aim, the group acts, the gap starts to close — with BlazeAid shown in an example lane under each step

Figure 3 — From a gap to a group. The example lane uses BlazeAid, a real volunteer-based charity whose camps of volunteers clear debris and rebuild fences for households after bushfires, floods and cyclones.

2. Migrant and diaspora communities shape Australian society

Australia has one of the largest overseas-born shares of population in the world. In the 2021 Census, 29.1 per cent of people counted were born overseas, and the five most common overseas countries of birth were England, India, China, New Zealand and the Philippines (Figure 4).



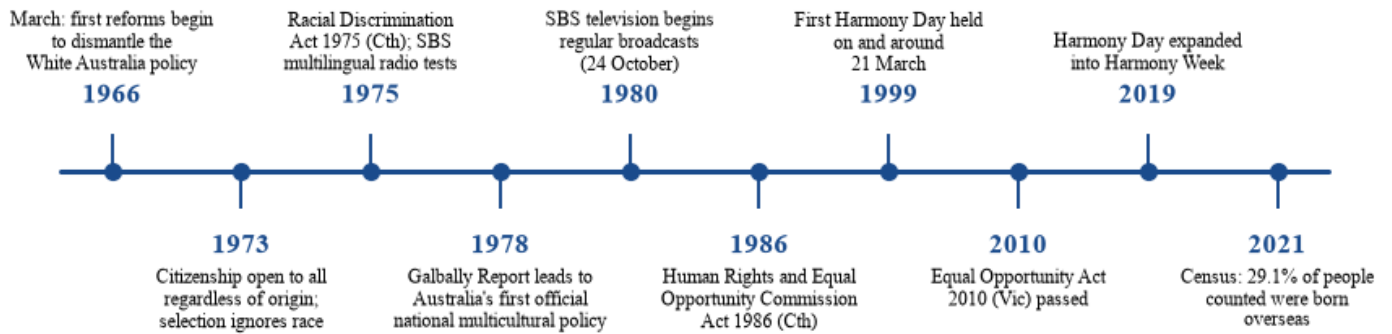
Source: ABS, 2021 Census QuickStats (Australia), country of birth — stated responses only.
In the same Census, 29.1 per cent of all people counted were born overseas.

Horizontal bar chart of the five most common overseas countries of birth in the 2021 Census — England 927,490; India 673,352; China 549,618; New Zealand 530,492; Philippines 293,892 — with the ABS source line

Figure 4 — Overseas-born Australians, 2021 Census. Source: ABS, 2021 Census QuickStats (Australia), country of birth, stated responses; retrieved 26 August 2026.

Diaspora communities influence Australian society in ways that are easy to see once you know what to look for: food, festivals, languages in the street, and media made by and for each community. The clearest institution is SBS, Australia's multicultural public broadcaster, which began as experimental multilingual radio stations on 9 June 1975 and today broadcasts radio in 74 languages (Figure 5 traces this history). Influence works both ways: communities change Australian society, and Australian society changes each community. Figure 6 shows what a short explain-answer built from that story looks like — the evidence is real; the argument is yours to build.

Milestones in migration, participation and inclusion in Australia



Each milestone changed who could take part in Australian civic life, and how.

Timeline of milestones in migration, participation and inclusion in Australia from 1966 to 2021 — the 1966 and 1973 migration reforms, the Racial Discrimination Act 1975, the 1978 Galbally Report, SBS television in 1980, the 1986 human rights commission act, Harmony Day from 1999, the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic), Harmony Week from 2019 and the 2021 Census result

Figure 5 — Milestones, 1966–2021. Each milestone changed who could take part in Australian civic life, and how. Until 1973, Australian migration law still carried rules built around race; the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth) then made racial discrimination against the law.

Question: *"Explain one way that migrant and diaspora communities have influenced Australian society."*

Model response (one paragraph), split to show its parts:

One way migrant and diaspora communities have influenced Australian society is through community media.	Point Answers the question directly and names the way.
SBS, Australia's multicultural public broadcaster, began as experimental multilingual radio stations on 9 June 1975; its radio service now reaches listeners in 74 languages.	Evidence A real, dated fact from a checkable source.
These services let communities keep their languages and follow news from their countries of origin while taking part in Australian life.	Explanation Shows HOW the evidence counts as influence.
Over time this has helped make Australian media — and Australian society itself — more multilingual.	Link Ties the point back to Australian society as a whole.

The same evidence (the SBS story) could support other points too — the argument, not the fact, is what you build.

Model response paragraph split into four labelled parts — Point, Evidence, Explanation and Link — using the SBS story (experimental multilingual radio from 9 June 1975, 74 languages today) as the evidence for how migrant and diaspora communities have influenced Australian society

Figure 6 — A model explanation, taken apart. The same evidence could support other points too — the argument, not the fact, is what you build.

3. Power held is not the same as power perceived

Power is a contested word. In this section the word is used with a stated working definition:

Defined term — power. *The ability of a person or group to make things happen — to shape decisions, opinions or outcomes.* We compare **power held** (what the evidence says a person or group can actually do, judged by things like members, money, jobs or control of media) with **power perceived** (what others believe they can do). The two often differ, and judging the gap is a civic skill, not a guess at the “right” side.

Figure 7 sorts power into four kinds, with Australian examples for each.

Four kinds of power in Australian society — held by groups and individuals

Kind of power	Where it comes from	Australian examples
Political power	votes, seats in parliament, the right to make laws	parliaments; political parties; every enrolled voter
Economic power	money, jobs, investment	large companies and employer groups
Media power	control of what people see, read and hear	News Corp Australia and Nine Entertainment own nearly all major metropolitan newspapers
Civic power (people power)	numbers of people acting together, in person or online	the ACTU (46 affiliated unions, about 1.8 million members); CFA volunteers; community groups

Power held is not always the same as power perceived — what others believe a person or group can do may sit above or below what they can actually do.

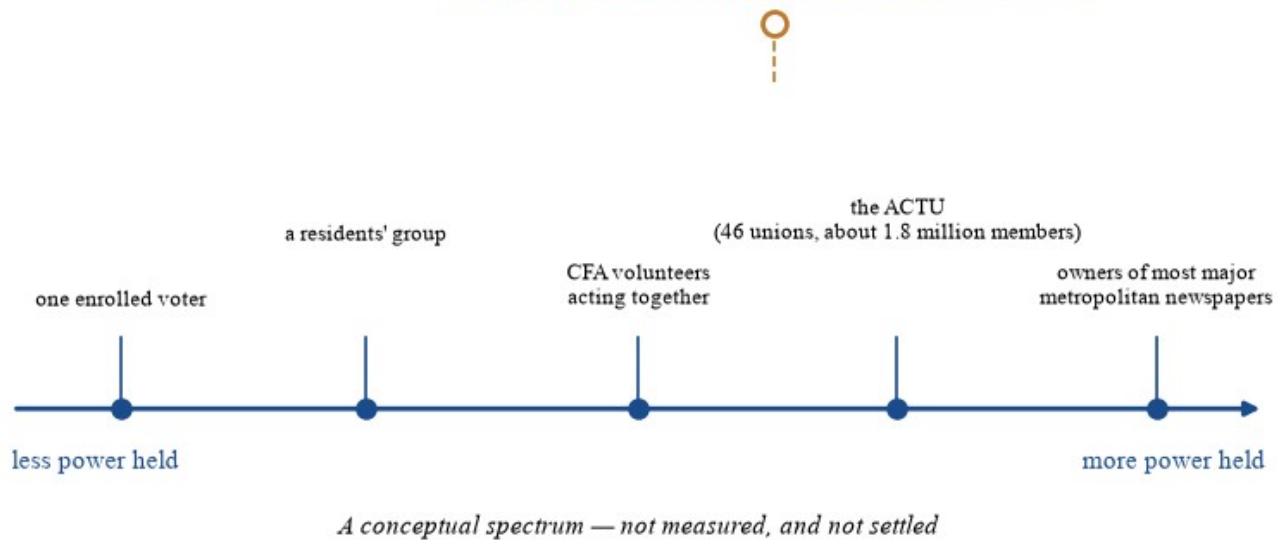
Table of four kinds of power in Australian society — political, economic, media and civic — showing where each comes from and naming real Australian examples such as parliaments, the ACTU and the owners of most major metropolitan newspapers

Figure 7 — Four kinds of power. No one kind is “the real one”. A group can be strong in money and weak in numbers, or strong in numbers and weak in money — which is why comparing power needs more than one ruler.

Figure 8 places some Australian actors on a conceptual spectrum of power held, and shows the second idea: perceived power can sit above or below it.

Power held versus power perceived

The hollow marker is where someone might THINK an actor sits.
Perceived power can sit above or below the power actually held.



Conceptual horizontal spectrum from less to more power held with markers for one enrolled voter, a residents' group, CFA volunteers acting together, the ACTU and owners of most major metropolitan newspapers, plus a hollow amber marker showing where someone might think an actor sits

Figure 8 — Held versus perceived. The spectrum is not measured by design: reasonable people disagree about the order of some actors, and that disagreement is the lesson.

Two views of the same comparison, each shown in its strongest form (steelmanned):

- **View A:** Unions hold too much power. Their strongest form: a union can stop work across whole industries, and a strike can move a law the way a vote can — power that is not checked by any ballot box.
- **View B:** Big companies and media owners hold too much power. Their strongest form: they are never elected, yet money and control of what people read can decide which laws are even proposed.

Both views can be argued well from defined terms and dated evidence (for example, the ACTU's 46 affiliated unions and roughly 1.8 million members on one side; News Corp titles' large share of big-city daily newspapers on the other). In this section you are marked on the quality of the reasoning, not on which side you reach.

4. Cultural hybridity: discrimination, pride and inclusion

Defined term — cultural hybridity. The curriculum uses the term but does not define it. This section treats it as: *the mixing of cultural elements from different traditions in everyday life — food, music, words, festivals — so that what counts as “Australian culture” changes over time.*

You can hear hybridity on the radio (SBS's 74 languages), see it at festivals (Melbourne's Moomba since 1955; Harmony Day, held on and around 21 March each year since 1999 and expanded into Harmony Week in 2019, aligned with the UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) and taste it in food that is now simply “Australian”. Hybridity is not a threat to a culture; it is what cultures do when people live together.

Three forces shape how healthy that mixing is:

- **Discrimination** is treating people worse because of who they are — for example their race, religion or culture. Australian law answers it: the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth) makes racial discrimination against the law, and Victoria's *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* protects people against unfair treatment in work, school and services. When discrimination goes unanswered, people withdraw from civic life and hybridity stalls.

- **Pride** is communities being able to show what they are — festivals, language schools, places of worship, sport. Pride is what makes hybridity visible instead of hidden.
- **Inclusion** is the active work of making room: Harmony Week events, welcome programs for new arrivals, translation services, and bodies such as the Australian Multicultural Council, which advises the Australian Government on multicultural affairs and social cohesion.

The three work together: pride without inclusion becomes separation; inclusion without pride becomes pressure to blend in and disappear; and discrimination attacks both.

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — scaffolded (finding a gap and a group, VC2HC10K09.E01)

Find the gap, find the group. Use the real case of BlazeAid.

Step	Thinking
1. Name the need.	After bushfires, floods and cyclones, households face months of rebuilding — fences down, debris everywhere — that one family cannot manage alone.
2. Ask who already meets it.	Emergency services meet the emergency; governments pay some grants; and public records of the 2019–20 season note that people donated about \$500 million and that convoys of food, clothing and stock feed reached affected towns. The <i>immediate</i> stage is covered.
3. Find the gap.	Practical, hands-on rebuilding that keeps going after the emergency services move on was the thin spot — a gap in civic contributions.
4. Name the group that filled it.	BlazeAid, a volunteer-based charity, runs camps of volunteers who clear debris and rebuild fences for affected households.
5. Check the fit.	BlazeAid’s work is exactly the missing step from row 3 — that is what makes it a gap-filling group and not just another charity.

The same five rows work for any gap you find, including online ones: a need not met, a page or place where people connect, a group with a shared aim, the action, and the gap starting to close.

Worked example 2 — scaffolded (comparing power held and perceived, VC2HC10K09.E03)

Compare two actors without pretending one ruler fits all. Compare the ACTU and the owners of most major metropolitan newspapers.

Step	Thinking
1. Define the term.	Power here means the ability to shape decisions, opinions or outcomes (see the definition box above). Held is the evidence; perceived is the belief.
2. List what each holds.	The ACTU: 46 affiliated unions and about 1.8 million members — civic power, people. The newspaper owners: media power — News Corp titles hold a large share of big-city daily readership, and Nine Entertainment holds most of the rest.
3. Compare held power by kind (Figure 7).	Not one ruler but several: the ACTU can stop work; the owners shape what readers see first. Neither “wins” overall — which is the point of comparing.

Step	Thinking
4. Separate perceived from held.	Ask what people <i>believe</i> : some believe unions run the country; some believe media owners do. Audit the assumptions: ask what each claim takes for granted — each takes for granted that its group’s power is the kind that matters most. State which kind of power you are comparing and the claim no longer hides that choice.
5. Judge with evidence.	Quote dated facts (the 1927 founding of the ACTU; the 2021 Census; circulation shares) rather than feelings, and mark both views by the same standard — the substitution test: would the claim still stand if “union” and “media owner” swapped places?

A response that reaches either conclusion scores full marks when it defines the term, names its evidence and states its limits.

Practice tasks

Scaffolded

Q1. (a) In your own words, what is *civic life* as defined in this section? (b) From Figure 2, name two cases and say how people take part in each.

Q2. Pick two scales from Figure 1 that your answer to Q1 did not use. For each, describe one way a person your age could take part (an “e.g.” pattern is fine).

Q3. (a) State the working definition of *diaspora* used in this section. (b) From Figure 4, name the most common overseas country of birth and how many people gave it. (c) Give one way a diaspora community influences Australian society, using a real, dated example from this section.

Q4. (a) In one sentence each: power *held*; power *perceived*. (b) From Figure 7, name one actor that holds economic power and one that holds media power. (c) Give one reason why perceived power can differ from held power.

Q5. (a) State the working definition of *cultural hybridity* used here. (b) Name one example of it from this section. (c) Name the two laws in this section that answer discrimination, and say which level of government made each one.

Q6. New families at your school say there is no way to find out about local sport teams and clubs. (a) Is this a gap in civic contributions? Explain in one sentence. (b) Describe one way a new group could form to fill it, in person, online or both.

Unscaffolded

Q7. Explain one way migrant and diaspora communities have influenced Australian society. Use at least one real, dated example, and say *how* the example counts as influence.

Q8. Compare the power held by one individual and one organised group in Australian society. Then give one way someone’s perceived power might sit above or below the power they actually hold.

Q9. Cultural hybridity in Australia involves discrimination, pride and inclusion. Explain the role of any two of these three, using one example for each.

Q10. Find one gap in civic contributions in a community you know — it may be a gap with no online or in-person support yet. Explain how a new group could form to fill it, using the five steps from Worked example 1.

Source inquiry

Read the two sources, then answer the questions.

Source A — Figure 4, the 2021 Census bar chart. *ABS, 2021 Census QuickStats (Australia), country of birth, stated responses; retrieved 26 August 2026.* In the same Census, 29.1 per cent of people counted were born overseas.

Source B — Harmony Day has been held on and around 21 March each year since 1999, aligned with the UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; in 2019 it was expanded into Harmony Week, led nationally by the Department of Home Affairs. *(Summary of public records, retrieved 26 August 2026.)*

SI1. Identify two facts Source A shows.

SI2. Audit the assumptions. What does Source A assume about who counts in “Australian society”? Name one thing a census chart cannot tell you about participation.

SI3. Explain how Sources A and B together show a contribution of migrant and diaspora communities to Australian civic life.

SI4. Evaluate this claim: “*A census chart is enough to measure whether Australia is a welcoming society.*” Give the strongest case **for** the claim and the strongest case **against** it, then state your own reasoned view.

Answers and response guides

Marking note: for every task that asks for reasoning (Q7–Q10, SI3–SI4), marks are awarded for defined terms, named evidence, surfaced assumptions and stated limits — never for the conclusion reached. Two students on opposite sides can both score full marks.

Q1. (a) The shared life of a community that people take part in as members of it, at every scale from school to world. (b) Any two from Figure 2, matched correctly — e.g. CFA: volunteering in person; Moomba: attending, performing, helping run events.

Q2. Any two scales with a fitting act — e.g. *Australia*: joining a national charity’s volunteer program; *the world*: taking part in a school project linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Q3. (a) People living outside the country their community comes from, who keep active ties with that country and its culture. (b) England, 927,490. (c) e.g. SBS: begun as experimental multilingual radio on 9 June 1975, radio in 74 languages today — communities keep language and news while taking part in Australian life.

Q4. (a) Held: what the evidence says a person or group can actually do. Perceived: what others believe they can do. (b) Economic: large companies and employer groups. Media: News Corp Australia / Nine Entertainment. (c) e.g. people judge by visibility, not by evidence — a group that is loud looks stronger than its resources are, or a quiet group looks weaker.

Q5. (a) The mixing of cultural elements from different traditions in everyday life, so that “Australian culture” changes over time. (b) Any named example — e.g. SBS radio’s 74 languages; Moomba; Harmony Week. (c) *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth) — federal; *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic) — Victorian.

Q6. (a) Yes if no existing group meets the need — a need no group is yet meeting is the definition of a gap. (b) Any workable forming story — e.g. an online page run by senior students listing local clubs, paired with a signup stall at school events, growing into a student-run welcome group.

Q7. Look for: a named way (media, food, festivals, language, business, sport); a real dated example (SBS 1975/74 languages; Moomba since 1955; Harmony Day since 1999; the 2021 Census figures); and a *how* sentence — influence shown as change in Australian society, not just presence.

Q8. Look for: the individual matched to a modest but real kind of power (one vote; one voice online; one choice as a buyer) and the group matched to an organised kind (members, money or media); then a perceived/held gap with a reason (visibility, fear, stereotypes, or quiet work out of sight).

Q9. Look for two of the three roles with an example each: discrimination — unanswered, it pushes people out of civic life; law answers it (*Racial Discrimination Act 1975*); pride — makes culture visible (festivals, language schools); inclusion — makes room (Harmony Week events, welcome programs, the Australian Multicultural Council’s advice).

Q10. Look for the five steps used honestly: a real need, a way people connect, a shared aim, a concrete action, and how the gap closes; plus whether the group acts in person, online or both.

SI1. e.g. England is the most common overseas country of birth (927,490); five countries alone account for about three million people; 29.1 per cent of people counted were born overseas (any two).

SI2. It assumes society is the people counted on Census night, and it reads only stated responses; it cannot show *taking part* — belonging, volunteering, trust, or whether people feel welcome.

SI3. Look for: A shows *who is here* (a society made from many countries of birth), B shows *a national habit of recognising that mix* — a week of events since 1999 — and the link: the week exists because the society shown in A exists, and both are contributions migrants and diasporas make to civic life.

SI4. Strongest for: numbers are checkable and comparable over time, and a society that keeps attracting and keeping migrants is, by behaviour, welcoming enough. Strongest against: belonging is felt and done, not counted; a chart cannot see discrimination or exclusion, and the same numbers can sit beside unwelcoming attitudes. Own view: any conclusion reasoned from both cases and from defined terms.

Sources — every real-world fact above carries a retrieval date of 26 August 2026: ABS, 2021 Census QuickStats (Australia); blazeaid.com.au; cfa.vic.gov.au; and Wikipedia: *Special Broadcasting Service, Harmony Day, Moomba Festival, Salvation Army in Australia, Australian Council of Trade Unions, Australian Human Rights Commission, Media ownership in Australia, 2019–20 Australian bushfire season, Multiculturalism in Australia, White Australia policy*.

Keeping democracy resilient and society cohesive — and what threatens them

Section 3B · VC2HC10K10 · Knowledge and Understanding — Citizenship, diversity and identity

Owens VC2HC10K10. Draws on VC2HC10K10.E01 .E02 .E03 .E04 (linkage keys for coverage joins, not a teaching order).

Teaching sequence

Starting point: two ideas worth defining

Australia's democracy did not arrive finished. It is kept going by rules, institutions and habits — and it can be weakened if those rules, institutions and habits fail. This section looks at two questions:

1. **What are the challenges?** What threatens a democracy, in Australia, in our region, and around the world?
2. **What keeps it going?** How do citizens and institutions sustain (keep up, over time) both a **cohesive society** and a **resilient democracy** — and what happens when those two goals pull in different directions?

The curriculum names both key ideas but does not define either, and both are **contested terms** — words over whose exact meaning people disagree. So this section fixes a frame first.

Definitions first — two contested terms, defined for this section

The Victorian Curriculum uses the terms *resilient democracy* and *cohesive society* but does not define them. This section therefore treats them as follows, and every question here is answerable on these definitions alone. Other definitions exist and are not interchangeable with these ones.

- A **resilient democracy** is a democracy whose institutions, laws and civic habits are strong enough to survive shocks and threats — corruption, abuse of power, political violence, false information — and to repair itself when damage occurs. (Think of resilience the way you would in engineering: not “never bends” but “bends without breaking, then recovers”.)
- A **cohesive society** is a society whose members feel they belong, trust one another and their institutions, and settle their differences without violence. **Social cohesion** is the degree to which a society holds together in this way.

Notice the kind of terms these are: neither is measurable like a length or a weight. Both are closer to “healthy” — useful, real, but in part a matter of judgement. Keep that in mind whenever a question asks “how resilient” or “how cohesive” something is: state your frame, and reason within it.

Two contested terms — defined for this section

The Victorian Curriculum uses both terms but defines neither. This section fixes a frame first: every question here is answerable on these definitions alone. Other definitions exist and are not interchangeable with them.

RESILIENT DEMOCRACY

A democracy whose institutions, laws and civic habits are strong enough to survive shocks and threats — corruption, abuse of power, political violence, false information — and to repair itself when damage occurs.

Like a bridge: not “never bends” but “bends without breaking, then recovers”.

COHESIVE SOCIETY

A society whose members feel they belong, trust one another and their institutions, and settle their differences without violence. Social cohesion is the degree to which a society holds together in this way.

Like “healthy”: useful and real, but in part a matter of judgement.

Both are contested terms: state the frame, then reason within it. Section 3B · VC2HC10K10

Two contested terms defined for this section: resilient democracy and cohesive society

Part 1 — What makes a society cohesive and democratic?

The curriculum asks you to identify the characteristics that mark a society as both cohesive and democratic. Four are named: **cooperation, inclusion, respect, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts**. Each is a habit as much as a rule.

- **Cooperation** — people and institutions working together, even when they disagree, because they accept decisions made by fair processes. Obeying a law you voted against, or accepting an election result your side lost, is cooperation. So is volunteering and helping neighbours.
- **Inclusion** — no group is shut out of civic life. Everyone can enrol and vote, stand for office, speak, join and protest. In Australia, voting is open to all adult citizens; barriers such as gender were removed over time (women gained the federal vote in 1902). Inclusion also means practical help to take part — interpreters, accessible polling places, and information in many languages.
- **Respect** — treating people with different views, faiths and identities as fellow citizens, not enemies. Respect is protected by law (rights and anti-discrimination laws — see section 2B) and by culture (arguing about ideas without attacking people).
- **Peaceful resolution of conflicts** — disputes are settled by courts and tribunals, by negotiation and mediation, and by ballots — not by force. When an Australian government loses an election, power changes hands quietly. At the federal election of 3 May 2025, the ballot was counted, the result accepted, and the new Parliament met. No army, no violence: that quiet handover *is* the system working.

None of this runs itself. Underneath all four characteristics sits one condition the curriculum names: **an active and informed citizenry** — citizens who take part and who know enough to take part well.

Australia’s numbers here are strong by world standards. At the 2025 federal election, **98.2%** of eligible Australians were enrolled — a record — and turnout was about **90%**. That second number is not an accident: in Australia, voting is compulsory for enrolled citizens aged 18 and over. Australia is one of only about **13%** of the world’s democracies that make voting compulsory.

But voting once a few years is the floor, not the ceiling. An *active* citizenry also joins parties and community groups, writes to members of parliament, signs petitions, protests peacefully and volunteers. An *informed* citizenry checks claims before sharing them and can tell evidence from opinion (skills built in sections 3C and 4B). Apathy — citizens switching off — is itself a quiet challenge to democracy, because power flows to whoever still shows up.

What holds a cohesive democracy together

COOPERATION

Working together even when we disagree: accepting decisions made by fair processes — including results your side loses.

INCLUSION

No group shut out of civic life: all adult citizens can enrol, vote and take part, with practical help — interpreters, accessible polling places.

RESPECT

People with different views, faiths and identities are fellow citizens, not enemies — protected by rights and anti-discrimination law.

PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS

Disputes settled by courts, tribunals, negotiation and ballots — never by force. Power changes hands quietly after elections.

AN ACTIVE AND INFORMED CITIZENRY — none of the four runs itself. Citizens must take part, and know enough to take part well: enrol, vote, stay informed, join, question, volunteer — between elections, not only at them.

Australia, 2025 federal election (AEC): 98.2% of eligible Australians enrolled — a record · turnout about 90% · voting is compulsory, as in only about 13% of the world's democracies.

Characteristics named in VC2HC10K10.E01. AEC figures: aec.gov.au, retrieved 26 August 2026.

Four characteristics of cohesive democratic societies above their base — citizens who are active and informed

Part 2 — Threats to Australian and to other democracies

The curriculum names four threats to consider — **the influence of vested interests, corruption, organised crime and lawlessness** — plus how social media affects the quality of civic debate on controversial matters. Each is defined below, with the institutions that answer it.

Five named challenges to Australian democracy — and what answers them

THE CHALLENGE

WHAT ANSWERS IT

Vested interests — hidden or outsized influence on decisions by groups with money or power to gain	Lobbyist registers · disclosure of political donations · freedom of information laws — force influence into the open
Corruption — public decisions swapped for private gain	NACC (Commonwealth, from 1 July 2023) · IBAC (Victoria) · courts · auditors-general · a free press
Organised crime — networks running crime like a business, using secrecy, bribery and violence	Criminal law · Australian Federal Police and state police · courts · integrity bodies watching the watchers
Lawlessness — widespread law-breaking that goes unpunished	The rule of law: the same law applies to everyone, including the people in power, and is enforced equally
Degraded civic debate — misinformation and disinformation flooding argument about controversial matters	eSafety Commissioner (Online Safety Act 2021) · platforms' duties · citizens who check claims before sharing them

Challenges named in VC2HC10K10.E02. Institutions: nacc.gov.au, ibac.vic.gov.au, esafety.gov.au — retrieved 26 August 2026.

Five named challenges to Australian democracy and the institutions that answer them

Vested interests. A *vested interest* is a person or group with a strong stake in one outcome of a decision — usually money or power to gain or lose — that acts to influence it. Be careful here, because there is a real tension. Interest groups are **not** automatically bad for democracy: they let citizens organise between elections, give parliament expertise, and give voice to people the major parties overlook — unions, business groups, farmers, environmental and community organisations all do this (see section 1B). That is the strongest form of the case *for* interest groups. The threat begins where influence stops being open and fair: when money buys access that others cannot get, when lobbying is hidden, or when a small group's gain is pushed through against the public interest. The defences are rules that force influence into the open: registers of lobbyists, disclosure of political donations, and freedom of information laws that let the public see what was decided and why.

Corruption. For this section, *corruption* means corrupt conduct as defined in the *National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022* (Commonwealth): conduct by a public official involving a breach of public trust or abuse of office, misuse of information gained in office, or conduct by anyone that adversely affects the honest or impartial exercise of a public official's powers. Corruption is a direct attack on democracy, because it swaps the public interest for a private deal.

How much corruption does Australia have? Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index 2024 scored Australia **77 out of 100** and ranked it **10th of 180** countries and territories (the world average was **43**, and more than two-thirds of countries scored below 50). So Australia is comparatively clean — but not clean enough to stop trying, and the score measures *perceived* public-sector corruption, which is one lens, not the full picture.

The main institutional answer is new. The **National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC)** is an independent Commonwealth agency, established under the *National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022* (Commonwealth), which began operating on 1 July 2023. It detects, investigates and reports on serious or systemic corrupt conduct across the Commonwealth public sector — and its independence means the government cannot tell it what to investigate. Victoria has its own integrity body, the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC), established under the *Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Act 2011* (Vic). Courts, police, auditors-general and a free press complete the network. Worked example 1 below follows one real case through that network.

Corrupt conduct — the four types under the NACC Act

1 BREACH OF PUBLIC TRUST

A public official betrays the trust placed in their office.

2 ABUSE OF OFFICE

A public official misuses the powers of their position.

3 MISUSE OF INFORMATION

A current or past public official misuses information gained in their official role.

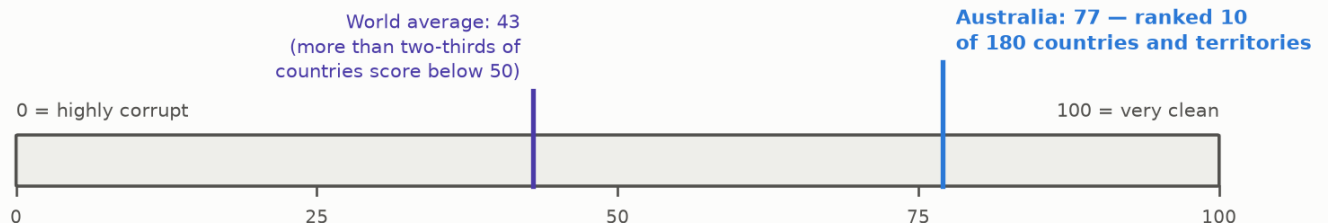
4 AFFECTING HONESTY OR IMPARTIALITY

Anyone — inside or outside government — does something that adversely affects the honest or impartial exercise of a public official's powers or duties. Offering a bribe is corrupt conduct even if it is refused.

National Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2022 (Commonwealth), as explained at nacc.gov.au (retrieved 26 August 2026). The NACC is an independent Commonwealth agency: the government cannot tell it what to investigate.

The four types of corrupt conduct under the NACC Act

Corruption Perceptions Index 2024 — where Australia sits



A comparatively clean record — but the index measures PERCEIVED public-sector corruption: one lens, not the full picture, and no reason to stop building integrity institutions.

Source: Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index 2024 (published 11 February 2025), retrieved 26 August 2026.

Corruption Perceptions Index 2024: Australia 77 out of 100, ranked 10 of 180; world average 43

Organised crime. *Organised crime* means groups that run crime like a business — ongoing networks that use secrecy, bribery and sometimes violence to make money from things like drug trafficking and fraud. The threat to democracy is double: organised crime breaks the laws everyone else is expected to keep, and it tries to corrupt the officials who enforce them — police, politicians, public servants. The answers are the criminal law, the police (federal and state), the courts, and integrity bodies watching the watchers.

Lawlessness. *Lawlessness* is widespread law-breaking that goes unpunished — the state either cannot or will not enforce its own laws. The *rule of law* — the principle that law applies equally to everyone, including the people in

power — is what fails first. Where lawlessness spreads, people stop trusting institutions and start looking after themselves, and that is fertile ground for anyone offering “order” at the price of freedom (Part 3 returns to this).

Social media and the quality of civic debate. *Civic debate* is public argument about matters the community must decide together. Social media has changed it — for worse and for better, and the honest analysis holds both at once. Two subject terms first: *misinformation* is false or inaccurate information shared whether or not anyone meant to deceive; *disinformation* is false information created and spread on purpose to deceive.

The strongest case **against** social media’s effect on debate: false claims can travel faster than corrections; feeds learn what keeps each user clicking and often reward outrage over accuracy; anonymous abuse can drive people out of public conversation; and hostile actors can spread disinformation to poison trust in elections and institutions.

The strongest case **for** it: far more people can take part than through older media; groups with little money can organise and be heard; citizens can question ministers and officials directly; and false claims by the powerful can be checked in public, quickly.

Australia has an institution that sits right on this fault line: the **eSafety Commissioner**, the online safety regulator created under the *Online Safety Act 2021* (Commonwealth), which can require platforms to remove harmful material and sets basic online safety expectations for industry. How far regulation of false information *should* go remains a live argument: some argue stronger powers are needed to protect public debate, others argue they would give whoever holds power too much control over speech. Both sides claim to be defending democracy — which is exactly why you need the definitions and the evidence, not the slogans. Worked example 2 models how to hold both sides at once.

Social media and civic debate — the strongest case on each side

IT CAN DAMAGE DEBATE

- False claims can travel faster than corrections
- Feeds learn what keeps each user clicking — outrage often out-reaches evidence
- Anonymous abuse can drive people out of public conversation
- Hostile actors can spread disinformation to poison trust in elections

IT CAN STRENGTHEN DEBATE

- Far more people can take part than through older media
- Groups with little money can organise and be heard
- Citizens can question ministers and officials directly
- False claims by the powerful can be checked in public, quickly

Which way it tips depends on rules — the eSafety Commissioner's powers under the Online Safety Act 2021 — and on citizens' habits: checking before sharing.

How social media affects civic debate — VC2HC10K10.E02.

Two strong cases: social media harms civic debate versus social media helps civic debate

Part 3 — Threats to democratic resilience globally

Some challenges are bigger than any one country. The curriculum asks you to locate threats to the resilience of democracies globally — including **extreme polarisation**, **breakdown in social consensus**, and **non-democratic forces on the rise**.

Extreme polarisation. *Polarisation* is the hardening of a society into two opposed camps. In its extreme form, the camps stop treating each other as opponents with different answers and start treating each other as enemies who must

not be allowed to win. Compromise — which democracy needs, since no side gets everything — comes to look like betrayal. Politics stops being about policy and becomes about identity and fear.

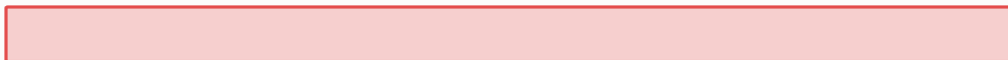
Breakdown in social consensus. *Social consensus* is the underlying agreement that makes disagreement safe: shared respect for basic facts, for the rules of the contest, and for the institutions that settle disputes — courts, electoral commissions, the count itself. When that agreement cracks, even true results are rejected, and every question becomes a fight about which side is legitimate rather than which policy works.

Non-democratic forces on the rise. The curriculum names *extremist groups with no real commitment to democratic values* — groups that reject fair elections, rights and the rule of law, and that may use or admire violence. Why do such forces rise? The honest answers include: economic insecurity and the feeling of being left behind; slow or divided government that makes strongman rule look efficient; distrust fed by disinformation; and the blaming of a minority group for problems that group did not cause. Putting each side at its strongest matters here too: people drawn to such movements often have real complaints about how the system has failed them — and the strongest answer to that is not to dismiss the complaints but to show that concentrating power removes the very checks that protect ordinary people from abuse.

The trend is measurable. Freedom House, a research organisation that scores political rights and civil liberties worldwide, reported in *Freedom in the World 2025* that global freedom declined in 2024 for the **19th consecutive year**: **60 countries** became less free, while only **34** improved.

Global freedom, 2024 — the 19th consecutive year of decline

Became less free



60 countries

Improved



34 countries

Freedom House scores political rights and civil liberties worldwide. Its Freedom in the World 2025 report found global freedom declined in 2024 for the 19th consecutive year — 60 countries became less free, 34 improved.

Source: Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025, retrieved 26 August 2026.

Global freedom in 2024 declined for the 19th consecutive year: 60 countries deteriorated, 34 improved

One case, close to home: Myanmar. In November 2020, Myanmar held an election won in a sweeping victory by the National League for Democracy. In February 2021, the country's military seized power, overturned the result and set up a junta — a military ruling body — named the State Administration Council, to run the country. Since the coup, the military has suppressed peaceful civic dissent with violence, and armed resistance has grown. Myanmar shows what the *absence* of resilient institutions looks like: where courts, the ballot and the army are not bound by law, the ballot can simply be cancelled. (It also shows that cohesion and resilience are not the same thing — Myanmar's junta demands unity; what it destroyed was everything that made disagreement safe.)

How democracies lose resilience — and the off-ramps at each step

EXTREME POLARISATION

Two hardened camps treat each other as enemies, not opponents; compromise looks like betrayal.

Off-ramp: argue about policy, not identity — keep opponents legitimate

LOSS OF SHARED FACTS AND CONSENSUS

Agreement cracks about basic facts, the rules of the contest and the institutions that settle disputes.

Off-ramp: shared standards of evidence — check sources before sharing

DISTRUST OF INSTITUTIONS

Courts, electoral commissions and the media are treated as tools of the other side.

Off-ramp: institutions that earn trust — independent courts, fair counting

OPENNESS TO NON-DEMOCRATIC FORCES

Groups and leaders not committed to democratic values — and real grievances to feed on — start to look like an answer.

Off-ramp: democratic delivery — fix real grievances through fair policy

DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING

Elections matter less; power concentrates; rights and the rule of law weaken.

The pathway and its off-ramps model the threats named in VC2HC10K10.E03 — a sequence, not a destiny: every step can be stopped.

Pathway of democratic backsliding from polarisation to breakdown, with off-ramps at each step

Part 4 — The tension: a cohesive society can be at odds with a resilient democracy

The curriculum's most pointed question is its last: how can a cohesive society be *at odds with* a resilient democracy — and how can the tension be resolved? On our definitions, see where the pull goes:

- **Cohesion pulls toward sameness** — shared identity, shared values, agreement. Its danger is that the pressure to belong excludes whoever is different.
- **Resilience pulls toward openness** — free speech, tolerated dissent, protected minorities, room to challenge power. Its danger is endless division, where nothing is agreed and nothing gets done.

So the same society can be pulled two ways at once:

1. **Protecting democracy from its enemies versus keeping debate open.** Should groups that openly want to end democracy be banned from standing, speaking or organising? Banning them protects the system (resilience) but silences dissent and hands whoever governs a tool that can be misused (cohesion and freedom weaken). Not banning them leaves a legal path for democracy's opponents to dismantle it.
2. **Shared values versus diverse identities.** Pushing one national identity hard can exclude minorities and migrants — weakening inclusion, the very thing that makes people feel they belong. But celebrating diversity with nothing shared in common can erode the trust and consensus that hold a society together.
3. **Order versus liberty.** Tougher laws — surveillance powers, limits on protest — can protect stability, but each one shrinks the space for the dissent and participation that keep democracy resilient.

How is this resolved? Not by choosing one value and dropping the other, but by building arrangements that serve both:

- **The rule of law and protected rights** (section 2B) are the bridge: they make majority rule safe for minorities, which is what makes minorities accept majority decisions — cohesion *through* resilience.
- **Fair, regular elections** keep fights inside the institutions instead of in the street: the losing side accepts defeat because it knows it can compete again.
- **Inclusion is resilience policy.** People who feel included are far more likely to defend the system than people pushed to the edges. Every barrier to participation — language, disability, cost, geography — removed is resilience banked.
- **Deliberation as a habit.** Citizens who argue about evidence, separate claims from assumptions, and treat opponents as people they must persuade rather than enemies they must destroy, keep polarisation from becoming breakdown (sections 4B and 5C train exactly this).

The balance is never finished; it is re-decided in every election, every court case and every argument about where the line sits. That is what *sustaining* means.

Holding two goods at once: cohesion and resilience pull apart

COHESION pulls toward sameness: shared identity, shared values, agreement. Its danger: the pressure to belong excludes whoever is different.

THE TENSION

RESILIENCE pulls toward openness: free speech, tolerated dissent, protected minorities, room to challenge power. Its danger: endless division, where nothing is agreed and nothing gets done.

Four ways Australia holds both:

The rule of law and protected rights

make majority rule safe for minorities — so minorities accept majority decisions: cohesion THROUGH resilience.

Fair, regular elections

keep fights inside the institutions: the losing side accepts defeat because it can compete again.

Inclusion is resilience policy

people who feel included defend the system; every barrier to participation removed is resilience banked.

Deliberation as a habit

argue about evidence, separate claims from assumptions, treat opponents as people to persuade — not enemies to destroy.

A cohesive society at odds with a resilient democracy — and how the tension is resolved. VC2HC10K10.E04.

The tension between resilient democracy and cohesive society, and four ways Australia holds both

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — scaffolded

Reading a real corruption case: what kept the system strong?

The source below is real. It is drawn from a National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) media release of 21 August 2026 about Operation Lota.

Source — NACC media release (21 August 2026), summary: The senior manager of a renewable energy technology company, Allen Zhu, was sentenced following a joint investigation by the Queensland Police Service, the NACC and the Australian Federal Police into the attempted bribery of a Commonwealth public official. Zhu had offered the official \$20,000 in cash hidden inside a bag of tea to speed up the product approval process for a Commonwealth rebate scheme. The public official immediately reported the bribe. Zhu pleaded guilty to offering a secret commission to an agent under section 442BA of the *Criminal Code*

1899 (Qld) and was sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment, immediately suspended, after 26 days in custody. Acting NACC Commissioner Kylie Kilgour said the result shows that "attempting to influence public officials for commercial gain strikes at the heart of public trust".

Step	Model move
1. Identify the threat	Someone tried to buy a government decision — a private payment to fast-track approval in a public rebate scheme. This is corruption in the textbook sense: a private deal in place of the public interest.
2. Match it to the definitions	Under the NACC Act, this is conduct that adversely affects the honest or impartial exercise of a public official's powers — one of the four types of corrupt conduct (figure above). Had the official accepted, it would also have been a breach of public trust.
3. Trace the response	The official reported the offer at once. Three agencies investigated together (NACC, Australian Federal Police, Queensland Police Service). The case went to court; the plea and sentence followed.
4. Weigh what held	Two defences worked together: institutions (reporting channels, a joint investigation, an independent court) and individual integrity (one official who would not play along). Remove either, and the chain breaks.
5. Know the limit	One conviction proves this attempt failed — it does not prove the whole system is clean. Resilience claims must stay this size: evidence for one case, one case at a time.

Model conclusion: The Operation Lota case shows Australian democracy absorbing a real corruption shock: the attempt happened, was reported, investigated by independent bodies and punished through the courts — which is resilience working. It also shows resilience is personal, not just institutional: the chain began with one public official doing the right thing.

Worked example 2 — scaffolded

Both sides at their strongest: does social media damage civic debate?

Claim A: "Social media is damaging Australian democracy." Claim B: "Social media has made Australian democracy better."

Step	Model move
1. Define the key term	"Quality of civic debate" needs a frame. Use: debate is good when it rests on accurate information, includes many voices, gives reasons, and lets people take part safely.
2. Strongest form of claim A	Misinformation and disinformation spread faster than corrections; feeds reward outrage, so anger out-reaches evidence; anonymous abuse drives people, especially women and minorities, out of the conversation; hostile actors can flood debate with invented stories.
3. Strongest form of claim B	More Australians can join public debate than ever before; community groups with no budget can organise and be heard; ministers can be questioned directly; and false claims by the powerful can be checked in public within hours.
4. Audit the assumptions	Claim A assumes debate used to be healthy — but older media had their own gatekeepers and blind spots. Claim

Step	Model move
5. Ask what evidence would decide	B assumes access equals quality — but more voices do not guarantee better reasons. Both claims hide an assumption; surface it before choosing. You would need evidence about reach (how far false claims travel), participation (who speaks now who could not before) and trust (whether people believe the institutions that settle disputes). Section 4B is where you learn to weigh such evidence.
6. Reach a weighed conclusion	Not “good” or “bad” — <i>both at once</i> : social media raises participation and speeds misinformation simultaneously. The outcome depends on rules (such as the eSafety Commissioner’s powers under the <i>Online Safety Act 2021</i>) and on citizens’ habits (checking before sharing).

Practice tasks

Scaffolded

Q1. The definitions in this section’s preface box frame everything that follows. Classify each item below as mainly a challenge to *resilient democracy*, mainly a challenge to *cohesive society*, or to both, and give one reason each time: (a) a politician refuses to accept an election result; (b) neighbours organise to exclude newly arrived families from community events; (c) false emergency warnings flood social media during a bushfire.

Q2. Copy the four characteristics of a cohesive democratic society (cooperation, inclusion, respect, peaceful resolution of conflicts) and beside each write one real Australian example from this section or your own knowledge that shows the characteristic working.

Q3. The NACC Act lists four types of corrupt conduct (see the figure). For each scenario, say which type it best fits and why: (a) a minister’s staff member sells details of a confidential tender to a bidding company; (b) a business offers a public official free holidays in exchange for favourable treatment; (c) a public servant uses their position to award contracts to their own company.

Q4. Australia scored 77 of 100 in Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index 2024, ranking 10th of 180; the world average was 43. (a) Give two things these numbers suggest about corruption in Australia compared with most countries. (b) The index measures *perceived* public-sector corruption. State one thing the number cannot tell us, and explain why.

Q5. Complete this table for the three features of social media below. For each feature, give one way it can damage the quality of civic debate and one way it can help it. Features: anonymity; feeds chosen for each user by the platform; instant sharing.

Q6. Freedom House reported that in 2024, 60 countries became less free while 34 improved — the 19th consecutive year of global decline. (a) State the trend in one sentence. (b) Offer two possible explanations for it. (c) For each explanation, state what evidence would help decide whether it is right.

Un scaffolded

Q7. “Australia’s democracy is resilient.” Construct an argument that weighs this claim: give reasons and evidence on both sides, then state your judged conclusion. Use at least three facts from this section.

Q8. Using Myanmar since the November 2020 election and the February 2021 coup, explain what happens to citizens when democratic institutions are not resilient. What does the case tell you about what resilience depends on?

Q9. “Inclusion strengthens both cohesion and resilience.” To what extent do you agree? Define the contested terms as this section does, then argue your position.

Q10. Identify one practical action your school or local community could take that would strengthen *both* social cohesion and democratic resilience at the same time. Justify your choice against both definitions.

Source inquiry

“Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others that have been tried.”

— Winston Churchill, speaking in the British House of Commons, 11 November 1947.

This is one of the most quoted claims ever made about democracy. Treat it as a source to be questioned, not admired. Answer in full sentences:

1. What is the claim actually saying? Identify its frame: what is democracy being compared with?
2. Audit the assumptions buried in the claim. What must be true for it to hold? Does it compare real democracies with *ideal* alternatives, or with real ones?
3. The word “worst” sounds measurable, but by what standard? List two standards on which governments could be ranked, and say whether the claim might give different answers under each.
4. What evidence could support or challenge the claim? Think about what you would need to know about life, rights and security under democratic and non-democratic systems.
5. Connect the claim to this section: if Churchill is right that democracy is imperfect, what does that imply about why *resilience* — the capacity to bend, repair and recover — matters more than perfection?

Marking in this task rewards reasoning, not the conclusion you reach: terms defined, assumptions surfaced, standards stated, evidence identified, limits acknowledged. Two students who reach opposite conclusions can both do excellent work.

Suggested answers

These notes give the shape of a strong response, not one required wording. For the evaluative tasks (Q7–Q10 and the inquiry), marks go to the reasoning steps listed; opposite conclusions can earn full marks if they reason well from the defined terms.

Q1. (a) Resilience — refusing a result attacks the mechanism that lets power change hands safely; if it worked, elections would stop settling anything. (b) Cohesion — exclusion breaks inclusion and respect, the bonds that make people feel they belong; it can also weaken resilience over time, since excluded people have less reason to defend the system. (c) Both — false information damages informed citizenship (resilience) and can set groups against each other in a crisis (cohesion). One mark for the classification, one for a reason tied to the definitions.

Q2. Model answers: cooperation — accepting the 3 May 2025 election result and forming government peacefully; inclusion — voting open to all adult citizens, interpreters and accessible polling places; respect — rights and anti-discrimination laws protecting people who differ (section 2B); peaceful resolution — disputes settled in courts and tribunals, power changing hands by ballot, not force. Accept any real, accurate example.

Q3. (a) Misuse of information gained in office. (b) Conduct that adversely affects the honest or impartial exercise of a public official’s powers (the offer itself is corrupt conduct — no acceptance needed). (c) Abuse of office / breach of public trust. One mark for the match, one for the reason.

Q4. (a) For example: Australia has comparatively little perceived public-sector corruption; most countries have a much larger problem (average 43). (b) For example: it cannot tell us how much corruption is actually happening — it measures perceptions of experts and business people, not every case; nor does it cover private-sector corruption. Credit any limitation of *perception* measures, or of scope.

Q5. Models — anonymity: damages by letting abuse drive people out of debate; helps by letting people speak safely about powerful employers, governments or family pressure. Feeds: damage by rewarding outrage and trapping users in one-sided views; help by connecting people to communities and information they would never find alone. Instant sharing: damages by letting false claims outrun corrections; helps by getting warnings, evidence and mobilisation out fast.

Q6. (a) Global freedom has fallen every year since 2006, with far more countries sliding backwards than forwards in 2024. (b) Accept any two that are genuine explanations, e.g.: disinformation and polarisation weakening shared consensus; economic insecurity making strongman politics attractive; democratic governments failing to deliver results quickly enough. (c) For each explanation, the student names testable evidence — e.g. compare countries where disinformation spread widely with those where it did not; compare freedom scores with measures of economic insecurity.

Q7. Strong responses define resilience (per the preface box), then weigh: on one side, compulsory voting and about 90% turnout, 98.2% enrolment, independent bodies (NACC, eSafety Commissioner), free elections with peaceful handovers; on the other, real threats — corruption that still occurs, polarisation, misinformation, global democratic decline. A judged conclusion follows from the balance, and states its confidence honestly. Marking: defined terms, two sides with evidence, weighed conclusion, acknowledged limits.

Q8. The elected government was removed by force; peaceful protest was met with violence; law became the tool of the junta rather than a check on it. Citizens lost the protection that comes from institutions bound by law. The case shows resilience depends on institutions that stand above raw power — courts, the ballot, and armed forces under civilian, lawful control — and on citizens and groups willing to defend them.

Q9. Strong responses use the section’s definitions, then argue: inclusion builds cohesion (belonging, trust) *and* resilience (people who belong defend the system; excluded people are more open to anti-democratic appeals). Counter-weight: inclusion alone is not enough if shared ground (rules, facts, respect for outcomes) is missing. The best answers state the extent, not just agree/disagree.

Q10. Credit any action that genuinely serves both, justified against both definitions — e.g. a structured student deliberation on a real local issue with roles for students from every background (builds the habit of peaceful disagreement: resilience; mixes groups that rarely meet: cohesion). The justification must name both definitions and show the action serving each.

Source inquiry. (1) Democracy is being compared with every alternative that has actually existed — monarchy, dictatorship, one-party rule — not with a perfect system; the frame is “worst of the real options except the rest”. (2) Assumptions include: that we can rank whole systems at all; that the alternatives really have been tried enough to judge; that “worst” is measured by something shared. (3) E.g. rank by material living standards and by protection of rights and safety of citizens — the answer may differ between standards, which shows the term is contested, not measured. (4) Evidence: comparisons of rights, living standards, famine and war records, and of whether citizens can remove rulers without violence, across democratic and non-democratic systems. (5) If no system is perfect, the decisive advantage is the capacity to repair: free speech, elections and independent courts let a democracy find and fix its failures without breaking — which is precisely the definition of resilience this section uses.

Curriculum traceability

Item	Elaboration id (verbatim from VCAA export)	Where in this section
Characteristics that mark societies as cohesive and democratic — cooperation, inclusion, respect, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts; why an active, informed citizenry matters	VC2HC10K10.E01	Part 1; figures 3b_cohesion.png, 3b_terms.png; Q1, Q2
Threats to Australian and other democracies — vested interests, corruption, organised crime and lawlessness; how social media affects civic debate on controversial matters	VC2HC10K10.E02	Part 2; figures 3b_threats_defences.png, 3b_nacc_categories.png, 3b_cpi.png, 3b_social_media.png; Worked examples 1–2; Q3–Q5
Global threats to democratic resilience — polarisation of views in	VC2HC10K10.E03	Part 3; figures 3b_global_trend.png,

Item	Elaboration id (verbatim from VCAA export)	Where in this section
its extreme form, a breakdown in social consensus; why non-democratic forces rise, extremist groups with no real commitment to democratic values among them		3b_backslide.png; Q6, Q8
How a cohesive society can be at odds with a resilient democracy — and how the tension can be resolved	VC2HC10K10.E04	Part 4; figure 3b_tension.png; Q9, Q10, Source inquiry

How media and social media shape identity and views on diversity

Section 3C · VC2HC10K11 · Knowledge and Understanding — Citizenship, diversity and identity

Owens VC2HC10K11. Draws on VC2HC10K11 .E01 .E02 .E03 .E04 (linkage keys for coverage joins, not a teaching order; .E01 is taught as scoped for this book — see the traceability table).

Teaching sequence

Starting point: what media is, and what it does

Every day, information reaches you from many directions at once: free-to-air TV, radio, newspapers and news sites, streaming services, and social platforms. Together these are **the media** — the channels through which stories, images and claims reach a public. This section asks what all that reaching *does*: to your sense of who you are, and to your attitudes to people different from you.

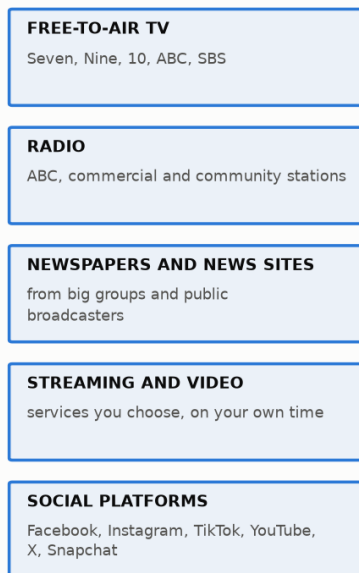
Words in this section. **Representation** is how a person or group is shown or described — in news, sport coverage, drama, advertising and posts. A **stereotype** is a fixed, over-simple idea about a whole group, applied to every member whether it is true or not. A **public broadcaster** is a broadcaster funded by the government but independent of it, set up by law to serve all Australians (the ABC and SBS). A **charter** is the part of a law that says what an organisation is for and what it must aim to do. **Advocacy** is organised action to change a law, policy or practice — speaking up, campaigning, pushing. **Ownership** means who owns and controls a media company, and therefore who sets its rules and keeps its profits.

Misinformation, disinformation and malinformation are defined in Part 4. The Victorian Curriculum uses most of these words without spelling them out; this section uses them the way defined here.

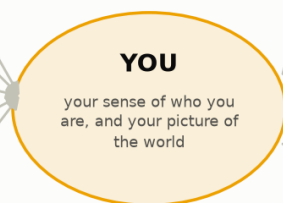
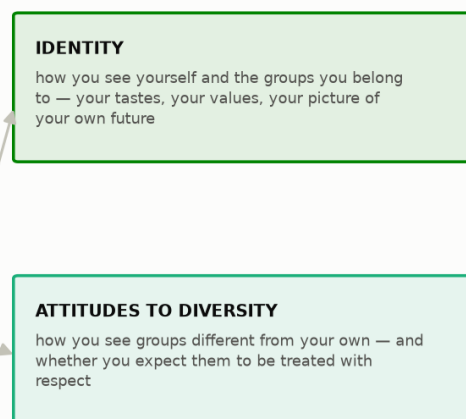
A day of media: what reaches you — and what it can shape

Most Year 9 students meet several of these every day.

WHERE MEDIA COMES FROM



WHAT MEDIA CAN SHAPE



Media never just 'shows' the world. It selects what to show — and what to leave out.

Diagram of one day of media: five channels on the left (free-to-air TV, radio, newspapers and news sites, streaming and video, social platforms) all feeding into “you” in the centre, and from you two arrows run to the two things media can shape, identity and attitudes to diversity

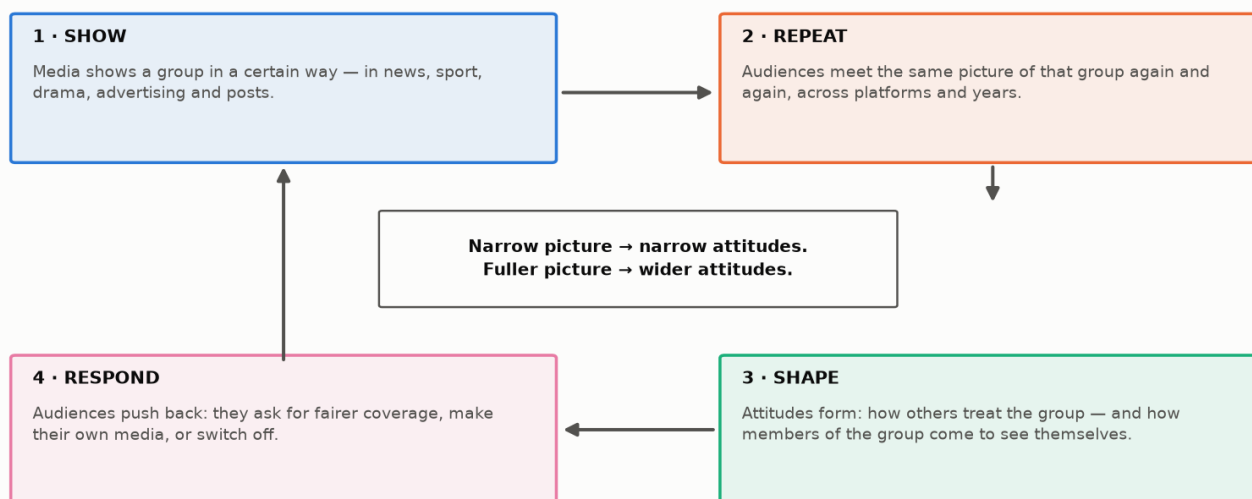
Media never just “shows” the world. It selects what to show — and what to leave out. That selection is representation, and this section studies what it shapes.

Part 1 — How media represent groups, and what that shapes (E01)

Representation is not a one-off event. It works as a loop: media show a group a certain way; audiences meet that picture again and again; attitudes form; and audiences then respond, which changes what media show next.

The representation loop

How repeated pictures can turn into attitudes



A loop, not a one-way street: what audiences do changes what media shows next.

Four-step loop: 1 show — media shows a group in a certain way; 2 repeat — audiences meet the same picture again and again; 3 shape — attitudes form, in how others treat the group and how members see themselves; 4 respond — audiences push back, ask for fairer coverage, make their own media, or switch off; with the note “narrow picture, narrow attitudes; fuller picture, wider attitudes”

The loop matters most for groups most people rarely meet in person. For those groups, media coverage may be the main picture audiences ever get. The curriculum names three groups to analyse: **immigrant groups**, **people with disability**, and **male and female sporting figures**.

Three groups, two ways to show them

Ways Australian media can represent each group — and why it matters

Group	A narrow way it can be shown	A fuller way it can be shown	Why it matters
Immigrant groups	Only in stories about problems — crime, crowding, 'us and them'.	As neighbours, workers, students and business owners — speaking for themselves.	Repeated narrow stories can feed fear. Fuller stories build understanding.
Male and female sporting figures	Women's sport shown rarely, or treated as less serious than men's.	Same coverage, same celebration: skill and effort shown in full.	Coverage tells young people whose sport — and whose gender — 'counts'.
People with disability	As objects of pity — or left out of the picture altogether.	As athletes, artists, workers and experts — including telling their own stories.	Being seen in full changes how a group is treated.

These rows describe patterns, not any one outlet. The curriculum names these three groups as the examples for this section.

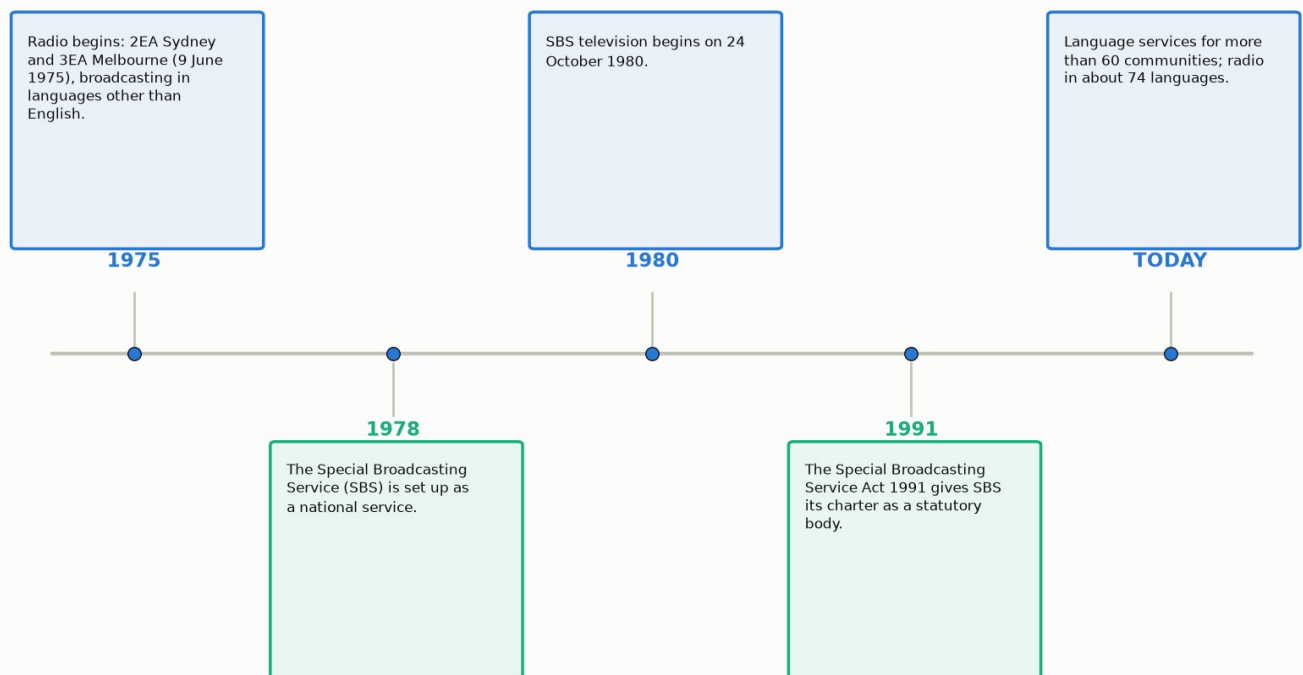
Table with three rows — immigrant groups; sporting figures, male and female; people with disability — and for each, a narrow way it can be shown, a fuller way it can be shown, and why it matters

Read the table slowly. The narrow column is not a claim about every outlet; it is a pattern that shows up often enough to study. The fuller column is not praise for any one outlet either. The point is the last column: repeated narrow pictures can feed fear and disrespect, while fuller pictures build understanding — and being seen in full changes how a group is treated.

A public broadcaster built for diversity. One Australian institution exists precisely to widen the picture. SBS began as radio stations broadcasting in languages other than English, became a national television service, and today is a statutory body under the *Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991* (Commonwealth) with a charter written into the law.

SBS: a public broadcaster built to reflect a diverse Australia

Key steps for the Special Broadcasting Service



Sources: SBS corporate site (sbs.com.au/aboutus); Wikipedia, 'Special Broadcasting Service'. Retrieved 26 August 2026.

Timeline of SBS: 1975 radio begins with 2EA Sydney and 3EA Melbourne on 9 June 1975; 1978 the Special Broadcasting Service is set up; 1980 SBS television begins on 24 October 1980; 1991 the Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991 gives SBS its charter; today, language services for more than 60 communities and radio in about 74 languages

Source A — SBS's charter, in SBS's own words

"... to provide multilingual and multicultural broadcasting and digital media services" that "inform, educate and entertain all Australians" and, through that, "reflect Australia's multicultural society".

SBS's own summary of the charter set out in the Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991.

SBS, 'SBS Act', sbs.com.au/aboutus. Retrieved 26 August 2026. Short gloss: the law says SBS's job is to reflect Australia's mix of cultures and languages — not only to entertain.

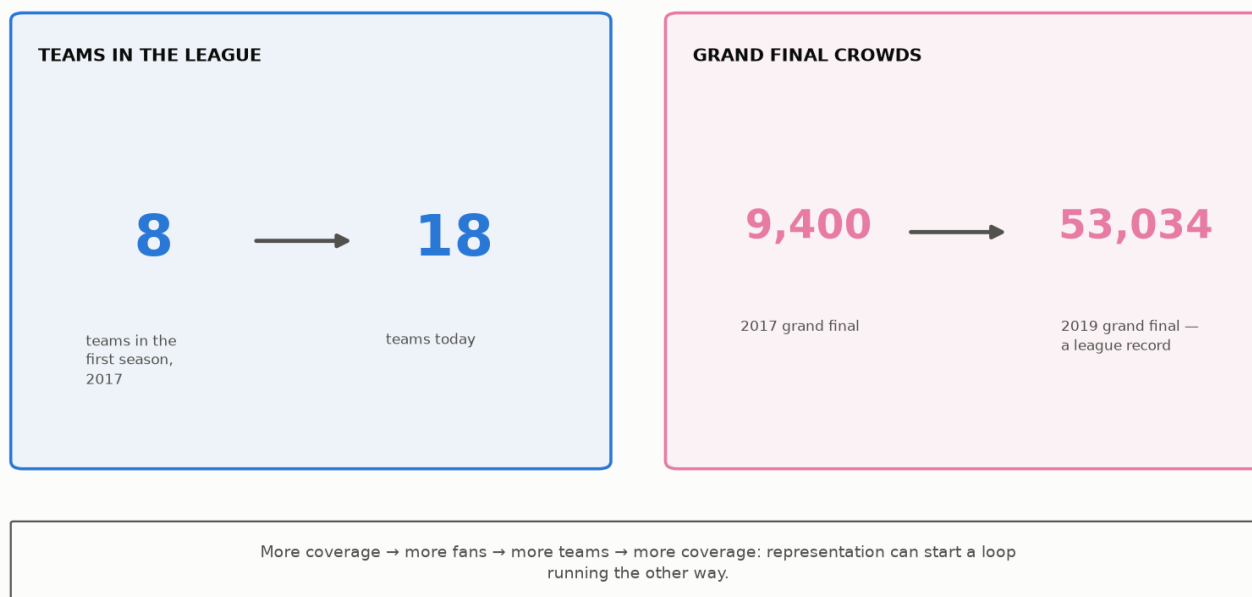
Source card quoting SBS's own summary of its charter: to provide multilingual and multicultural broadcasting and digital media services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians and, through that, reflect Australia's multicultural society

About 29.8 per cent of Australians were born overseas (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020), and hundreds of languages are spoken at home. A broadcaster whose legal job is to reflect that mix gives groups a fuller representation than the market alone may provide — news and drama in many languages, stories told by the people in them, and sport and culture from beyond the English-speaking world.

Male and female sporting figures. For decades, women’s sport received a small share of Australian sports coverage. The launch of AFL Women’s (AFLW) in 2017, broadcast on the Seven Network and Fox Footy, changed part of that picture — and the numbers show what happened when representation changed.

AFLW: what changed when women's football got air time

The AFL Women's league launched in 2017, with matches broadcast on the Seven Network and Fox Footy.



Source: AFL Women's records. Retrieved 26 August 2026.

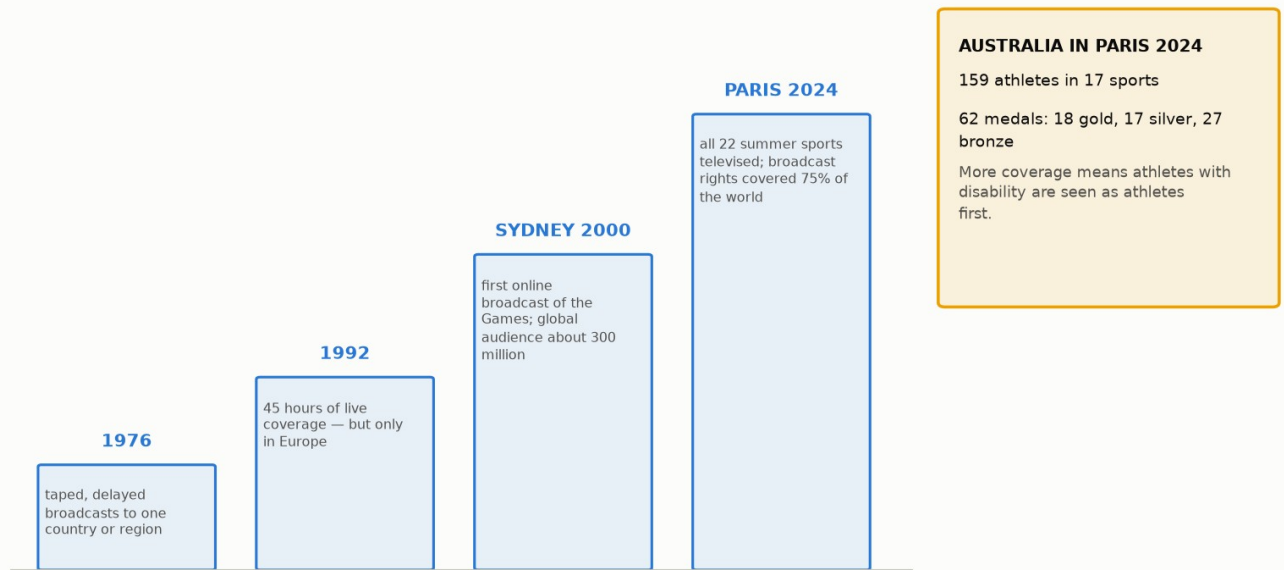
Two panels: teams in the AFLW league grew from 8 in the first season (2017) to 18 today; grand final crowds grew from 9,400 in 2017 to a league-record 53,034 in 2019

More coverage brought more fans, more fans brought more teams, and more teams brought more coverage — the representation loop running the other way, widening attitudes about whose sport “counts”. Young women and girls also saw elite athletes who looked like them, which is the identity side of the loop.

People with disability. The Paralympic Games show the same pattern on a world stage. In 1976, coverage was taped and delayed, shown in one country or region. By Paris 2024, all 22 summer sports were televised and broadcast rights covered 75 per cent of the world.

Paralympic Games on television: growth in coverage

From taped highlights to every sport televised



Sources: Wikipedia, 'Paralympic Games'; Wikipedia, 'Australia at the 2024 Summer Paralympics'. Retrieved 26 August 2026.

Rising bars for Paralympic television coverage: 1976 taped and delayed; 1992 45 hours live but only in Europe; Sydney 2000 first online broadcast with a global audience of about 300 million; Paris 2024 all 22 summer sports televised with rights covering 75 per cent of the world; beside it a card for Australia in Paris 2024: 159 athletes in 17 sports and 62 medals (18 gold, 17 silver, 27 bronze)

When athletes with disability are shown competing at the highest level — measured, commented, celebrated like any elite sport — the stereotype of people with disability as objects of pity loses ground to a fuller picture: athletes first. That is representation shaping attitudes to diversity, in one direction or the other, every time a broadcaster decides what to cover.

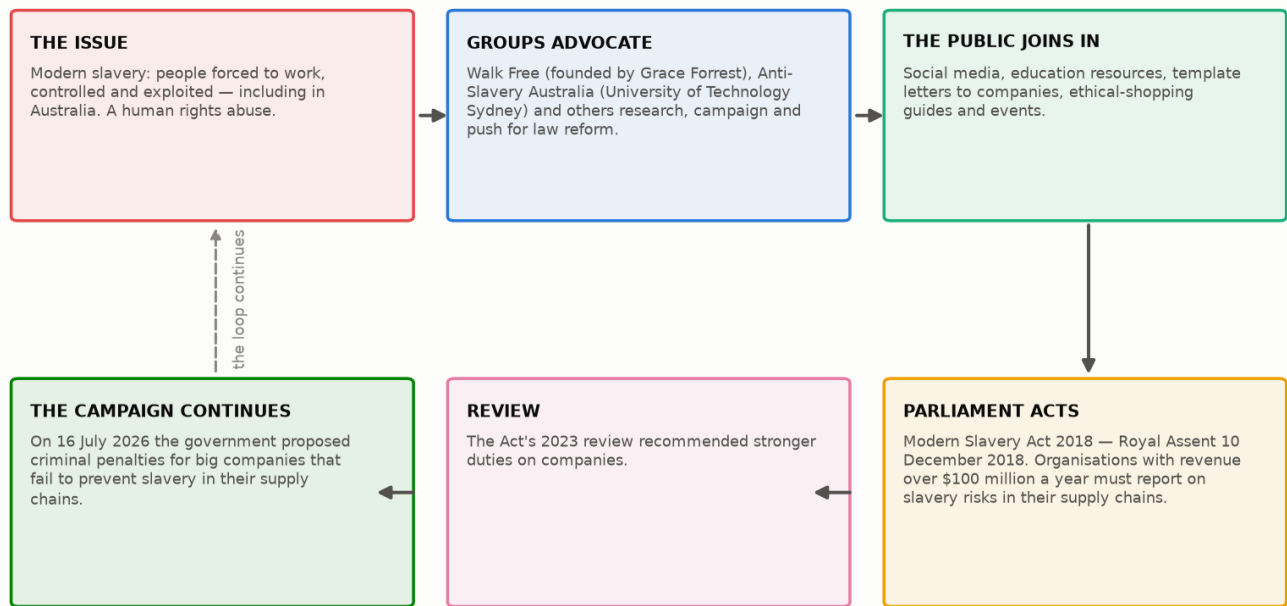
Part 2 — A human rights campaign that used social media (E02)

Media does not only shape attitudes; it can also be the tool citizens use to change law. **Modern slavery** is the umbrella term for situations where one person controls and exploits another and the other cannot refuse or leave — forced labour, debt bondage, forced marriage, trafficking. It is a human rights abuse, and it exists in Australia as well as overseas, including in the supply chains of everyday products.

The campaign for Australia's *Modern Slavery Act 2018* (Commonwealth) is a clear case study of advocacy that leaned on social media.

A human rights campaign in action

The push for Australia's Modern Slavery Act 2018 — and what keeps it moving



Sources: Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Federal Register of Legislation); Walk Free; Anti-Slavery Australia. Retrieved 26 August 2026.

Six-box campaign loop: the issue (modern slavery as a human rights abuse, including in Australia); groups advocate (Walk Free, founded by Grace Forrest, and Anti-Slavery Australia at the University of Technology Sydney, among others, research, campaign and push for law reform); the public joins in (social media, education resources, template letters to companies, ethical-shopping guides and events); parliament acts (Modern Slavery Act 2018, Royal Assent 10 December 2018, requiring organisations with revenue over \$100 million a year to report on slavery risks in their supply chains); review (the Act's 2023 review recommended stronger duties on companies); the campaign continues (on 16 July 2026 the government proposed criminal penalties for big companies that fail to prevent slavery in their supply chains)

Follow the public-engagement box. Campaign groups used social platforms to explain the issue in plain language, share stories, circulate petitions and template letters to companies, and publish ethical-shopping guides that let ordinary shoppers act at once. Members of the public engaged by sharing, signing, asking companies questions in public, and choosing products with cleaner supply chains. That engagement mattered twice: it showed Parliament the issue had voters behind it, and it showed companies that customers were watching.

The law itself is reporting-based: organisations with revenue over \$100 million a year must publish an annual statement on the slavery risks in their supply chains and what they are doing about them. Transparency was the first weapon — sunlight on supply chains. The Act's 2023 review recommended stronger duties, and on 16 July 2026 the government proposed criminal penalties for large companies that fail to act. The campaign loop has not closed; it is still running, and social media is still its megaphone.

Part 3 — Who owns the media, and why it matters (E03)

Representation and campaigns both happen inside media systems — and media systems are owned. Australia's ownership is highly concentrated: a small number of companies own most of the news Australians read and watch.

Who owns the media Australians use?

Australia's media ownership is highly concentrated — few owners, many outlets

Part of the media	Who owns it
Commercial TV networks	Seven (Seven West Media) · Nine (Nine Entertainment) · 10 (owned by Paramount, based overseas).
Newspapers and news sites	Dominated by News Corp Australia and Nine Entertainment (owner of <i>The Sydney Morning Herald</i> and <i>The Age</i>).
Regional and rural news	Dominated by Australian Community Media — many towns have one local owner.
Public broadcasters	ABC and SBS — funded by the Commonwealth, independent of government, with charters to serve all Australians.
Social platforms	Mostly owned by overseas companies: Meta (Facebook, Instagram), X, TikTok, YouTube.

Ownership does not decide every story. But owners set the rules: what gets funded, who gets heard, and how much of the picture one voice can shape.

Sources: Wikipedia, 'Concentration of media ownership in Australia'; sevenwestmedia.com.au; nineforbrands.com.au. Retrieved 26 August 2026.

Ownership table: commercial TV networks — Seven (Seven West Media), Nine (Nine Entertainment), 10 (owned by Paramount, based overseas); newspapers and news sites — dominated by News Corp Australia and Nine Entertainment (owner of The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age); regional and rural news — dominated by Australian Community Media, many towns with one local owner; public broadcasters — ABC and SBS, funded by the Commonwealth, independent of government, with charters to serve all Australians; social platforms — mostly owned by overseas companies such as Meta (Facebook, Instagram), X, TikTok and YouTube

Ownership matters for public opinion because owners decide what gets funded and who gets heard. If two companies own most of the newspapers, then two editorial judgements shape most of the front pages. Ownership also matters for policy: governments watch coverage, and media companies lobby governments about the rules that govern them. Two real events show both directions.

- **The 2017 rule changes.** For decades, the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (Commonwealth) included the “two-out-of-three” rule (one company could not control a TV licence, a radio licence and a newspaper in the same area) and a 75 per cent reach rule. In 2017 Parliament abolished both, and a new wave of mergers followed — including Nine Entertainment’s takeover of Fairfax Media, owner of *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*. The owners of news changed shape, and with them the range of editorial voices in some markets.
- **The News Media Bargaining Code (2021).** When Parliament moved to make platforms pay news businesses for content, Facebook blocked news stories for Australian users for several days in February 2021, then restored them after the law was amended and deals were signed. A private platform’s decision changed what millions of Australians could see for days — a sharp lesson in who holds power over the public’s picture of the world.

Social platforms add a second layer of ownership: the feeds most young Australians use are owned by companies based overseas, and the order of what you see is set by each platform’s algorithm — its rules for choosing what to show you next — in the service of keeping you watching.

A live policy debate: the under-16 social media ban. Ownership and platform power sit behind one of the biggest media-policy debates in Australia right now.

Two strong views: the under-16 social media ban

Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024

Passed federal parliament on 29 November 2024. From 10 December 2025, under-16s cannot hold accounts on the platforms the law lists — including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Reddit, X, Threads, Twitch, Kick and YouTube.

THE CASE FOR THE BAN

Protects young people from harm: bullying, pressure, and content that damages mental health. Gives families a clear rule they can actually use. Pushes platforms to build safer products for young users.

THE CASE AGAINST THE BAN

Raises privacy and rights concerns. Doubts about whether it will work as intended — the technology may not sort ages well. Teens who need support from people their age may lose it. Passed quickly, with details still uncertain.

Both cases were made in parliament and in public debate. Marks here go to the quality of reasoning — not the side chosen.

Source: Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024; Wikipedia article on the Act. Retrieved 26 August 2026.

Two-viewpoints card: the law (Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024, passed 29 November 2024, under-16s unable to hold accounts on listed platforms from 10 December 2025) above two steelmanned cases — for the ban (protects young people from harm, gives families a clear rule, pushes platforms to build safer products) and against the ban (privacy and rights concerns, doubt that age-sorting technology works, loss of online support for teens who need it, law passed quickly with details uncertain)

Both cases are genuinely held, in Parliament and in public debate, and each has evidence behind it. Notice the loop again: media reporting and platform behaviour shaped public opinion about harm to young people; public opinion pushed policy; and the policy now changes what media young people can use. Media influence on opinion and policy is not one-way — it runs in a circle.

Part 4 — Misinformation and disinformation (E04)

The last piece of the picture is what travels through media when it is false. This section uses three terms, defined the way accredited fact-checkers such as AAP FactCheck use them:

- **Misinformation** — false or inaccurate information, shared *without* intent to harm. The sharer believes it.

- **Disinformation** — false information created *on purpose* to mislead or harm.
- **Malinformation** — true information used to harm, such as private details published to hurt someone.

Three kinds of bad information

What separates them is intent

Kind	What it is	Intent	Example (made up for this book)
Misinformation	False or inaccurate information.	No intent to harm — often shared by mistake.	A post says the local pool is closing. The date was wrong, and the person who shared it did not check.
Disinformation	False information created to mislead people.	Intent to deceive or harm.	A made-up story created to make people angry at a group in the community.
Malinformation	True information used to harm.	Intent to harm.	Someone's private details shared publicly to hurt them.

The curriculum uses these words without defining them; this section uses the definitions here. Fact-checkers such as AAP FactCheck use the same split.

Definition frame: this book's own operational definitions, kept consistent with how accredited fact-checkers use the words.

Table of the three kinds of bad information: misinformation (false, no intent to harm, shared by mistake), disinformation (false, intent to deceive or harm), malinformation (true, intent to harm), each with a made-up example

The difference that does the work is **intent** — whether someone meant to mislead. It matters because the fix is different: misinformation calls for education and correction (people who share it in good faith can be reached with better information), while disinformation calls for exposure and deterrence (someone creating lies on purpose will not stop being corrected).

Why does this belong in a civics section? Because a democracy runs on a shared picture of what is true. If false claims travel faster than corrections, voters judge leaders and policies on invented facts; if groups are targeted by disinformation, attitudes to diversity harden on lies. During the 2025 federal election campaign (polling day 3 May 2025), fact-checkers and the Australian Electoral Commission publicly urged voters to check before sharing — the AEC's "Stop and Consider" line is digital literacy in three words. Social media speeds both kinds of bad information: sharing is instant, algorithms reward strong feeling, and a post can circle the country before anyone checks it.

The defence is a civic habit, and it is learnable.

Before you share: five checks

A civic habit for the social media age

1

Who made this — and what do they want me to think, feel or do?

2

When was it made? Old stories are often recycled as if they were new.

3

Is anyone else reporting it? One source is a lead, not proof.

4

Could the image or video be old, edited or cut from its real setting?

5

Has a fact-checker looked at it? AAP FactCheck is a member of the International Fact-Checking Network, run by the Poynter Institute.

Sharing is civic action too: whatever you share adds to what other people see and believe.

AAP FactCheck is a fact-checking service of Australian Associated Press, accredited by the International Fact-Checking Network. Retrieved 26 August 2026.

Five numbered checks before sharing: 1 who made this, and what do they want me to think, feel or do? 2 when was it made — old stories are often recycled as new; 3 is anyone else reporting it — one source is a lead, not proof; 4 could the image or video be old, edited or cut from its real setting? 5 has a fact-checker looked at it — AAP FactCheck is a member of the International Fact-Checking Network, run by the Poynter Institute; with the closing line “sharing is civic action too”

And remember the loop from Part 1: *you* are part of the media now. Whatever you share adds to the picture other people see. Checking before sharing is a civic habit, like voting carefully or arguing in a fair way — a small act that keeps the shared picture closer to the truth.

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — scaffolded (VC2HC10K11.E01)

Reading the AFLW numbers: how did a change in representation change attitudes?

Use the AFLW figure: 8 teams in 2017 growing to 18 today; a grand final crowd of 9,400 in 2017 growing to a league-record 53,034 in 2019; the opening round of 2017 drawing 24,568 fans to one match and 896,000 television viewers.

Step	Model move
1. Read the numbers twice	First pass: list what grew — teams, crowds, viewers. Second pass: note the order. Broadcast coverage came first (2017 launch on Seven and Fox Footy); the crowds and teams grew after it.
2. Name the representation change	Before 2017, elite women’s football was mostly invisible on free-to-air sport coverage. The launch put women’s football on television as a serious league —

Step	Model move
3. Run the loop	same sport, same clubs' colours, real stakes. Show (televised matches) → repeat (weekly coverage over seasons) → shape (record crowds, girls signing up, women's sport talked about as sport) → respond (the league expanded from 8 teams to 18 because the audience was there).
4. Connect to identity and attitudes	Attitudes: "women's football is real football" gained ground against the stereotype that only men's sport counts. Identity: young female athletes saw a pathway that had not been visible on their screens.
5. Know the limit	Coverage started the loop; it did not do everything. Pay, facilities and scheduling for women's players remained live issues after 2017. Representation shifted attitudes — it did not, by itself, settle every question of fairness.

Source: AFL Women's records — 2017 launch and opening-round attendance and audience, 2017 and 2019 grand final crowds, team counts. Retrieved 26 August 2026.

Worked example 2 — scaffolded (VC2HC10K11.E03)

Both sides at their strongest: should Australians under 16 be banned from social media?

Claim A: *"The under-16 ban protects young Australians and was good policy."* Claim B: *"The under-16 ban is a mistake and should be reversed."*

Step	Model move
1. Fix the facts	The <i>Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024</i> passed federal Parliament on 29 November 2024; from 10 December 2025, under-16s cannot hold accounts on the platforms the law lists. Argue about the real law, not a rumour of it.
2. Strongest form of Claim A	Young people face bullying, pressure and harmful content at an age that is hard to shrug off; platforms profit from keeping them scrolling, so they will not fix it themselves; a clear age rule gives families backing and pushes platforms to design safer products.
3. Strongest form of Claim B	The law raises privacy concerns (age-checking means more data about everyone); the technology for sorting ages is unproven, so the ban may mostly punish law-abiding families while determined teens route around it; some young people — including those isolated offline — lose support communities; and the law was passed quickly with details left uncertain.
4. Audit the assumptions	Claim A assumes platforms cannot be fixed by lighter rules, and that an age line at 16 is the right one. Claim B assumes harms are manageable as they stand, and that lost online support has offline replacements. Both hide a value choice: protection first, or liberty first? Surface it.
5. Ask what evidence would decide	Usage and harm data after 10 December 2025: did reported harm fall, did teens migrate to unregulated spaces, did age-checks collect data or fail? That evidence is still arriving — an honest answer says so.
6. Reach a weighed conclusion	A model answer picks a side <i>or</i> holds judgement, but

Step	Model move
	must state: the strongest point of the other side, the evidence that would change its mind, and the value choice it is making. Marks go to that structure, not to the side.

Source: Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024 (Commonwealth); parliamentary and public debate reporting. Retrieved 26 August 2026.

Practice tasks

Scaffolded

Q1. Use the representation loop figure (Part 1). Put these events in the loop's order by naming the step (show, repeat, shape, respond) each one belongs to: (a) a viewer writes to a network asking why a group never appears in its drama; (b) a news bulletin shows an immigrant community only in a story about crime; (c) audiences see that kind of story many times over years; (d) classmates treat a new arrival as if the crime story were about him.

Q2. Use the groups table (Part 1). Label each made-up headline *narrow* or *fuller*, and give one reason using the table's "why it matters" column: (a) "Local family's small business wins suburb's best bakery award"; (b) "Disability athlete 'inspirational' for simply turning up"; (c) "Women's grand final sets new ticket record".

Q3. Use the SBS timeline and Source A (Part 1). (a) In what year did SBS television begin? (b) In your own words, what does the charter say SBS must reflect? (c) Give one way a broadcaster doing that job widens the picture of Australia, compared with a channel that shows only one kind of Australian life.

Q4. Use the campaign flow figure (Part 2). (a) Put in order: Royal Assent to the Modern Slavery Act; the 2023 review; the government proposing criminal penalties; campaign groups pushing for a law. (b) Name two ways members of the public engaged with the issue online, from the figure. (c) What was the first "weapon" the Act used against slavery in supply chains?

Q5. Use the ownership table (Part 3). (a) Which company owns *The Age*? (b) Name the two public broadcasters and one thing the table says about how they are set up. (c) Which two ownership rules did Parliament abolish in 2017?

Q6. Use the three-kinds table (Part 4). Classify each as misinformation, disinformation or malinformation, and state the clue that decides it: (a) your aunt shares a post saying a famous person said something he never said — she believes it; (b) an account created overseas posts invented quotes to make Australians angry at a migrant community; (c) someone publishes a teacher's private address to punish her for a grade.

Un scaffolded

Q7. Choose *immigrant groups*. Using the representation loop, explain how repeated narrow coverage could harden attitudes to diversity in Australia, and describe one change a broadcaster could make that would run the loop the other way. Anchor your answer in one real Australian fact from this section (for example, the share of Australians born overseas, or SBS's charter).

Q8. Choose *people with disability*. Explain what changed between the 1976 and 2024 Paralympic Games in how athletes with disability were represented, and assess what that change does — and does not — do for attitudes. Include one limit of representation on its own.

Q9. "Media ownership concentration is a problem for Australian democracy." Give the strongest case for this claim using two Australian facts from Part 3, then give the strongest counterweight (think about public broadcasters and the many voices online), and state your own weighed view.

Q10. Explain the difference between misinformation and disinformation in your own words, with one made-up example of each. Then argue: why should a government, a platform and a citizen respond *differently* to the two? (Hint from Part 4: intent.)

Source inquiry

“... to provide multilingual and multicultural broadcasting and digital media services” that “inform, educate and entertain all Australians” and, through that, “reflect Australia’s multicultural society”.

— SBS’s own summary of the charter set out in the *Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991* (Commonwealth). (See the Source A figure in Part 1.)

Treat the charter as a source to be analysed, not admired. Answer in full sentences:

1. What job does the law give SBS that a commercial channel does not have by law? Quote the words that do the work.
2. Why might a Parliament write such a charter in 1991? What did the market alone not provide, on this account?
3. Steelman the other side: give the strongest case you can for the view that public broadcasters are unnecessary — that in a country with many commercial channels and global streaming, the market and choice can supply diversity without government-funded broadcasters.
4. Weigh the two views against one real fact from this section (for example, the concentration of newspaper ownership, or the share of Australians born overseas). Which view does the fact strengthen, and why?
5. Reach a judged conclusion: to what extent do public broadcasters matter for a diverse Australia? State your extent (“a great extent”, “in part”, “little”), and one piece of evidence that would make you change your mind.

Marking rewards reasoning, not the conclusion: the charter read closely, the other side stated in its strongest form, a real fact used as evidence, and an honest limit acknowledged. Two students who reach opposite conclusions can both do excellent work.

Suggested answers

Q1. (a) Respond. (b) Show. (c) Repeat. (d) Shape. One mark per correct step.

Q2. (a) Fuller — an immigrant group shown as neighbours and business owners, part of everyday life; fuller stories build understanding. (b) Narrow — the athlete is shown as an object of pity or wonder rather than as an athlete; being seen in full changes how a group is treated. (c) Fuller — women’s sport shown as serious, record-setting sport; coverage tells young people whose sport counts.

Q3. (a) 1980 (24 October 1980). (b) Australia’s multicultural society — its mix of cultures and languages. (c) Any one, for example: news and drama in many languages, or stories told by the people in them, so audiences meet groups in full rather than through a single narrow picture.

Q4. (a) Campaign groups push for a law → Royal Assent (10 December 2018) → 2023 review → government proposes criminal penalties (16 July 2026). (b) Any two: sharing campaign posts, signing petitions, sending template letters to companies, using ethical-shopping guides. (c) Transparency — compulsory public reporting on slavery risks in supply chains.

Q5. (a) Nine Entertainment. (b) ABC and SBS; funded by the Commonwealth, independent of government, with charters to serve all Australians. (c) The two-out-of-three rule and the 75 per cent reach rule.

Q6. (a) Misinformation — the clue is no intent to harm; she believes it. (b) Disinformation — invented content created on purpose to mislead and harm. (c) Malinformation — the address is true, but it is published to harm.

Q7. Model: narrow crime-focused coverage (show), repeated over years (repeat), can teach audiences to associate a whole group with crime (shape) — hardening attitudes at school, work and the ballot box; a broadcaster could pair that coverage with everyday stories — the same group as workers, neighbours, students (a fuller show) — and, repeated, that runs the loop towards understanding. Anchor fact: about 29.8 per cent of Australians were born overseas, or SBS’s charter to reflect a multicultural society. Limit to credit: representation is one input; contact and policy matter too.

Q8. Model: 1976 — taped, delayed, one-region coverage, athletes almost never seen; 2024 — all 22 summer sports televised, rights covering 75 per cent of the world, and Australia’s 159 athletes winning 62 medals covered as elite

sport. The change replaces pity with a fuller picture (athletes first), widening attitudes. What it does not do on its own: coverage does not fix access, funding or inclusion off the field; representation shifts attitudes, other changes must follow.

Q9. Model case for: few owners set most front pages (News Corp Australia and Nine Entertainment dominate newspapers; many regional towns have one owner), so public opinion can rest on a narrow range of editorial judgements, and owners lobby governments on media rules — policy can follow ownership. Strongest counterweight: public broadcasters with charters to serve all Australians (ABC, SBS), plus many independent voices online, keep the picture wider than the ownership table alone suggests. Weighed view: any conclusion that uses two facts for, one counterweight, and states its confidence.

Q10. Model: misinformation is false information shared by mistake (example: a wrong date shared in good faith); disinformation is false information created on purpose to mislead (example: invented quotes targeting a community). Responses differ because intent differs: the misinformed sharer needs correction and better habits (education, checks); the creator of disinformation needs exposure, platform action and possibly law; governments should fix the first with literacy and the second with deterrence — treating them as one problem gets both responses wrong.

Source inquiry. 1. SBS must by law provide multilingual and multicultural services and reflect Australia's multicultural society; a commercial channel has no such legal duty — its duty is to its owners and advertisers. 2. On this account, the market alone left many languages and cultures unserved — diversity was not profitable everywhere, so Parliament wrote the duty into law. 3. Strongest against: choice and competition already deliver many languages and cultures through streaming and global platforms; government-funded broadcasters crowd out private rivals and compel taxpayers to fund content they may not want; charters can reflect 1991 media scarcity more than today's abundance. 4. Example use: newspaper ownership concentrated in two companies strengthens the case *for* public broadcasters (the market concentrates, so a charter-based counterweight matters); or, the abundance of online voices weakens it (diversity now arrives without a charter). Either use credited if the fact genuinely bears on the view. 5. Any stated extent with one supporting fact and one piece of disconfirming evidence named. Marks go to structure, not side.

Curriculum traceability

Item	Elaboration id (verbatim from VCAA export)	Where in this section
How media show different groups in Australian society, and what those pictures do to community cohesiveness — taught as scoped for this book: of the groups named in the export, one is out of scope for this series and is not taught; immigrant groups, sporting figures (male and female) and people with disability are taught in full	VC2HC10K11.E01	Part 1; figures 3c_media_diet.png, 3c_representation_loop.png, 3c_groups_table.png, 3c_sbs_timeline.png, 3c_source_sbs.png, 3c_aflw_growth.png, 3c_paralympic_tv.png; Worked example 1; Q1–Q3, Q7, Q8
A campaign for human rights that runs on social media — investigating it, and how the public engaged with the issue	VC2HC10K11.E02	Part 2; figure 3c_campaign_flow.png; Q4
Media and social media ownership — examining it, and its influence on public opinion and policy, at home and abroad	VC2HC10K11.E03	Part 3; figures 3c_ownership.png, 3c_two_viewpoints.png; Worked example 2; Q5, Q9
Analysing what misinformation and disinformation do in media and social media	VC2HC10K11.E04	Part 4; figures 3c_mis_dis.png, 3c_check_before_share.png; Q6, Q10