

History Level 6

Chapter 2 — Australia 1900–2000: Federation and the changing nation

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Contents

Section	Page
The road to Federation: significant individuals, events and ideas; the Constitution and democratic government	2
Democracy and citizenship since Federation: the changing experiences of women, children and migrants	17
Migration to Australia in the 20th century from Europe and Asia: causes, experiences and impacts	30
How individuals and groups helped change Australian society	44
Different interpretations of a 20th-century development: migration, politics and “the lucky country”	61

The road to Federation: significant individuals, events and ideas; the Constitution and democratic government

Curriculum traceability (teacher-facing). This section owns **VC2HH6K07** (Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0, History, Levels 5 and 6 band): the significant individuals, events and ideas behind Australia’s Federation, plus the Constitution and democratic government. It draws on elaborations **VC2HH6K07.E01** – **.E04** (linkage only; the narrative below is not a walk through E01→E04 — see TOC §3 and D10):

- **E01:** a presentation or display on the Constitution and its government system — realised in Writing task Option B.
- **E02:** the path to Federation studied through its key people and events — the spine of the narrative, people table and demonstrations.
- **E03:** the United States’ federal model behind the Constitution’s first draft — realised in the Inglis Clark content and the influences figure. (The export’s “Andrew Clark” is the Tasmanian jurist Sir Andrew Inglis Clark; the section uses his correct name.)
- **E04:** the British origins of Australia’s law and government — realised in “Where the ideas came from” and the separation figure.

Relevant achievement-standard clause: students explain how significant individuals, events and ideas contributed to continuity and change in Australian politics and society, Federation included. First Nations disposition: **none** (TOC §2A/§3). Cross-subject planning note only: the present-day institutions are taught the same year by Civics and Citizenship (**VC2HC6K01/K02**); this section teaches the **historical path** to Federation (TOC §4).

In this section

By the 1880s, the island of Australia was not one country. It was **six colonies**, each ruled by Britain, each with its own parliament, its own premier and its own laws. In this section you will follow the twelve-year road that turned those six colonies into **one nation** on 1 January 1901. You will meet the people who pushed for it and the people who argued with it, the big ideas they borrowed from Britain and the United States, and the **Constitution** — the written rule book they made — including the **democratic** parts of it: a parliament the people elect, and changes that only the people can approve.

You will learn to:

- explain the **causes** that pushed the colonies towards Federation, and the **consequences** of it;
- sequence the key events and people of 1889–1901;
- read a real primary source (a speech reported in a real newspaper) and a real data set (the referendum votes);
- say what **changed** when Federation came, and what **stayed the same**;
- give the strongest case for each side of the referendum debate, and reason to your own view.

Key terms — defined before use

Some words in history are used with more than one meaning. This section tells you up front which meaning it uses.

- **democracy / democratic** — The Victorian Curriculum uses these words but does not define them. This section therefore treats *democratic government* as **government chosen by the people in fair elections, in which most adult citizens may vote, and in which the rulers must obey the same laws as everyone else**. Other meanings exist, but every task here can be answered on this meaning alone.
- **Federation / federation** — a word with two senses, and both matter here. Capital-F **Federation** is the *event*: 1 January 1901, when the six colonies became the states of one nation, the Commonwealth of Australia. Small-f **federation** is the *system*: power shared between a national government and state governments, written down in a constitution.
- **constitution** — a country’s written rule book: it sets up the parliament, the government and the courts, and says what each may and may not do.
- **referendum** — a vote in which the people themselves say yes or no to a big change (not a vote to choose a person).

- **colony** — a place ruled by a more powerful country far away. In 1900 the six Australian colonies were still British colonies.
 - **premier** — the leader of a colony's (later a state's) own government.
 - **prime minister** — the leader of the national government.
 - **delegate** — a person chosen or elected to speak and decide for a group at a meeting.
 - **convention** — here, a large formal meeting of delegates (not the everyday meaning, "what is usually done").
 - **constitutional monarchy** — a system with a king or queen as head of state, but the monarch rules only with the parliament and under the constitution, not alone.
 - **Westminster system** — the British way of governing: a parliament chosen in elections runs the country, and the government must keep the parliament's support.
 - **separation of powers** — splitting government power into three parts (**legislative** makes the laws, **executive** carries them out, **judiciary** decides what they mean) so that no single group holds all of it. These three words are the curriculum's own terms for the three parts.
 - **customs duty** — a tax charged on goods coming across a border.
 - **oration** — a formal public speech. (History gives the name *Tenterfield Oration* to Parkes's 1889 speech.)
 - **perspective** — one person's or group's point of view, shaped by what they wanted, knew and believed.
 - **continuity** — what stays the same over time; its partner idea is **change** — what becomes different.
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The story

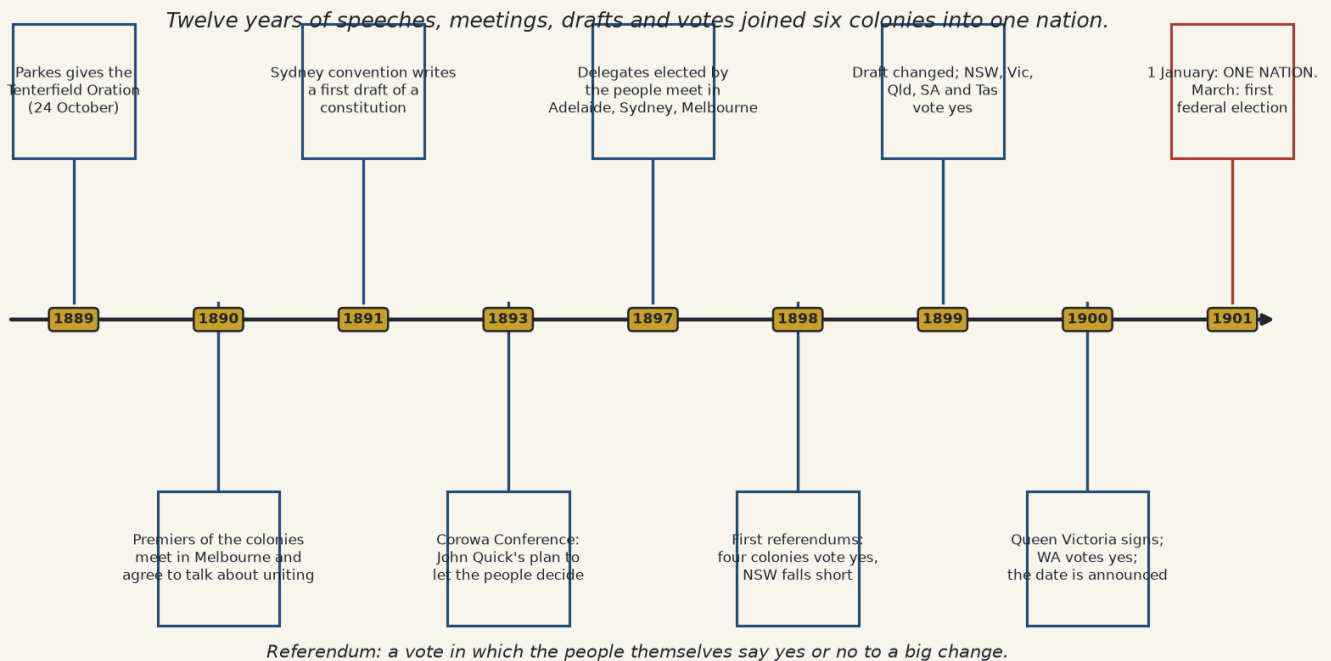
Six colonies, six sets of rules

By the 1880s, Britain had set up six self-governing colonies along the coasts of Australia: New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia. Each had a parliament elected by its voters, a premier, and its own laws. Each colony also guarded its own borders: goods crossing from one colony to another were stopped and taxed with **customs duties**, as if the colonies were foreign countries. The railways did not match either — colonies laid tracks of different widths, so a train from one colony could not run into the next. There were six post systems and six sets of stamps.

At the same time, a new feeling was growing. Most children born in the colonies in the 1880s had never seen Britain. They called Australia home. More and more of them thought of themselves as Australian first, and as people of one colony second.

There were also worries. The long coasts were hard to guard with six tiny armies and navies, and other empires were showing interest in the Pacific. Many people argued that one country could defend itself far better than six colonies could.

The road to Federation, 1889-1901



A timeline from 1889 to 1901 showing nine steps on the road to Federation, from the Tenterfield Oration to the first federal election

The spark at Tenterfield

On **24 October 1889**, Sir Henry Parkes, the premier of New South Wales, stopped in the small town of Tenterfield on his way home to Sydney. At the Tenterfield School of Arts he gave a speech — an **oration** — that history looks back on as the spark of Federation. The next day *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported his words, including this call:

“... unite and create a great national government for all Australia.” — Sir Henry Parkes, Tenterfield, 24 October 1889, reported in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 October 1889, p. 8 (National Library of Australia).

Parkes told his listeners that the time was close at hand to build that national government, and he pointed to the United States as proof it could be done: “... what the Americans have done by war, Australians can bring about in peace.” Remember that this is a **perspective**: Parkes *wanted* union, and his speech is evidence of what one powerful man believed and wanted other people to believe — not a bare fact about what everyone thought.

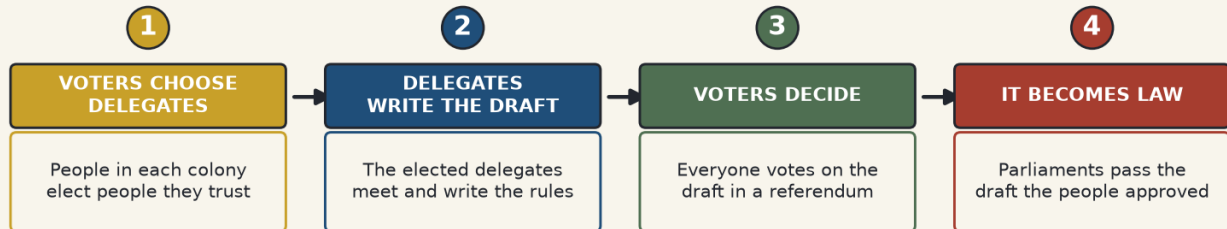
The speech worked. In 1890 the premiers of the colonies met in Melbourne and agreed to talk about uniting. In 1891 a **convention** in Sydney wrote a first draft of a constitution. Much of that draft came from **Sir Andrew Inglis Clark** of Tasmania, who admired the United States’ federal system and had travelled there, meeting the American judge Oliver Wendell Holmes in Boston. But the early 1890s brought hard times, and the push for Federation stalled.

Quick’s big idea: let the people decide

In 1893, at the border town of Corowa, a meeting of federation supporters heard a plan from **Sir John Quick** — a man who had come to Victoria from England as a child, worked as a miner at Bendigo, and put himself through law. Quick’s plan moved the whole question out of the premiers’ hands and into the people’s:

John Quick's plan - how the people could decide (Corowa, 1893)

Quick wanted ordinary voters, not just politicians, to shape the new nation.



This is the plan the 1897-98 convention followed: elected delegates wrote the draft, and the people voted on it.

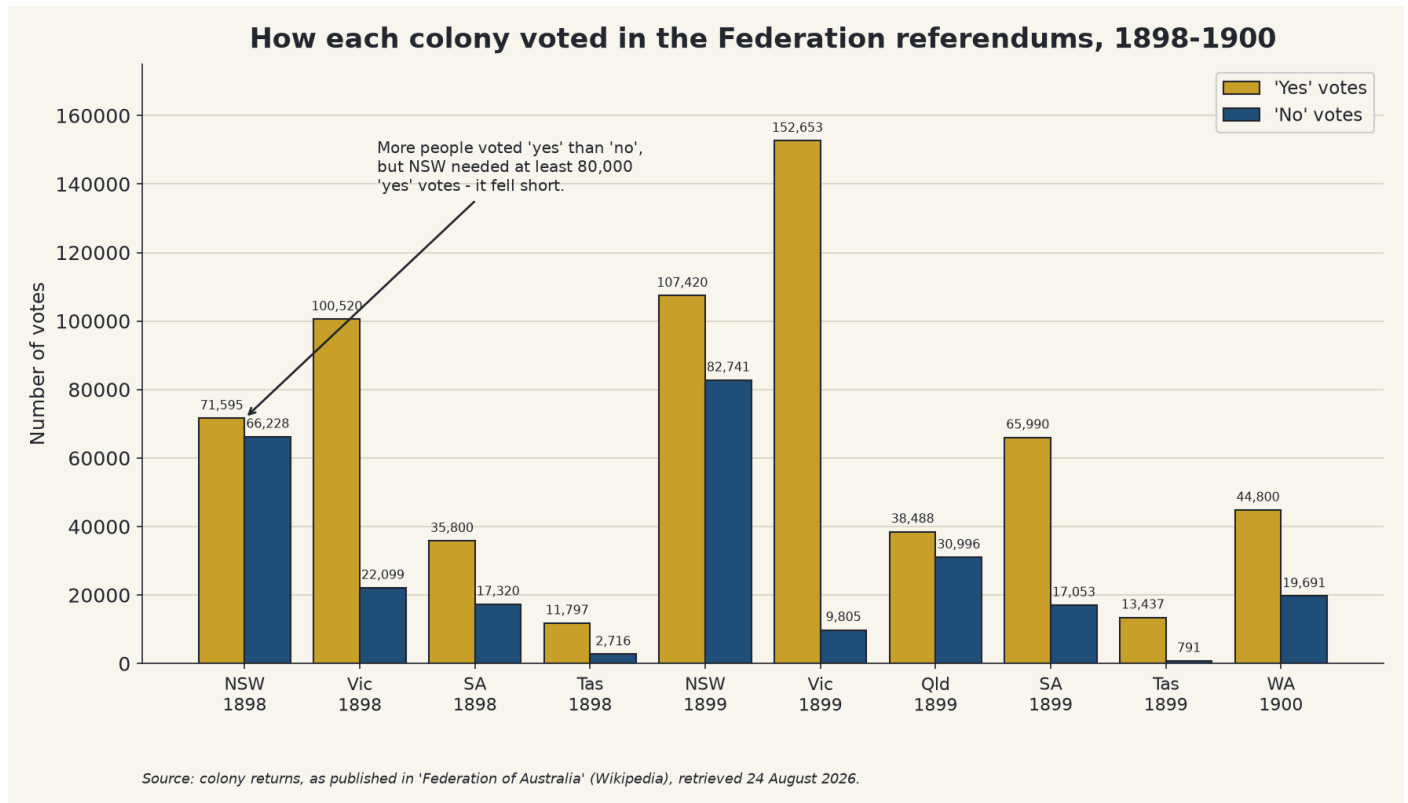
A four-step diagram of John Quick's 1893 plan: 1 voters choose delegates, 2 delegates write the draft, 3 voters decide in a referendum, 4 it becomes law

The colonies took it up. In 1897 and 1898, an elected convention met in three sittings — Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne — to write the draft. In New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania the **delegates** were chosen by the people, as Quick had wanted. **Sir Edmund Barton** of New South Wales led the convention's hard work, and **Alfred Deakin** of Victoria argued, spoke and brought rivals to agreement.

One candidate at the 1897 elections in South Australia made history: **Catherine Helen Spence**, who became the first woman in Australia to stand for political office. She could stand because South Australia had given women the vote and the right to stand for parliament — the first colony in Australia to do so, by a law of 1894.

The people decide: the referendums, 1898–1900

The finished draft went to the people. Between 1898 and 1900, every colony held a **referendum**.



A bar chart of the yes and no votes in each colony's Federation referendums, 1898 to 1900, with every colony ending in a yes majority

The first round, in 1898, did not go well for the federation camp. In New South Wales more people voted yes than no — but a NSW law said the draft needed at least 80,000 yes votes to move forward, and it did not reach that number. The colony's premier, **Sir George Reid**, had given his famous “Yes-No” speech that year: he supported Federation but pointed out problems in the draft, above all the power it gave the Senate over money. Both camps made strong cases:

The referendum debate: the strongest case on each side

Fair history listens to both sides. These are the best arguments each camp made in the 1890s.

The 'YES' case

- * Together we are stronger: one army and navy protect all the colonies.
- * One set of rules for trade: no taxes on goods crossing colony borders.
- * Shared services, like post and the telegraph, would run as one.
- * A new nation would give Australians more say over their own future.

The 'NO' case

- * Big colonies like NSW and Victoria could out-vote the smaller ones.
- * A national parliament might take away the colonies' power and their tax money.
- * Our colony already works well: why hand its decisions to strangers?
- * The draft was rushed - better to wait and get the rules right.

People on both sides wanted what was best for their colony. Many 'no' voters, like George Reid, still wanted Federation - they just wanted a better draft. Their arguments changed the final Constitution.

The strongest yes case and the strongest no case in the referendum debate, side by side

Reid's arguments mattered. The premiers met and changed the draft, giving New South Wales better terms, including a promise that the new national capital would be built in NSW.

In 1899 the voters of NSW, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania all said yes, and in 1900 Western Australia joined them. The draft then went to Britain, whose parliament still had to make it law. Deakin travelled to London to argue the colonies' case. On **9 July 1900**, Queen Victoria signed the bill — the *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act* — and on 17 September she made the formal announcement that the new nation would begin.

At midnight on **1 January 1901**, the six colonies became the six **states** of one nation, the Commonwealth of Australia. In March, the people elected the first federal parliament — 75 members in the House of Representatives and 36 senators — and **Edmund Barton** became the first prime minister. Parkes, the old spark of the movement, had died in 1896 and never saw the day. These are the key people you have met:

Key people of Federation

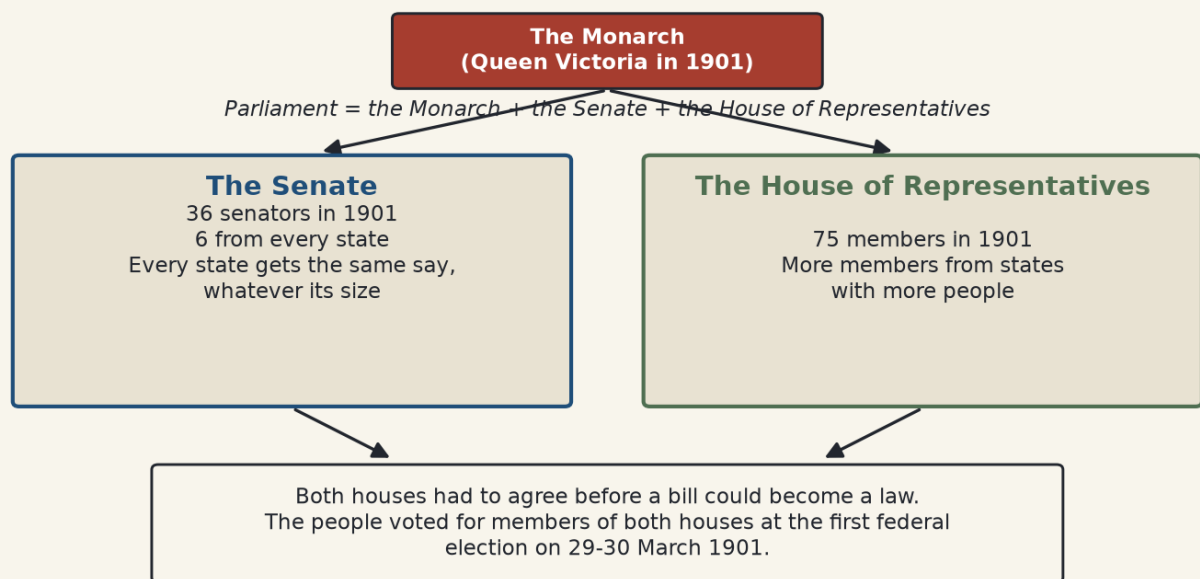
Who?	Colony	What they did
Sir Henry Parkes	New South Wales	Premier five times over. His 1889 Tenterfield speech restarted the push. Often called the 'Father of Federation'. Died in 1896, before Federation happened.
Sir Edmund Barton	New South Wales	Led the work of the 1897-98 convention and the 'yes' campaign. Became Australia's first Prime Minister on 1 January 1901.
Alfred Deakin	Victoria	A gifted speaker who brought people to agreement. Campaigned for the 'yes' vote and pushed Britain to make the draft a law. Three times Prime Minister.
Sir George Reid	New South Wales	Premier of NSW. His famous 1898 'Yes-No' speech pointed out problems in the draft, which led to changes before the next vote.
Sir John Quick	Victoria	Came from England as a child and worked as a miner at Bendigo, then became a lawyer. His 1893 Corowa plan put the people in charge of the decision.
Sir Andrew Inglis Clark	Tasmania	Wrote the first draft constitution in 1891. He admired the United States' federal system and used its ideas.
Catherine Helen Spence	South Australia	In 1897 she stood for election as a convention delegate - the first woman in Australia to stand for office.
Queen Victoria	Britain	Queen of the British Empire. In July 1900 she signed the bill that made the Constitution a law.

Many more people - men and women in every colony - campaigned, wrote letters and voted. Federation was a team effort.

A table of the key people of Federation, listing who they were, their colony, and what they did

What the Constitution made

The new Federal Parliament under the Constitution



Why two houses? Small states feared big states would out-vote them. The Senate keeps the states equal; the House reflects the population. Both together balance the two.

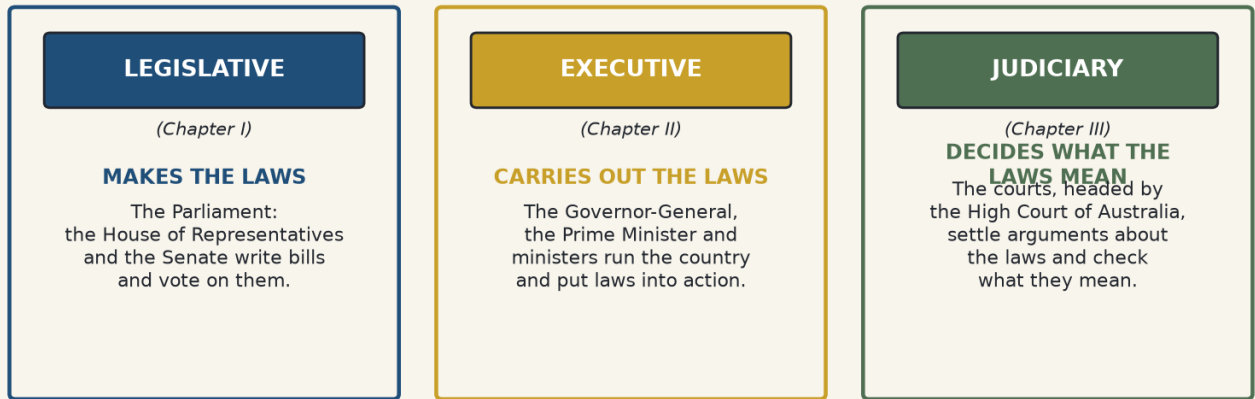
A diagram of the 1901 Federal Parliament: the Monarch at the top with the Senate of 36 senators (six per state) and the House of Representatives of 75 members below

The Constitution set up a **federal** system. The six states kept their own parliaments for their own affairs — schools, police, hospitals, land — while the new national parliament handled the things the colonies wanted to share, such as the army and navy, the post, and trade between the states. The national parliament copied the British shape, with two houses, but it borrowed an American trick to keep the small states on board: in the **Senate** every state has the same number of senators whatever its size, while the **House of Representatives** gives more members to states with more people. A bill had to be agreed by both houses before it could become a law.

The Constitution also kept Australia a **constitutional monarchy**. The monarch (Queen Victoria in 1901) remained head of state, but could not govern alone: the monarch's place in Australia was filled day to day by a Governor-General, and real governing power sat with ministers who had to keep the support of the elected parliament — the **Westminster system** the colonies already knew.

Separation of powers: three jobs, three groups

The Constitution splits the power of government into three parts, called Chapters I, II and III.



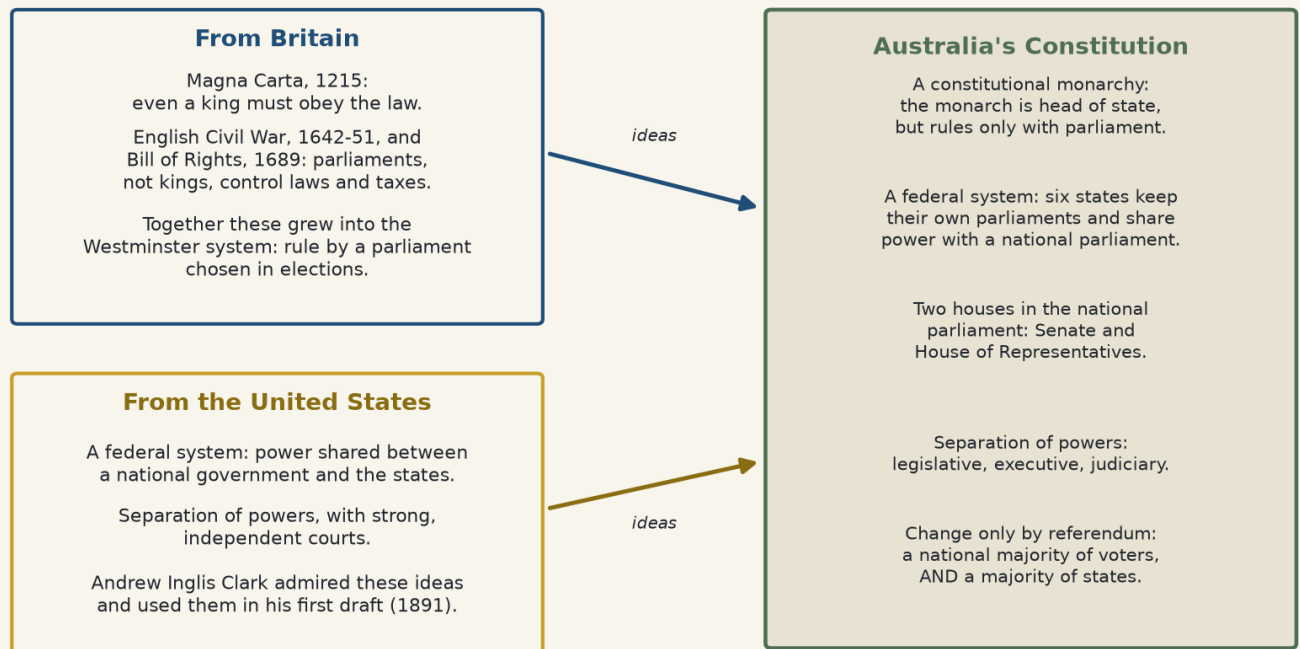
Why split the power? So that no single person or group can make the laws, carry them out and judge them all at once. Each part keeps watch on the others.

A three-column diagram of the separation of powers: the legislative part makes the laws, the executive part carries them out, and the judiciary, headed by the High Court, decides what the laws mean

And it split power three ways — the **separation of powers** — so that no single person or group could make the laws, carry them out and judge them all at once. Finally, it gave the last word to the people: the Constitution can only be changed by a **referendum** that wins a majority of voters across the nation *and* a majority of voters in a majority of states. That double rule means small states cannot be changed against their will, and big states cannot be ignored.

Where the ideas came from

Where did the ideas come from?



The people who wrote the Constitution mixed old British habits of parliament with the American idea of written, shared power.

A diagram showing two streams of ideas, from Britain (Magna Carta, the English Civil War and Bill of Rights, the Westminster system) and from the United States (a federal system and separation of powers), flowing into the features of Australia's Constitution

The rule book was a mix of two traditions. From **Britain** came the habit of parliament: Magna Carta (1215) had planted the idea that even a king must obey the law; the English Civil War (1642–51) and the Bill of Rights (1689) had made parliaments, not kings, the masters of laws and taxes; and the Westminster system gave the colonies their model of elected government. From the **United States** — through Inglis Clark’s draft — came the federal idea of power written down and shared between a nation and its states, with separate, independent courts to guard it.

Continuity and change

Federation was a big **change**: six colonies became one nation; a new national parliament, government and High Court were created; border taxes between the old colonies ended; and Australians gained a national say in their own affairs. Yet much **continued**: Australia remained a monarchy under the British crown; the states kept their old parliaments, now called state parliaments, with wide powers; the Westminster way of doing politics carried straight on; and for most people, daily life in 1901 looked much as it had in 1900. Good history holds both facts at once: what changed, and what stayed the same.

Worked demonstrations

Demonstration 1 — reading a real primary source

A **primary source** was made at the time, by people who were there. Here is a real one: a speech reported in a real newspaper. Watch how a historian reads it.

The source. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Friday 25 October 1889, page 8: “Sir Henry Parkes at Tenterfield” — a report of the speech Parkes gave the day before at the Tenterfield School of Arts. Two lines from it: “... unite and create a great national government for all Australia” and “... what the Americans have done by war, Australians can bring about in peace.”

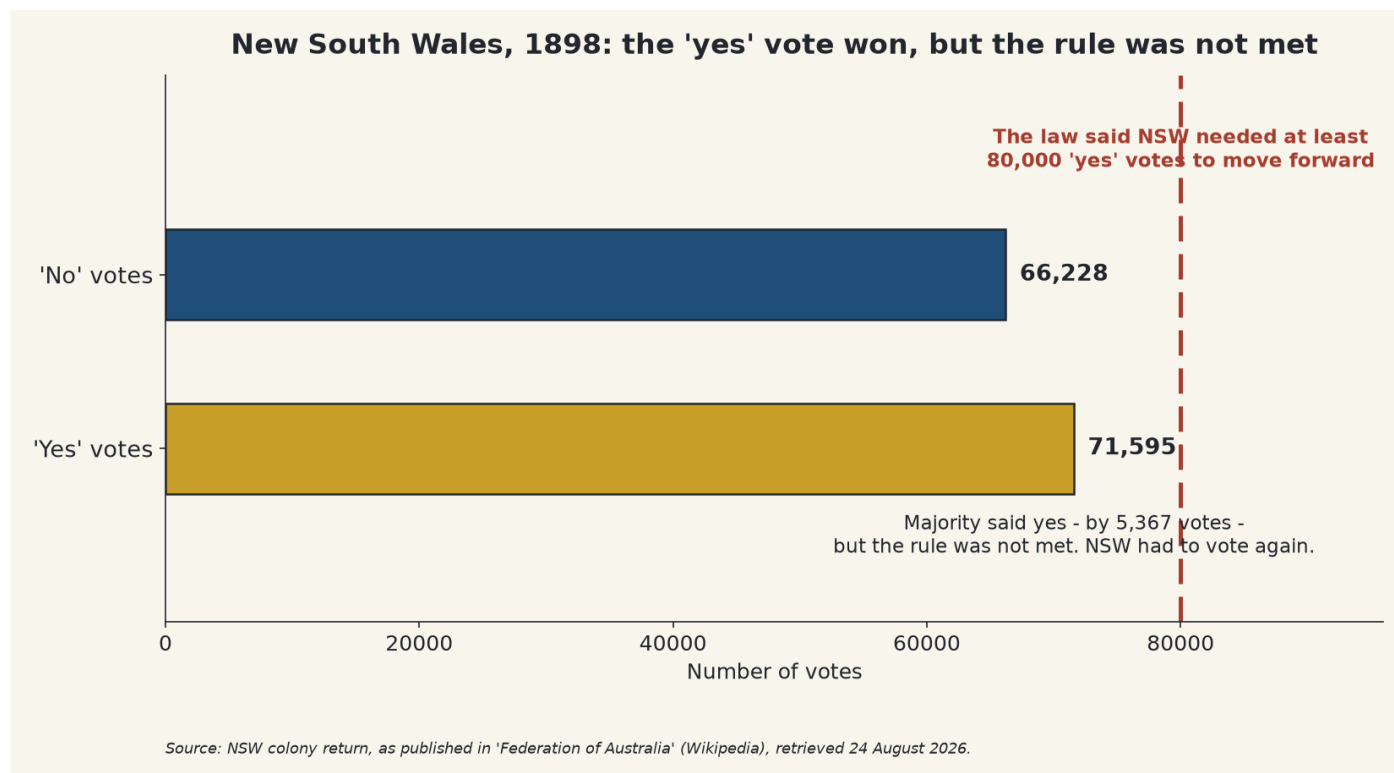
Source: “Sir Henry Parkes at Tenterfield”, The Sydney Morning Herald, 25 October 1889, p. 8 (National Library of Australia).

Question a historian asks	What the source says back
Who made it, and what did they want?	A newspaper reporter wrote down what Parkes said. Parkes was the NSW premier and wanted the colonies to unite — so the speech is his perspective , his argument, not a bare fact.
When and where ?	Reported 25 October 1889, about a speech given 24 October 1889 at Tenterfield, NSW — right when the federation push had gone quiet.
What is it evidence for ?	That a powerful politician was calling for a national government, and using the United States as proof it could be done in peace.
What can it not tell us?	What ordinary listeners thought. One speech cannot show the views of a whole colony — for that you would line up many sources, like the referendum numbers below.

The lesson: a source is someone’s voice. We value it *because* it shows what one person believed and wanted — then we check it against other evidence.

Demonstration 2 — reading a real data set

Numbers are sources too. Look at New South Wales in 1898:



A bar chart of the 1898 New South Wales referendum: 71,595 yes votes against 66,228 no votes, with a dashed line showing the 80,000 yes-vote rule that was not met

Figures: the colonial vote counts, from “Federation of Australia” (Wikipedia, retrieved 24 August 2026), after the colonies’ own returns.

Reading it like a historian. More NSW voters said yes (71,595) than no (66,228) — a yes majority of 5,367. Yet the draft did not carry in NSW, because a NSW law set the bar at 80,000 yes votes and the yes vote missed that bar by 8,405 votes.

Cause and consequence. The *cause* of the failure was not that most NSW voters were against Federation; it was the 80,000 rule on top of a narrow yes majority. The *consequences* were (1) the premiers met and changed the draft, giving NSW better terms such as the promise of the capital, and (2) NSW voted again in 1899, when 107,420 said yes — enough to join the new nation. One number, read carefully, explains a turning point.

Practice — with help

S1. Using the timeline figure: (a) which came first, Quick’s Corowa plan or the elected convention? (b) how many years passed between the Tenterfield Oration and 1 January 1901? (c) name one event on the timeline that happened *after* the Queen signed the bill.

S2. Using the key-people figure, match each clue to a person: (a) first prime minister; (b) first woman to stand for office in Australia; (c) the “Father of Federation” who never saw it happen; (d) miner from Bendigo whose plan gave voters the final say; (e) Tasmanian whose first draft borrowed American ideas.

S3. Copy the sentences and fill each gap with a key term: *referendum*, *delegate*, *constitution*, *premier*, *federation*. (a) The leader of a colony’s government was its _____. (b) A person elected to speak for a group at a big meeting is a _____. (c) The written rule book of a country is its _____. (d) A vote in which the people say yes or no to a big change is a _____. (e) The system of sharing power between a nation and its states is _____.

S4. Using the referendum chart: (a) which colony–year shows the largest yes vote? (b) which colony–year shows the closest result between yes and no? (c) did any colony end with a no majority? (d) how many more yes votes did Tasmania record in 1899 than in 1898?

S5. True or false? Fix any false sentence. (a) Parkes lived to see Federation. (b) In 1897, a woman stood for office in South Australia. (c) Under the 1901 Constitution, bigger states got more senators. (d) The Constitution can only be changed by a referendum. (e) New South Wales said yes at its first referendum try, under its own 80,000 rule.

S6. Senate or House of Representatives? Sort these 1901 facts: (a) 36 members; (b) 75 members; (c) six from every state whatever its size; (d) more members from states with more people.

S7. Which stream? Using the influences figure, say whether each idea flowed mainly from Britain or from the United States: (a) even a king must obey the law; (b) power shared between a national government and the states; (c) parliaments, not kings, control taxes; (d) separate, independent courts guarding a written constitution.

S8. Finish each cause–consequence chain in a full sentence: (a) Because each colony charged customs duties at its borders, ... (b) Because small colonies feared being out-voted, ... (c) Because the 1898 NSW yes vote did not reach 80,000, ...

Practice — on your own

U1. Explain the two causes that most pushed the colonies towards Federation. For each, give one piece of evidence from this section (an event, a person’s words, or a number).

U2. New South Wales voted in 1898 and again in 1899. Use the numbers in Demonstration 2 and the referendum chart to explain what changed between the two votes, and why.

U3. Parkes is often called the “Father of Federation”. Build the strongest case you can for Parkes, then the strongest case you can for Barton (think: who led the actual writing of the draft and became first prime minister?). Then give your own judgement with reasons. *You are marked on the quality of your reasons and evidence, not on which man you choose — two students may pick different men and both earn full marks.*

U4. Look at the yes/no debate figure. Write the strongest “yes” argument and the strongest “no” argument you can, each in one or two sentences. Then record your own vote as if you were a colonist in 1899, with one reason. Fair history listens to both sides carefully before it chooses.

Writing task — evidence-based

Option A (writing). Answer this question in one well-built paragraph (about 8–12 sentences): *Explain how Australia became one nation by 1901.* Your paragraph must include: at least three dates; at least two named people; at least one cause word (*because, so, as a result*) and one change word (*changed, continued, from ... into ...*). Study the model below before you write, then check your work against its tick list.

Model answer: How did Australia become one nation?

Federation was a change caused by people and ideas over many years. In 1889, Sir Henry Parkes gave his Tenterfield speech, saying the colonies should "unite and create a great national government for all Australia". Because of speeches like this, the colonies held meetings and conventions. In 1897-98, delegates elected by the people wrote a draft constitution, and the people voted on it themselves in referendums between 1898 and 1900. Two big causes pushed the colonies together. First, trade between the colonies was slow and costly because each colony charged its own border taxes. Second, one united country could defend itself better than six small ones. On 1 January 1901, the six colonies became the states of one nation, and in March the people elected the first federal parliament. Australia had changed from six separate colonies into one country.

What this model does well:

- ✓ clear point at the start
- ✓ at least 3 dates (1889, 1897-98, 1901)
- ✓ at least 2 named people or groups
- ✓ cause words: because, so, as a result
- ✓ change words: from ... into ...

A model paragraph answering 'How did Australia become one nation?', with a tick list: a clear point at the start, at least three dates, named people or groups, cause words, and change words

Option B (display). Instead, create a presentation or display — a poster, slide deck or table model — that shows what is inside Australia's Constitution and how its system of government works: the two houses, the constitutional monarchy, the separation of powers, and the referendum rule for change. Label each feature and add one line on where the idea came from (Britain or the United States).

Answers (with help)

S1. (a) Quick's Corowa plan (1893) came before the elected convention (1897–98). (b) 12 years (1889 to 1901). (c) Any of: the WA yes vote (31 July 1900), the 17 September announcement, 1 January 1901, or the March 1901 election — all after the 9 July signing.

S2. (a) Edmund Barton. (b) Catherine Helen Spence. (c) Henry Parkes. (d) John Quick. (e) Andrew Inglis Clark.

S3. (a) premier. (b) delegate. (c) constitution. (d) referendum. (e) federation.

S4. (a) Victoria, 1899 (152,653 yes). (b) NSW, 1898 (yes led by only 5,367). (c) No — every colony-year finished with a yes majority. (d) $13,437 - 11,797 = 1,640$ more yes votes.

S5. (a) False — he died in 1896, five years before Federation. (b) True. (c) False — every state got the same six senators; only the House of Representatives has more members for states with more people. (d) True. (e) False — the yes vote won a majority but did not reach the 80,000 bar.

S6. (a) Senate. (b) House of Representatives. (c) Senate. (d) House of Representatives.

S7. (a) Britain (Magna Carta). (b) United States. (c) Britain (Bill of Rights, 1689). (d) United States.

S8. Example answers. (a) ... trade between the colonies was slow and costly, which made one big market attractive. (b) ... the Constitution gave every state six senators and made change need a majority of states. (c) ... the premiers changed the draft, and NSW voted yes in 1899.

Fully-worked solutions

These are full model answers for the tasks you did on your own. Your own words and your own evidence can earn full marks too — what matters is that you make a point, back it with something from this section, and follow the chain of cause and consequence.

U1. Model: Two causes pushed the colonies towards Federation. First, guarding the coasts: each colony had only a small army and navy, and other empires were showing interest in the Pacific, so one country could guard itself far better than six could. Evidence: the first point of the yes side in the debate figure — one army and navy protecting all the colonies. Second, trade: each colony charged customs duties at its borders, so goods were taxed again as they crossed, and one big market would work better. Evidence: the “Six colonies, six sets of rules” story, and S8(a).

U2. Model: In 1898, more NSW voters said yes (71,595) than no (66,228), but a NSW rule said the draft needed at least 80,000 yes votes, and the yes vote missed that bar by 8,405 votes. So the draft did not carry in NSW that year. Between the two votes, the premiers met and changed the draft, giving NSW better terms such as the promise that the new capital would be built in NSW. In 1899, 107,420 NSW voters said yes — far past the bar — and NSW joined the new nation. So what changed was not mainly voters' minds but the draft itself, and the yes vote grew as a result.

U3. Model (one of many full-mark answers): The strongest case for Parkes is that he lit the spark: his 1889 Tenterfield speech restarted the push when it had gone quiet, and as five-times premier of the biggest colony his voice carried far — that is why he is called the “Father of Federation”. The strongest case for Barton is that he did the hard work of finishing: he led the 1897–98 convention that wrote the draft, led the yes campaign, and became first prime minister on 1 January 1901. Judgement: this model gives it to Barton, because starting an idea is one thing, but without the convention's work and the yes campaign the idea might have stalled again, as it did in the early 1890s. *A student who picks Parkes with reasons of the same strength earns the same marks: marks here are for the reasons and the evidence, not for the name chosen.*

U4. Model: Strongest yes: “Together the colonies are stronger. One army and navy can guard all the coasts, and goods will no longer be taxed at every border.” Strongest no: “The big colonies could out-vote the small ones, and a far-away national parliament might take away the colony's power and its tax money.” Own vote (example): yes — because the small-colony worry was answered: every state gets six senators, and any change needs a majority of states, so small states are protected.

Writing task. Option A: use the model paragraph figure and its tick list — a full-mark paragraph earns all five ticks. Option B: a full-mark display labels each feature the task gives (the two houses; the constitutional monarchy; the separation of powers; the referendum rule for change) and says where each idea came from (Britain or the United States).

Teaching sequence (teacher-facing)

1. **Hook — six maps, one island.** Open with the problem frame: six colonies, six borders, six sets of stamps and taxes. Surface the causes informally before naming them.
2. **The spark.** Read the two Parkes lines from Demonstration 1 aloud and in print; model the who/when/what-for source grid; stress *perspective* (a voice, not a fact).
3. **The plan.** Teach Quick’s four-step cycle with the figure; have students physically re-order shuffled step cards. Note Spence and the 1894 SA law as the democratic thread.
4. **The votes.** Work Demonstration 2 together, then S4 in pairs; let students discover the NSW 1898 rule before telling them.
5. **The rule book.** Build the parliament and separation-of-powers figures from blank templates; link the “ideas” figure to a Britain/United States sort (S7).
6. **The debate.** Run U4 as a structured debate; enforce the steelman rule (each side must state the other’s best point before replying). Mark on reasoning, per U3’s note.
7. **The writing.** Option A paragraph with the model and tick list; Option B display for VC2HH6K07.E01-style output. Close with the continuity/change double-entry (what changed / what continued) to feed the Chapter 4 concepts.

Sequencing note: Chapters 3–4 may be taught interleaved; the referendum data set is a ready investigation for 3B/4A/4B, and the Parkes report is a ready primary source for 3C–3E, without this section owning those CDs.

Sources (teacher-facing; retrieval dates as required by SOURCE_USE.md)

Curriculum scope: VCAA VC2 export the VCAA VC2 Humanities export of 29-07-2026 (retrieved 2026-07-29), via the tree’s raw CD export table.

- **Primary:** “Sir Henry Parkes at Tenterfield”, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 October 1889, p. 8 (National Library of Australia); speech delivered 24 October 1889 at the Tenterfield School of Arts. Quoted lines verified against “Tenterfield Oration”, *Wikipedia* (en), retrieved 24 August 2026.
- “Federation of Australia” (referendum figures: official colonial returns), *Wikipedia*, retrieved 24 August 2026.
- “Henry Parkes”; “Edmund Barton”; “Alfred Deakin”; “George Reid (Australian politician)”; “Catherine Helen Spence”; “Women’s suffrage in Australia”; “Corowa Conference”; “Australasian Federal Convention”; “Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900”; “1901 Australian federal election”; “Andrew Inglis Clark”; “Magna Carta”; “Bill of Rights 1689”; “Referendums in Australia” — *Wikipedia* (en), each retrieved 24 August 2026.

All figures in diagrams/ are original, computed by this build’s generator scripts in `src/ (gen_2a_*.py)`; no publisher material is reproduced or paraphrased.

Democracy and citizenship since Federation: the changing experiences of women, children and migrants

History Year 6 · Chapter 2 · Section 2B · Codes: VC2HH6K08 with VC2HH6K08.E03, VC2HH6K08.E04, VC2HH6K08.E05 and VC2HH6K08.E06 (E04 and E05 trimmed as set out in Section 2A) · Section 2A gives the shared background for this chapter.

Theory

The big ideas

On 1 January 1901 the six colonies — the British-ruled areas of Australia — joined together as one country, the Commonwealth of Australia. We call this joining Federation. The new country had a national Parliament and a Constitution, the rule book for the nation. But in 1901, not everyone who lived in Australia was treated as a full member of the new nation.

This section follows the changing experiences of three groups — women, children and migrants — plus one story about pay that shaped Australian working life. As you read, think like a historian:

- **Cause and consequence** — what caused a change, and what followed from it.
- **Continuity and change** — what changed, and what stayed the same (the continuity).
- **Perspectives** — whose point of view we can see in a source, and whose is missing.

Key terms: democracy and citizenship

Historians do not all use one definition for these words, so this book states the working meanings it uses. In this section, *democracy* means a system of government where the people choose who will run the country, mainly by voting in elections. *Citizenship* means being accepted as an official member of a country, carrying rights (such as voting) and duties (such as following the law). As you read, notice how the rules about who could vote, who was cared for, and who counted as Australian changed over time — and how people themselves helped to change them.

Strand 1: Women — winning the vote and the right to stand

Before Federation, each colony ran its own elections and set its own voting rules. In most colonies women could not vote at all. The campaign for women's right to vote — the suffrage movement — was long and well organised. In Victoria in 1891, campaigners travelled the colony and collected about 30,000 signatures on one huge petition, now called the Monster Petition, asking the parliament to give women the vote (Figure 1).

The Monster Petition, 1891

What it is	a petition - a long written request to parliament, signed by ordinary people
When and where	Victoria, 1891, thirteen years before Federation
Who made it	women campaigning for the vote, who travelled the colony to collect signatures
How big	about 30,000 women signed it - one of the largest petitions an Australian parliament has ever received
Kept today	held by the State Library of Victoria
Why historians care	it shows how organised the campaign was, and how many ordinary women wanted the vote, years before Victoria's parliament agreed in 1908

Thinking like a historian

Look: what do you notice about its size and its signatures?

Think: what does it tell us about how women campaigned?

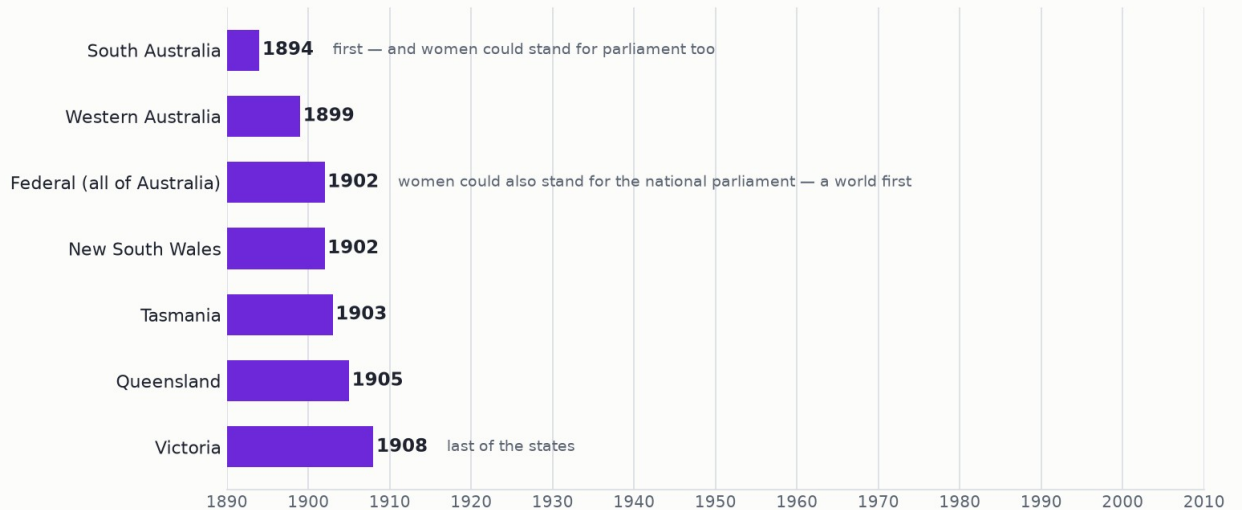
Question: why might a parliament listen to 30,000 signatures?

Primary source card for the 1891 Monster Petition from Victoria, signed by about 30,000 women and kept by the State Library of Victoria

Step by step, the colonies changed their laws (Figure 2). South Australia went first in 1894: women could vote in colony elections, and could stand to be members of parliament. Western Australia followed in 1899. Then, one year after Federation, the new national Parliament passed the **Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902** (Figure 3). It let women enrol and vote in federal elections: a woman could no longer be turned away because of her sex. In December 1903 women voted in a federal election for the first time, and some women stood as candidates (a *candidate* is a person trying to be elected). Australia became the first country in the world where women could both vote in, and stand for, the national Parliament.

When women won the vote

The year each colony (later state) parliament let women vote, and the federal parliament in 1902



History 6 · Section 2B

Bar chart showing the year women won the vote in each colony and state parliament and in the federal parliament, from South Australia in 1894 to Victoria in 1908

The firsts kept coming, slowly (Figure 4). In 1897 Catherine Helen Spence stood for the Australasian Federal Convention that helped write the Constitution. In 1903 Vida Goldstein became the first woman in the British Empire to stand for a national parliament, when she stood for the Senate; she stood five times in all. In 1921 Edith Cowan became the first woman elected to an Australian parliament, in Western Australia. In 1943 Dame Enid Lyons and Dorothy Tangney became the first women elected to the federal Parliament, and in 1949 Dame Enid Lyons became the first woman in a federal Cabinet.

First women in Australian parliaments

Real people, real firsts: the doors opened slowly, one at a time

Year	Person	A first for Australia
1897	Catherine Helen Spence	first woman to stand for election to a national political body, when she stood for the Australasian Federal Convention that helped write the Constitution
1903	Vida Goldstein	first woman in the British Empire to stand for a national parliament, when she stood for the Senate (she stood five times in all)
1921	Edith Cowan	first woman elected to an Australian parliament, in the Western Australian Legislative Assembly
1943	Dame Enid Lyons	first woman elected to the federal House of Representatives
1943	Dorothy Tangney	first woman elected to the Senate
1949	Dame Enid Lyons	first woman appointed to a federal Cabinet

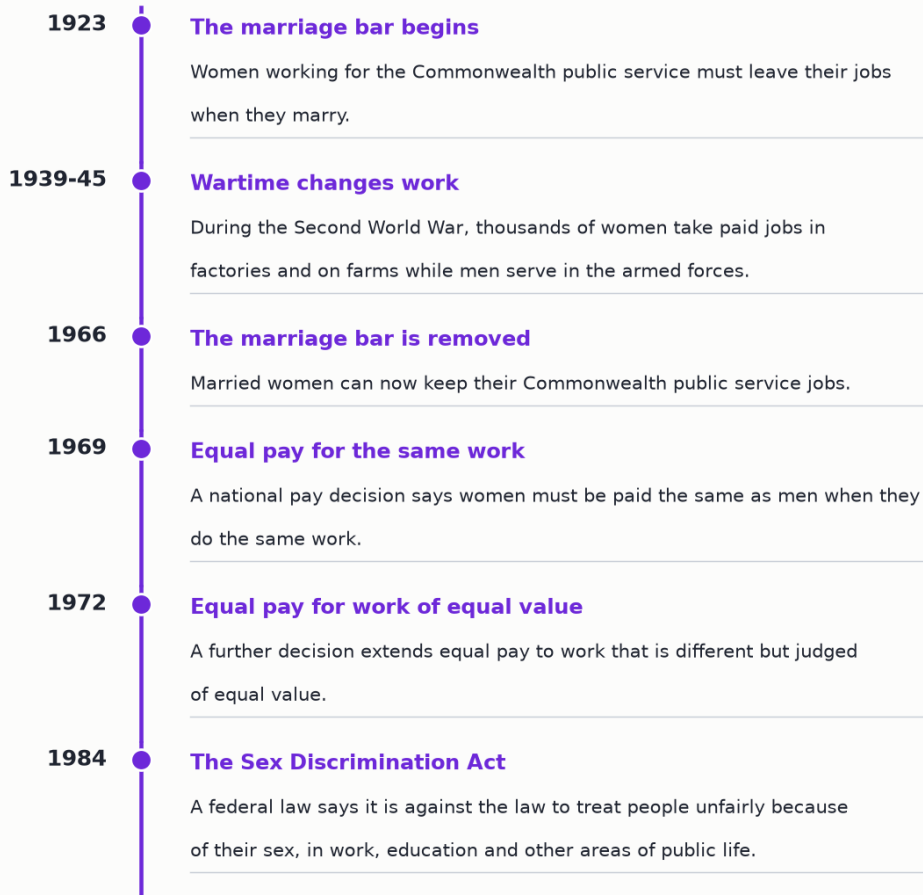
History 6 · Section 2B

Table of six firsts for women in Australian parliaments, from Catherine Helen Spence in 1897 to Dame Enid Lyons in 1949

Winning the vote was not the end of the story (Figure 5). From 1923, a woman who worked for the Commonwealth public service had to leave her job when she married — a rule known as the **marriage bar**. During the Second World War (1939–45) thousands of women took paid jobs in factories and on farms while men served in the armed forces. The marriage bar was only removed in 1966. A national pay decision in 1969 gave women equal pay for the same work as men; a further decision in 1972 extended equal pay to work of equal value; and then the **Sex Discrimination Act 1984** made it against the law to treat people unfairly because of their sex.

Women, work and equal pay, 1923-1984

How the rules for women at work changed, step by step



History 6 · Section 2B

Timeline, top to bottom, of the rules for women at work, from the 1923 marriage bar to the 1984 Sex Discrimination Act

Strand 2: Children — growing up away from family

Thousands of children in Australia grew up away from their families, in orphanages, children's homes and other institutions — large places, run by churches, charities or governments, where many people live under the same rules (Figure 6). Some children were there because their parents had died; many more were there because their families could not care for them at the time.

Children in care: orphanages, homes and other institutions

What life was like for children who could not live with their families, 1900s-1960s

Orphanages - for children whose parents had died or could not care for them

Children's homes - run by churches, charities and state governments

Farm schools - like Fairbridge Farm School at Pinjarra, WA (opened 1913)

Food and shelter

Most children slept in big shared rooms called dormitories.
Meals were plain, and children wore a uniform.

Education

Children went to school, but lessons were often basic. Many also worked in chores around the home, like washing, cooking and gardening.

Care and protection

The homes were meant to keep children safe and make sure they had food. Rules were strict. In later years, official inquiries found that some children were treated badly and were harmed.

Contacts with family

Letters and visits were often limited, and brothers and sisters were sometimes placed in different homes, far away from each other.

Thousands of Australian children spent part of their childhood in homes like these. About 7,000 children were sent from Britain as child migrants between 1913 and 1967.

From the 1950s, large homes began to close. Smaller, family-style homes took their place, and the last British child migrants arrived in 1967.

Numbers from: Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Lost Innocents: Righting the Record* (2001).

History 6 · Section 2B

Labelled diagram of children in care in orphanages, children's homes and farm schools, with four parts of daily life: food and shelter, education, care and protection, and contacts with family

Some of these children came from Britain as **child migrants**. Between 1913 and 1967, about 7,000 children were sent from Britain to Australia; the first group reached Fairbridge Farm School at Pinjarra, in Western Australia, in 1913. These numbers come from the Senate report *Lost Innocents: Righting the Record* (2001). Most of the child migrants were not orphans: many had parents who were still living.

Life in the homes had much in common. Children slept in big shared rooms called dormitories, had plain meals and wore a uniform. They went to school, but lessons were often basic, and many children worked at chores such as washing, cooking and gardening. The homes were meant to keep children safe and make sure they had food, and the rules were strict. Contact with family was often limited: letters and visits were restricted, and brothers and sisters were sometimes placed in different homes, far away from each other. In later years, official inquiries found that some children in care were treated badly and were harmed.

Things changed slowly. From the 1950s, large homes began to close and smaller, family-style homes took their place. The last British child migrants arrived in 1967. Most of the written records about the homes were made by the people who ran them, so historians also look carefully for the voices of the children themselves.

Strand 3: Migrants — who counts as an Australian?

The first national Parliament passed the **Immigration Restriction Act 1901**. It could keep migrants out using a **dictation test**: an officer read out words for a person to write down, in a language chosen so that the person would fail. In practice the rules made it easier for people from Britain and Europe to come to Australia (Figure 7).

Who counts as an Australian? The migrant strand, 1901-1978

How the rules about migration and citizenship changed after Federation

1901 • Immigration Restriction Act

The new parliament's law could keep migrants out with a dictation test. In practice it made it easier for people from Britain and Europe to come.

1948 • Nationality and Citizenship Act

Passed in 1948, in force from 26 January 1949: for the first time there was such a thing as an Australian citizen. Before that, people here were British subjects.

1958 • The dictation test is removed

A new migration law ends the test, although rules still limited who could come.

1966 • The rules begin to open up

Migration policy changes so that people from more countries, including Asian countries, can migrate to Australia.

1973 • Multicultural policy is named

The government describes Australia as a multicultural society and begins programs to help migrants settle.

1975 • Racial Discrimination Act

A new federal law says treating people unfairly because of their race is against the law.

1978 • The Galbally Report

A government report recommends services for migrants in their own languages, such as community radio and television.

History 6 - Section 2B

Timeline of the rules for migrants and citizenship, from the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act to the 1978 Galbally Report

In 1948 the Parliament passed the **Nationality and Citizenship Act**. It came into force on 26 January 1949, and for the first time there was such a thing as an Australian *citizen*. Before that, people born or living here were British subjects. The dictation test was removed from migration law in 1958, although rules still limited who could come. In 1966 the rules began to open up, so that people from more countries, including Asian countries, could migrate to Australia.

In 1973 the government named Australia's official **multicultural** policy. This book uses *multicultural* in the sense of the 1978 Galbally Report: a society made up of people from many cultural backgrounds, where people are helped to belong while keeping their languages and cultures. The report recommended services for migrants in their own languages, such as community radio and television. The **Racial Discrimination Act 1975** made it against the law to treat people unfairly because of their race.

Strand 4: Workers' pay — the first minimum wage

In 1907, in a famous case known as the Harvester Judgment, Justice H. B. Higgins of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration set the wage that an unskilled worker must be paid: 7 shillings a day (Figure 8). Higgins worked out what it cost one man to feed, house and clothe a wife and three children, and said the wage had to cover that whole family, not just one person. In old Australian money, 1 pound = 20 shillings and 1 shilling = 12 pence, so the weekly wage of 42 shillings was written as 2 pounds 2 shillings. There were no dollars and cents until 1966. The

idea behind the case — that every worker has a right to pay that can support a family — became known as the basic wage, and later as the **minimum wage**.

The first minimum wage: the Harvester Judgment, 1907

Justice H. B. Higgins set a wage a worker could support a family on

Old Australian money	The judge's sums	Who it was for
1 pound = 20 shillings 1 shilling = 12 pence 2 pounds and 2 shillings was written as 2 pounds 2s. There were no dollars and cents until 1966.	7 shillings a day for an unskilled worker x 6 days = 42 shillings a week = 2 pounds 2 shillings a week x 52 weeks = 2,184 shillings a year = 109 pounds 4 shillings a year	Higgins worked out what it cost one man to feed, house and clothe a wife and three children. The wage had to cover that whole family, not just one person. It became known as the basic wage, and later as the minimum wage.

Source: *Ex parte H. V. McKay (the Harvester Judgment)*, Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, 8 November 1907, Justice H. B. Higgins.

Why it matters: the minimum wage said that every worker, not only skilled ones, had a right to pay that could support a family. That idea is still part of Australian working life today.

History 6 · Section 2B

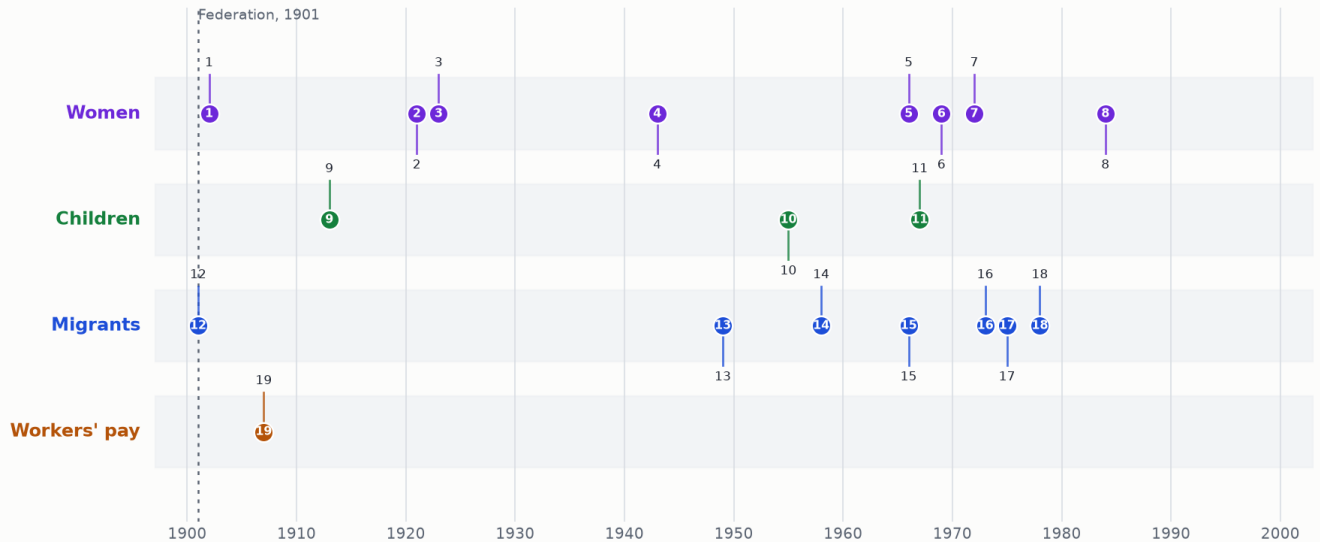
Three panels explaining the 1907 Harvester Judgment: old Australian money, the judge's sums and who the wage was for

Pulling the strands together

Figure 9 puts the four strands on one timeline. The big picture is change won step by step: women's vote (1902), the first minimum wage (1907), citizenship (1948–49), the slow opening of migration rules (1958–66), equal pay (1969–72), multicultural policy (1973) and anti-discrimination laws (1975, 1984). Yet there is continuity too: a Parliament that makes laws, elections that choose it, and — in every strand — ordinary people who organised, asked and argued until the rules changed.

Changing rights since Federation, 1901-1984

The four strands of this section. Match each numbered dot to the key below.



Key to the numbered events

Women

- 1 1902 — women win the right to vote in federal elections (Commonwealth Franchise Act)
- 2 1921 — Edith Cowan becomes the first woman in an Australian parliament (WA)
- 3 1923 — the marriage bar begins: women in Commonwealth public service jobs must leave when they marry
- 4 1943 — Dame Enid Lyons and Dorothy Tangney become the first women in the federal parliament
- 5 1966 — the marriage bar is removed in the Commonwealth public service
- 6 1969 — a national pay decision gives women equal pay for the same work as men
- 7 1972 — a further decision gives equal pay for work of equal value
- 8 1984 — the Sex Discrimination Act makes it against the law to treat people unfairly because of their sex

Children

- 9 1913 — the first group of British child migrants reaches Fairbridge Farm School, WA
- 10 1950s — large children's homes begin to close and smaller, family-style homes open
- 11 1967 — the last British child migrants arrive in Australia

Migrants

- 12 1901 — the Immigration Restriction Act can keep migrants out with a dictation test
- 13 1949 — Australian citizenship begins under the Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948
- 14 1958 — the dictation test is removed from migration law
- 15 1966 — migration rules open up, so people from more countries can come
- 16 1973 — Australia names its official multicultural policy
- 17 1975 — the Racial Discrimination Act makes it against the law to treat people unfairly because of their race
- 18 1978 — the Galbally Report recommends services for migrants in their own languages

Workers' pay

- 19 1907 — the Harvester Judgment sets Australia's first national minimum wage

History 6 · Section 2B

Numbered-dot timeline with four swim lanes for women, children, migrants and workers' pay, showing 19 events from 1901 to 1984 with a numbered key below

Worked examples

Worked example 1 (step by step): reading Primary Source Card A like a historian

Historians question a source instead of just believing it. We use three moves: **Look** (what kind of source is it?), **Think** (what does it tell us?) and **Question** (what can it not tell us?). Here is the thinking done for you on Card A, the Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902 (Figure 3).

The Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902

What it is	an Act - a law passed by the new federal Parliament
When	given Royal Assent in June 1902, one year after Federation
What it did	it let women enrol and vote in federal elections: a woman could no longer be turned away because of her sex
What happened next	women voted in a federal election for the first time in December 1903, and some women stood as candidates
Why it matters	Australia became the first country in the world where women could both vote and stand for the national Parliament
Kept today	a copy is held by the National Archives of Australia

Thinking like a historian

Look: what kind of source is this, and who made it?

Think: what does it tell us about what changed in 1902?

Question: what can it NOT tell us (for example, how people felt about it)?

Primary source card for the Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902, with look, think and question steps for reading it like a historian

Move	What I do	Example on Card A
Look	Name the kind of source, who made it and when.	It is an Act — a law passed by the new federal Parliament, given Royal Assent in June 1902. A law is a primary source: it was made at the time, by the people we are studying.
Think	Say what the source shows.	It shows that from 1902 a woman could no longer be turned away from voting in federal elections because of her sex.
Question	Say what the source cannot show.	A law tells us what changed on paper. It cannot tell us how women felt when they first voted in December 1903, or whether everyone was pleased to follow the law. For that we would need other sources, such as letters and newspapers.

Worked example 2 (step by step): the judge's sums

Justice Higgins set 7 shillings a day for an unskilled worker. How does that become 109 pounds 4 shillings a year?
Remember the old money: 1 pound = 20 shillings, and 1 shilling = 12 pence.

Working	Comment
7 shillings x 6 days = 42 shillings a week	the worker worked six days a week
42 shillings = 2 pounds 2 shillings	40 shillings makes 2 pounds, with 2 shillings left over
42 shillings x 52 weeks = 2,184 shillings a year	there are 52 weeks in a year
2,184 ÷ 20 = 109, with 4 left over	20 shillings makes 1 pound
so the year's pay = 109 pounds 4 shillings	written as £109 4s

That was the wage a man must be paid so he could feed, house and clothe a wife and three children. It became the basic wage — the first minimum wage.

Practice questions

Tasks with help

T1. Reading the timeline (Figure 9) (a) Which strand does event 13 (1949, citizenship begins) belong to? (b) Which two numbered events are about equal pay for women? Give the numbers and years. (c) Look at events 12 and 15. Complete this sentence: *In 1901 the dictation test could keep migrants out, but by 1966 ...*

T2. Match the term to its meaning

Term	Meaning
1 democracy	a a long written request to parliament, signed by ordinary people
2 citizenship	b the lowest pay a worker must be given
3 petition	c being accepted as an official member of a country, with rights and duties
4 dictation test	d a system where the people choose who will run the country by voting
5 marriage bar	e a writing test once used to keep migrants out of Australia
6 minimum wage	f the rule that made women leave Commonwealth public service jobs when they married

T3. Put these in time order. Write the letters in order. A Edith Cowan is elected to parliament in Western Australia. B South Australian women win the right to vote in colony elections. C The Commonwealth Franchise Act lets women vote in federal elections. D Dame Enid Lyons becomes the first woman in a federal Cabinet. E Vida Goldstein stands for the Senate.

T4. Children in care (Figure 6). Copy the table and add one fact from the figure for each part of daily life.

Part of daily life	What it was like for many children
Food and shelter	
Education	
Care and protection	
Contacts with family	

T5. Cloze: the migrant strand (Figure 7). Fill the gaps using the word bank. *Word bank: citizen, dictation, discrimination, multicultural, petition.* (a) The Immigration Restriction Act 1901 could keep migrants out using a _____ test. (b) From 26 January 1949, a person here was an Australian _____ for the first time. (c) In 1973, Australia named its official _____ policy. (d) The Racial Discrimination Act 1975 made racial _____ against the law.

T6. Using Primary Source Card B (Figure 1) (a) Is the Monster Petition a primary or a secondary source? How do you know? (b) About how many women signed it? (c) Start with these words and finish the sentence: *The size of the petition shows that ...*

T7. The judge's sums (Figure 8). Use the old money: 1 pound = 20 shillings; 1 shilling = 12 pence. (a) Work out the wage for one week of six days, in shillings. (b) Write your answer to (a) in pounds and shillings. (c) Work out the wage for 52 weeks, in shillings. (d) Write your answer to (c) in pounds and shillings. (Hint: how many twenties are in 2,184?)

T8. Cause and consequence: the marriage bar (Figure 5). Copy the table and complete it. || Your answer || — || — ||
One reason governments may have wanted the marriage bar in 1923 | (starter: *Many people at the time thought that ...*) || One consequence of the bar for women | (starter: *Because of the bar, women ...*) || One consequence of removing the bar in 1966 | (starter: *After 1966, ...*) |

Tasks on your own

T9. Explain why the Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902 was called a world first. Use two facts from Figures 2, 3 and 4.

T10. Continuity and change: give two changes and one continuity in the lives of children in care between the 1900s and the 1960s. Support each point with evidence from Figure 6 or the notes under it.

T11. Significance mini-debate: *Which did more to advance Australian democracy and citizenship — the Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902, or the Racial Discrimination Act 1975?* First write the strongest case you can for each side (even the side you disagree with). Then give your own view with reasons. You are marked on the quality of your reasoning, not on which side you pick.

T12. Perspectives, in your own words. Choose one person: a woman who signed the Monster Petition in 1891, or a child migrant at Fairbridge Farm School in the 1920s. Write a short imagined account (80–120 words) of one day in that person's life, using at least two facts from the figures in this section. Write this line at the top of your work: *"This is my imagining, not a real source."*

W. Evidence-based writing task. *Which development did the most to change Australian democracy and citizenship between 1901 and 1984?* Choose one: women's federal vote (1902); the first minimum wage (1907); Australian citizenship (1948–49); multicultural policy and anti-discrimination law (1970s). Write 150–200 words with: your claim; two pieces of evidence that name a figure or card from this section; your reasoning, which links the evidence to the claim; and one point from the other side, with your answer to it. You are marked on the reasoning steps, not on which development you choose.

Answers

T1. (a) The migrants strand. (b) Events 6 (1969, equal pay for the same work) and 7 (1972, equal pay for work of equal value). (c) ...but by 1966 the rules had opened up, so people from more countries could come to Australia.

T2. 1–d, 2–c, 3–a, 4–e, 5–f, 6–b.

T3. B (1894), C (1902), E (1903), A (1921), D (1949).

T4. Food and shelter: shared rooms called dormitories, plain meals, a uniform. Education: school lessons, often basic; chores such as washing, cooking and gardening too. Care and protection: meant to keep children safe and make sure they had food; rules strict; later inquiries found some children were treated badly. Contacts with family: letters and visits often limited; brothers and sisters sometimes placed in different homes.

T5. (a) dictation (b) citizen (c) multicultural (d) discrimination. (*Petition* is the extra word.)

T6. (a) A primary source: it is the petition itself, made in 1891 by the women campaigning, not something written about it later. (b) About 30,000 women. (c) Example: ...the campaign was well organised, and that many ordinary women wanted the vote, years before Victoria's parliament agreed in 1908.

T7. (a) $7 \times 6 = 42$ shillings. (b) 2 pounds 2 shillings. (c) $42 \times 52 = 2,184$ shillings. (d) $2,184 \div 20 = 109$ with 4 left over, so 109 pounds 4 shillings (£109 4s).

T8. Examples: reason — many people at the time thought a married woman's place was in the home, or that married women would take jobs from men; consequence for women — women had to choose between their job and marrying, and lost the pay and the work they were good at; consequence of removal — after 1966 married women could keep their Commonwealth jobs, and more women stayed in the workforce.

Model answers (worked in full)

T9. The Act was a world first because of two things it did together. New Zealand had let women vote in national elections earlier (1893), but the 1902 Australian law let women both vote and stand for the national Parliament — the first country in the world to do both. The evidence is in the figures: Figure 3 says Australia became the first country where women could vote and stand; Figure 4 shows Vida Goldstein standing for the Senate in 1903, the first woman in the British Empire to do so. (Note: Figure 2 also shows that within Australia the states moved at different speeds — Victoria did not let women vote in state elections until 1908.)

T10. Change 1: from the 1950s large homes began to close and smaller, family-style homes took their place. Change 2: the child-migrant shipments ended — the last British child migrants arrived in 1967. Continuity: through the whole period, children in care still lived by the home's rules, with plain meals, uniforms and limited contact with family — the daily shape of care changed slowly even as the places changed. Each point is drawn from the boxes and notes in Figure 6.

T11. Case for 1902: it doubled the voting pool at a stroke, made Australia a world first, and led within decades to women standing, sitting and serving in Cabinet — a change to the very idea of who the democracy was for. Case for 1975: it wrote fairness into law for everyone, whatever their race, and backed the multicultural turn of the 1970s — a change to who the citizenship included. Own view (example): the 1902 Act, because it changed who could choose the government, which is the heart of a democracy; the 1975 Act then widened the fairness of that same system. Any view is acceptable; the mark is for stating both cases in a fair way and linking evidence to the choice.

T12. Checklist for a strong imagined account: one clear point of view; at least two facts that match the figures (for example, for the petition signer: the long trip to collect signatures, the huge roll of names; for the Fairbridge child: the dormitory, the chores, the limited letters home); the "*This is my imagining, not a real source*" line; and 80–120 words.

W. Plan and example reasoning. Claim (example): the 1902 women's federal vote changed Australian democracy most. Evidence 1: Figure 3 — the Act let women enrol and vote in federal elections, and Australia was the first country where women could both vote and stand for the national Parliament. Evidence 2: Figure 5 — the change kept unfolding from that start (women in Parliament from 1921 in the states and 1943 federally, equal pay 1969–72, the Sex Discrimination Act 1984). Reasoning: a democracy rests on who may choose the government; adding half the

adult population at once is the biggest single change to that rule in this period. Other side: some would say citizenship in 1948–49 mattered more because it named who belonged at all. Answer: citizenship named the members, but the 1902 Act changed who chose the government — the deeper democratic rule. Markers look for exactly this: claim, two named pieces of evidence, reasoning that links them, and a point from the other side, answered.

Teaching sequence (teacher-facing)

This block is for the teacher. It is not part of the student-facing text.

Scope and §2A handling. This section owns VC2HH6K08 and draws on elaborations .E03, .E04, .E05 and .E06 only, as trimmed in Section 2A. In short: .E03 covers advances in democracy and citizenship for women (suffrage, voting rights, the work ban on married women, pay equity, anti-discrimination law); .E04 covers debating the significance of such advances for all citizens (retained here without the First Nations voting example, per §2A); .E05 covers a timeline figure tracing how democratic and citizenship rights changed after 1901 (Figure 9 is trimmed to the women, children, migrants and workers’ pay strands only); .E06 covers the experiences of children placed in institutions such as orphanages and homes (what they ate, where they slept, their protection, education and family contact). Elaborations .E01 and .E02 are excluded whole and are not taught here; Section 2A supplies neutral context. Do not extend any task into First Nations voting history in this section.

Sequence. 1) Big ideas and working definitions (Theory opening) — flag democracy and citizenship as contested, operational definitions. 2) Women strand: Figures 1 → 2 → 3 → 4 → 5 in that order, then Worked example 1 to model source questioning before T6. 3) Children strand: Figure 6, then T4 and T10; use the sensitive-content note below. 4) Migrants strand: Figure 7, then T5; define multicultural with the Galbally attribution before T11. 5) Minimum wage: Figure 8 and Worked example 2 before T7 (old-money conversion is the numeracy load — teach it explicitly). 6) Synthesis: Figure 9, then T1–T3, T8; unscaffolded T9–T12 and writing task W for assessment.

Vocabulary plan. Student-facing text is gated at or below Year 6 on the house word ladder. Terms defined at first use: suffrage movement (curriculum’s own wording from .E03), institutions (.E06 wording; glossed as large organisation-run places), candidate, marriage bar, dictation test, basic/minimum wage, continuity, perspective. Proper nouns and curriculum codes carry their usual capitalisation. En-AU spelling throughout (enrol, organised, travelled).

Sensitive content (children in care). Keep the treatment factual and age-appropriate: no graphic detail; harm is acknowledged in one plain sentence aligned with the findings of official inquiries (named: Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Lost Innocents: Righting the Record*, 2001, for the child-migrant figures ~7,000, 1913–1967). Do not bring in post-period apologies or inquiries beyond what is stated. Offer the standard follow-up: a student who connects personally to out-of-home care should be able to speak with a trusted adult; pause T10/T12 if needed.

Misconceptions to correct. (1) “Australia was the first country where women could vote” — New Zealand was earlier (1893); the Australian world first is vote plus stand for the national Parliament. (2) “Women got the vote everywhere in 1902” — the 1902 Act covered federal elections; state rules lagged (Victoria 1908, Figure 2). (3) “Child migrants were orphans” — most had living parents (Lost Innocents). (4) “The minimum wage is a modern dollar figure” — it began as 7 shillings a day in 1907 old money; do not quote modern wage amounts from this section (unverifiable here).

Assessment notes. T11 and W are the summative pair: mark reasoning steps (steelmanned cases; claim–evidence–reasoning–counter) rather than the conclusion, per CONTESTED TERMS guidance on significance debates. T12 assesses perspective writing; the “my imagining, not a real source” line is required so no invented text can be mistaken for a sourced one (SOURCE_USE D6).

Migration to Australia in the 20th century from Europe and Asia: causes, experiences and impacts

In this section you will find out why people left Europe and Asia to come to Australia in the 1900s, what their journeys and first years were like, and how they changed Australian society. This is the 20th-century continuation of Section 1D: the same push–pull machine keeps working, but now with new laws, new programs, and new groups of people.

By the end of this section you can:

- describe the main 20th-century migration programs and what each one offered (VC2HH6K09.E01)
- use push and pull factors to explain why particular groups came — Europeans after World War II, South-East Asians fleeing war, and British migrants on the Assisted Passage Migration Scheme (VC2HH6K09.E02)
- describe the part particular cultural groups played in Australia’s work and social life, as in the Snowy Mountains Scheme and in Broome’s pearling industry (VC2HH6K09.E03)
- read population data that show where Australia’s people were born at different times (VC2HH6K09.E04)
- build a migration story for one person or family using primary sources (VC2HH6K09.E05)
- plan questions and record an oral history of migration, such as your own family history (VC2HH6K09.E06)

Curriculum: VC2HH6K09

Elaborations drawn on in this section (a drawing-on list, not a teaching order):

- VC2HH6K09.E01
- VC2HH6K09.E02
- VC2HH6K09.E03
- VC2HH6K09.E04
- VC2HH6K09.E05
- VC2HH6K09.E06

The same list in plain words:

- **E01** — know what each program offered and who it was for (Figure 2).
 - **E02** — use push–pull thinking from Section 1D on three groups: Europeans after World War II, South-East Asians fleeing war, and the “Ten Pound Poms” (Figures 3 and 4).
 - **E03** — see migrant labour at work in the Snowy Mountains Scheme and in Broome’s pearling industry (Figures 6 and 7).
 - **E04** — compare census snapshots of where Australia’s people were born (Figure 9).
 - **E05** — use real sources — a law, a boat, letters, photos and figures — to tell one person’s migration story.
 - **E06** — interview someone about a migration story, and retell the journey and the arrival.
-

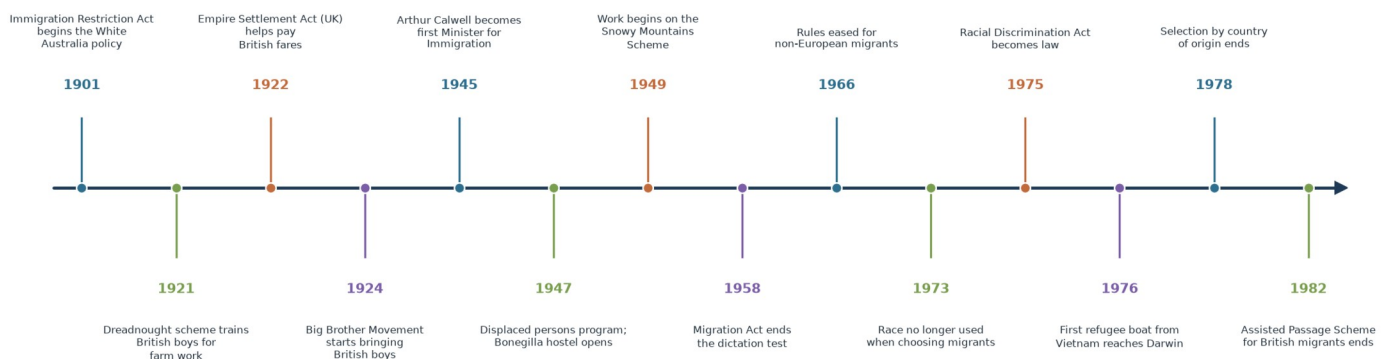
Key words

- **migration, migrant** — as in Section 1D: *migration* means large numbers of people moving from one part of the world to another to live. A **migrant** is a person making that move.
- **push factor** — something bad at home that pushes people to leave.
- **pull factor** — something good in the new place that pulls people to come.
- **assisted passage** — a ship or plane ticket paid for, or paid in part, by a government, to bring people out.
- **migrant hostel** — simple camp-style housing where new arrivals were put up until work and a home were found.
- **refugee** — a word with a legal meaning agreed by the United Nations: a refugee is a person who has had to flee their own country because of war, or because they are badly treated for who they are or what they believe. This section uses the UN meaning.

- **displaced person (DP)** — the term used after World War II for people in Europe left homeless by the war, far from their old homes. Many came to Australia as refugees under this name.
- **dictation test** — a spelling test Australia used from 1901 to turn people away. The officer could choose the language, so he could pick one the person did not know. It was a trick, not a fair test.
- **White Australia policy** — the name historians give to the bundle of rules Australia built from 1901 to keep Australia white and British. It is a historians' term: governments of the time spoke of "restriction" instead.
- **interned, "enemy alien"** — in wartime, Australia put people from enemy countries into camps without a trial; that is **interning** them. "Enemy alien" was the government's label of the time. We use it only in quote marks, because it is their label, not our words.
- **"populate or perish"** — the slogan of Arthur Calwell, Australia's first Minister for Immigration: fill this country quickly, or lose it. His claim was that a small population could not build or defend so large a continent.
- **census** — the official count of every person in the country, which also asks where people were born.

The story in dates

Twentieth-century migration to Australia: key dates, 1901-1982



Every date on this line is verified in the sources list at the end of this section (retrieved 24 August 2026).

A horizontal timeline of fourteen key dates in 20th-century migration to Australia, from the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 to the end of the British assisted passage scheme in 1982, with colour-coded events above and below the line.

Figure 1. The key dates of this section at a glance.

Look at Figure 1 before you read on. Two things to notice, as in Section 1D: people came for many different reasons (not only one), and some of the dates are about rules made *against* certain newcomers. Both belong to this history.

Part 1 — The rules: who could come (1901–1945)

When the six colonies became one nation in 1901, one of the first laws the new Parliament passed was the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*. At its heart was the dictation test. Any person who failed the test was barred from Australia — and because the officer chose the language, a person could be made to fail on purpose. Between 1902 and 1909, 1,359 people were given the test and only 52 passed. The law's target was clear: people from Asia and Africa were to be kept out, while people from Britain were welcomed. Historians call this bundle of rules the **White Australia policy**.

Why did so many Australians of the time back it? The strongest case for the policy, as its supporters put it, was fear. A new nation of fewer than four million people sat on a big continent, far from Britain. Many argued that only a

bigger, British population could hold the continent and keep the way of life they knew; unions (workers' groups) also feared that low-paid workers brought from overseas would pull down wages. That is the case put as strongly as its supporters put it. The case against is simpler and, historians judge, stronger: the policy was built on the belief that some races rank above others; it shut the door on people fleeing harm; and it told long-settled Asian residents they were not welcome. It was unfair, and it is part of the story all the same.

Through the 1920s and 1930s, while the door to Asians stayed shut, the door to the British was pushed wide open with assisted schemes (Figure 2): the **Dreadnought scheme** trained British boys for farm work; the **British Empire Settlement Act** helped pay travel costs; and the **Big Brother Movement** matched British boys with Australian “big brothers” to help them start farm life.

Migration programs to Australia in the 20th century

Program	Years running	Who came	Verified scale
Dreadnought scheme	1921-1930	British boys, farm training	4,500 trained at Scheyville farm by 1930
Empire Settlement Act (UK)	1922; renewed to 1967	British farm and domestic workers	Travel costs and training helped
Big Brother Movement	1924-1983	British boys, farm work	About 8,000 before WWII; about 12,000 in all
Displaced persons program	1947-1952	People left homeless by WWII in Europe	182,159 refugees accepted
Assisted Passage Migration Scheme (“Ten Pound Poms”)	1945-1972 (scheme to 1982)	British migrants	More than 1 million; fare £10 for adults
Agreements with the Netherlands, Italy and Greece	from 1951-1952	European workers	50,000 Dutch in the 1950s; 201,428 Italians 1949-1959
Refugee intakes	from 1956	Hungarians, Czechoslovaks, Vietnamese, Laotians, Cambodians	About 14,500 Hungarians; 157,863 Vietnamese (1975-1997)

Figures from the sources list at the end of this section (retrieved 24 August 2026).

A table of the main 20th-century migration programs to Australia: the Dreadnought scheme, the Empire Settlement Act, the Big Brother Movement, the displaced persons program, the Assisted Passage Migration Scheme, the European worker agreements, and the refugee intakes, with years running, who came, and verified numbers.

Figure 2. The programs of the century. Each row is a deal on offer: who it was for, and what it gave them.

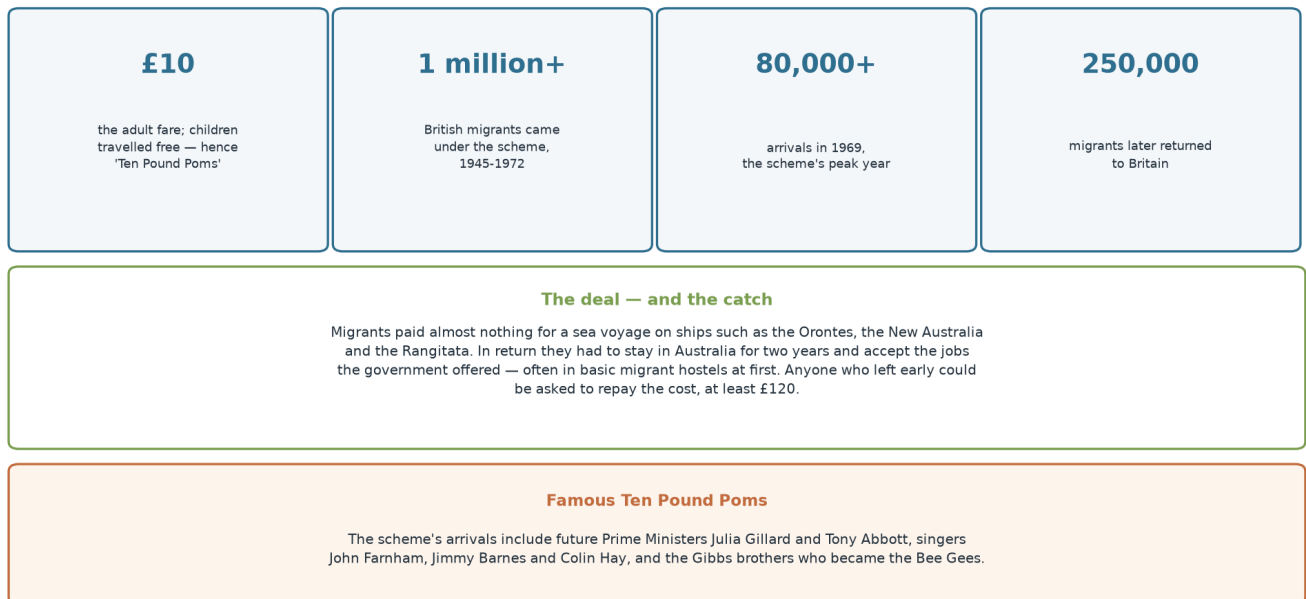
Part 2 — “Populate or perish”: the post-war push (1945–1960s)

World War II ended in 1945. Europe lay in ruins, and between seven and eleven million people there were displaced persons — homeless, far from home, with nothing to go back to. Australia’s first Minister for Immigration, **Arthur Calwell**, launched a huge migration program under his slogan “populate or perish”. Historians call Calwell the chief architect of the post-war program — and he remained a firm believer in the White Australia policy all the same. Both facts are true of the one man, and holding both in mind at once is the key to this part of the story.

Under an agreement with the International Refugee Organization (set up in 1946 to care for displaced persons), Australia accepted **182,159 displaced persons** as refugees by 1952. At the same time, the **Assisted Passage Migration Scheme** brought British migrants out for a fare of only £10 — the “Ten Pound Poms” (Figure 3). Agreements with the Netherlands, Italy and Greece from 1951–52 opened the door wider to southern Europe: 50,000 Dutch came in the 1950s, 201,428 Italians between 1949 and 1959, and Greeks fleeing hard times and civil war made Melbourne home to the largest Greek community outside Greece. In the twenty years after the war, more than two million people came to Australia from Europe.

The Assisted Passage Migration Scheme, 1945-1982

The scheme that brought the 'Ten Pound Poms' from Britain



Source: figures from the sources list at the end of this section (retrieved 24 August 2026).

A fact panel on the Assisted Passage Migration Scheme, 1945-1982: the ten-pound adult fare with children free, more than one million British migrants, a peak of 80,000-plus arrivals in 1969, the 250,000 who later returned, the two-year stay rule, and famous Ten Pound Poms.

Figure 3. The deal that brought the “Ten Pound Poms”.

Why people move: push factors and pull factors

Case study 1 — Europe after World War II (1947-1960s)



Case study 2 — South-East Asia after the Vietnam War (1975-1990s)



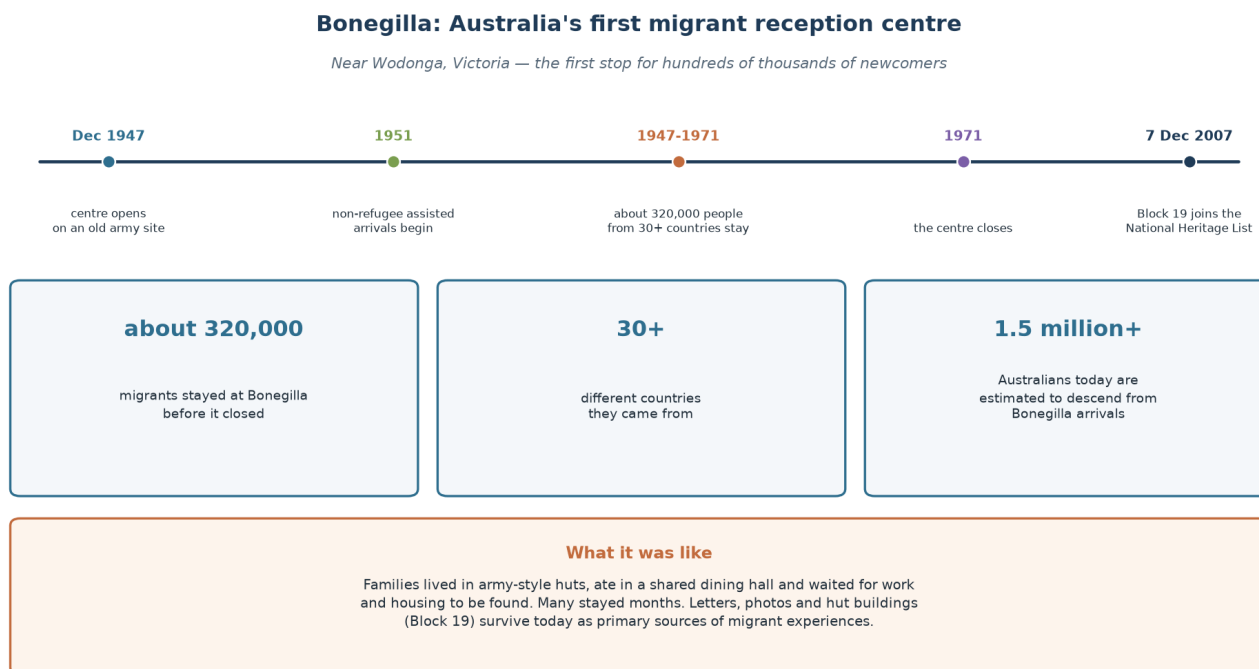
Push factors drive people away from home; pull factors draw them to a new place. The same machine you met in Section 1D, working at a new century's scale.

Two worked push-pull diagrams: Europe after World War II (pushed by war-wrecked homes, few jobs and unstable governments; pulled by paid work, cheap fares and safety) and South-East Asia after the Vietnam War (pushed by war, danger and refugee camps; pulled by a permanent home, family and a fresh start).

Figure 4. The same machine as Section 1D: two worked push–pull diagrams for the 20th century.

Part 3 — First years: Bonegilla and the Snowy

Most new arrivals did not walk into a house and a job. They were sent to migrant reception centres and hostels. The first and biggest was **Bonegilla**, near Wodonga in Victoria, on an old army camp (Figure 5). Families lived in army-style huts, had meals in shared dining halls, and waited while work and housing were found. For many it was meant to be a few weeks and became many months. Yet Bonegilla was also a beginning: letters, photos and the hut buildings of Block 19 survive today as primary sources of what those first years felt like.



Source: figures from the sources list at the end of this section (retrieved 24 August 2026).

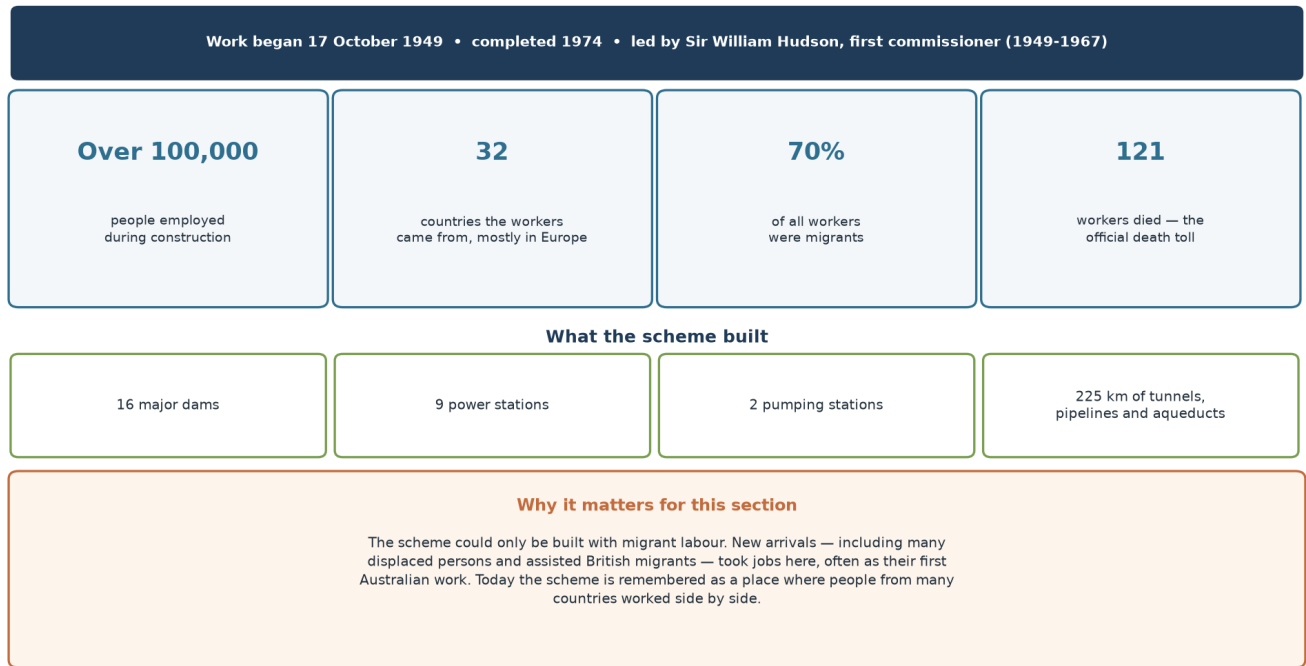
A fact panel on Bonegilla, Australia's first migrant reception centre near Wodonga, Victoria: a five-point timeline from its opening in December 1947 to Block 19 joining the National Heritage List in 2007, tiles for about 320,000 migrants from more than 30 countries, and a note on hut life.

Figure 5. Bonegilla: the first stop for hundreds of thousands.

Many of those new arrivals found their first work on the **Snowy Mountains Scheme** (Figure 6), the huge project that dammed rivers and cut tunnels through mountains on the New South Wales–Victoria border to make electricity and water for farms. Seventy per cent of its workers were migrants. Without the displaced persons and assisted migrants of the post-war years, the scheme could not have been built; for thousands of newcomers it was the job that got them started.

The Snowy Mountains Scheme, 1949-1974

Dams, tunnels and power stations in the Snowy Mountains on the New South Wales-Victoria border



Source: figures from the sources list at the end of this section (retrieved 24 August 2026).

A fact panel on the Snowy Mountains Scheme, 1949-1974: over 100,000 workers from 32 countries, 70 per cent of them migrants, the 121 workers who died, and what the scheme built: 16 dams, 9 power stations and 225 kilometres of tunnels and pipelines.

Figure 6. The Snowy Mountains Scheme: built by the world.

Part 4 — Asian labour in the north: Broome pearling

The Asian story of the 20th century did not begin in 1945. At **Broome**, in Western Australia, the pearl shell industry had been built since the 1880s by Asian crews (Figure 7): Japanese divers, Malay crewmen, “Manilamen” from the Philippines, and Chinese workers. By 1910 Broome was one of the world’s leading pearling towns, and most of the town worked in the industry.

Then the war reached the Pacific. More than 200 Japanese residents of Broome were interned as “enemy aliens”, and the industry nearly stopped. It slowly rebuilt after the war, but plastic buttons and zips took the market for pearl shell, and the industry shrank. The Japanese cemetery at Broome — the resting place of 919 divers — remains one of Australia’s strongest monuments to Asian labour, and a reminder that the same country that relied on Asian workers also locked them up when fear took over.

Pearling at Broome: an Asian workforce in Australia's north

Broome, Western Australia — from the 1880s, the pearl shell industry was built largely on Asian labour



Source: figures from the sources list at the end of this section (retrieved 24 August 2026). 'c.' means 'about'.

A fact panel on pearling at Broome: the Asian crews (Japanese divers, Malay crewmen, Manilamen from the Philippines and Chinese workers), the town's reliance on the industry by 1910, the interning of more than 200 Japanese residents in World War II, and the 919 divers buried in the Japanese cemetery.

Figure 7. Broome: an Asian workforce in Australia's north.

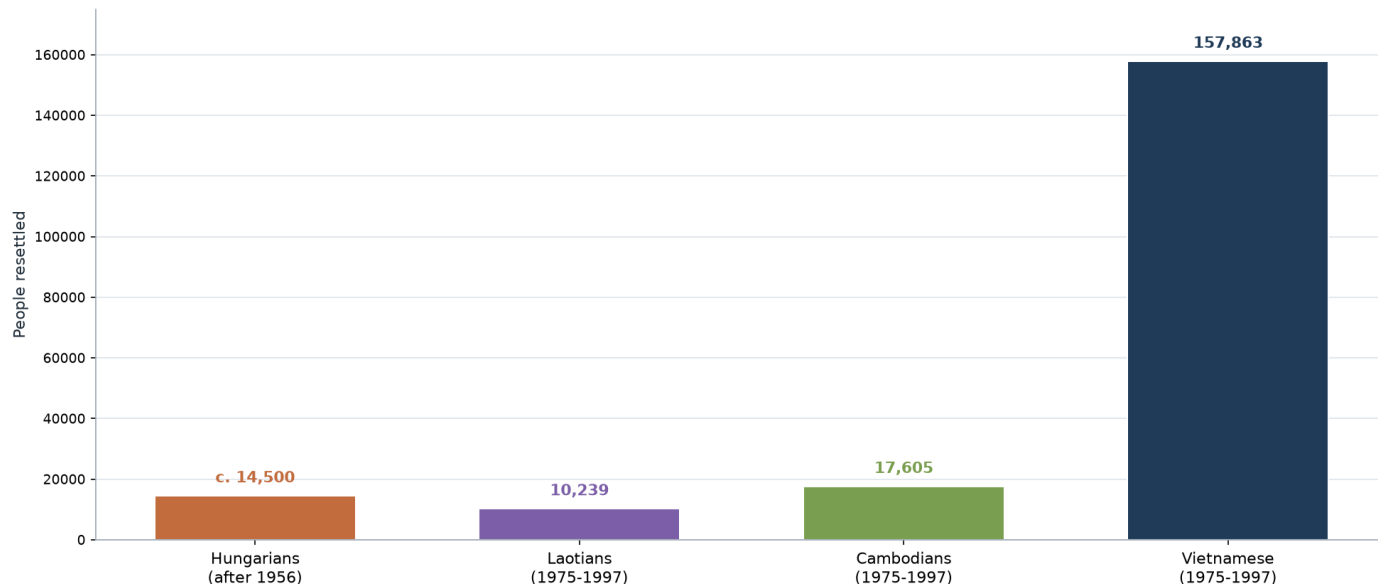
Part 5 — Refugees from Europe and from Asia, and the end of the White Australia policy

After 1945, Australia took refugees in waves (Figure 8). When the Soviet Union crushed Hungary's attempt to break free in 1956, about 14,500 Hungarians were resettled here; when Prague was crushed in 1968, thousands of Czechoslovaks followed. These intakes mattered: refugees were now seen not as a burden but as people Australia chose to help — and public feeling warmed to them.

Then the Vietnam War ended in 1975, and South-East Asia produced its own displaced persons. The first refugee boat reached Darwin in April 1976. One surviving boat, the **Tu Do**, is today a real museum object at the Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney — a primary source you can stand beside. About 2,000 people arrived by boat between 1976 and 1982, and most other Indochinese refugees came by plane from camps: Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser's government agreed to take more than 50,000 Vietnamese from the camps, and between 1975 and 1997 Australia resettled 157,863 Vietnamese, 10,239 Laotians and 17,605 Cambodians.

While these groups arrived, the old rules were ended one by one: the **Migration Act 1958** ended the dictation test; in **1966** the rules were eased for non-European migrants; in **1973** the Whitlam government said race was not to count at all in choosing migrants; the **Racial Discrimination Act 1975** made racial discrimination against the law; and by 1978 selection by country of origin had ended. Historians describe this as the dismantling of the White Australia policy — step by step, over thirty years.

People who came to Australia as refugees: four intakes from Europe and Asia



Source: figures from the sources list at the end of this section (retrieved 24 August 2026). 'c.' means 'about'. Czechoslovak arrivals after 1968 are not shown: no official total is published.

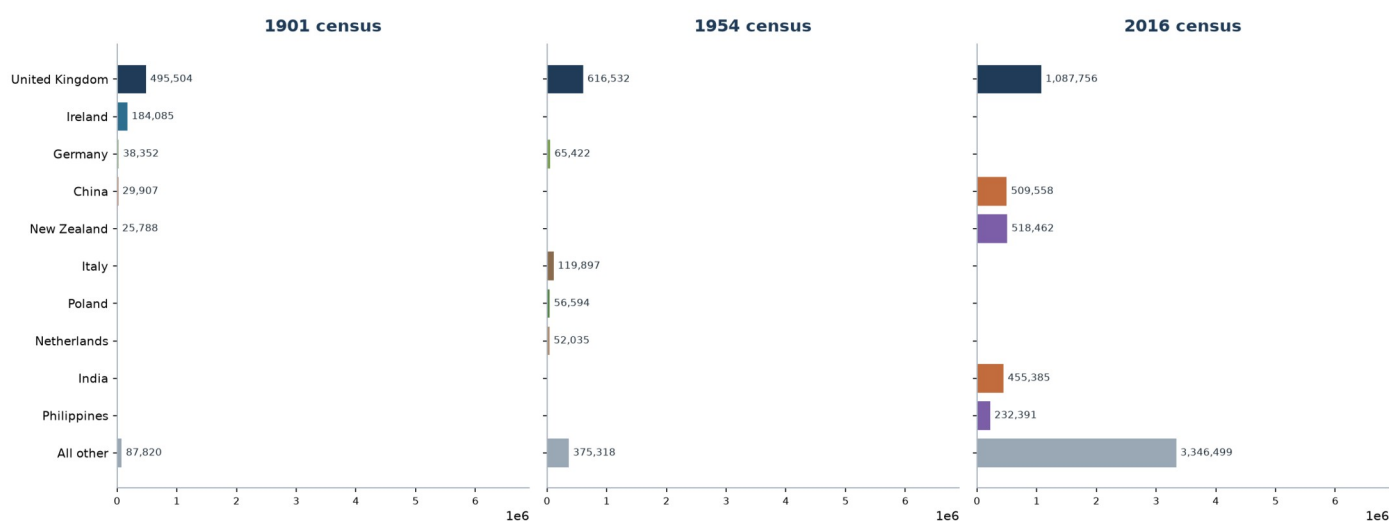
A bar chart of four refugee intakes to Australia from Europe and from Asia: about 14,500 Hungarians after 1956, 10,239 Laotians and 17,605 Cambodians in 1975-1997, and 157,863 Vietnamese in 1975-1997.

Figure 8. Four refugee intakes from Europe and Asia. (Czechoslovak arrivals after 1968 are left out: no official total is published.)

Part 6 — What the data shows

The census lets us see the change in numbers (Figure 9). In **1901** the top birthplaces were the United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany and China — the pattern of the 19th century you met in Section 1D. By **1954** the United Kingdom still led, but Italy had jumped to second place, and Poland and the Netherlands appeared high on the list — the post-war programs at work. By **2016** the list had changed again: China, New Zealand, India, the Philippines and Vietnam sat near the top, and the total of overseas-born had grown from 861,456 (1901) to 6,150,051. At the 2021 census, 27.6 per cent of Australia's people — 7,502,450 — were born overseas.

Where were Australia's people born?



Total overseas-born: 861,456 (1901), 1,285,798 (1954), 6,150,051 (2016). Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics census data, as tabulated in 'Immigration to Australia' (Wikipedia), retrieved 24 August 2026.

Three bar charts of the top birthplaces of Australia's overseas-born people at the 1901, 1954 and 2016 censuses, showing the United Kingdom always first, Italy, Poland and the Netherlands appearing by 1954, and China, New Zealand, India, the Philippines and Vietnam near the top by 2016.

Figure 9. Where were Australia’s people born? Three census snapshots. Source: ABS census data.

Read the three charts the way a historian reads them: not just “what is the biggest bar?” but “what changed between the snapshots, and which events from Figure 1 explain the change?”

Part 7 — Impacts on Australian society

A bigger, more varied society. More than two million post-war Europeans, and later the refugees of the 1950s–1990s, made Australia bigger and far more varied. Italian market gardens and “Little Italy” streets such as Carlton in Melbourne changed Australian food; Greek and Dutch communities built clubs, churches and festivals; Vietnamese Australians — such as the comedian Anh Do and Hieu Van Le, who became Governor of South Australia — are part of the country’s public life today.

Work and wealth. Migrant labour built the Snowy Mountains Scheme and kept northern industries like pearling going; migrant families started farms, shops and trades. The electricity and water of the Snowy still serve south-eastern Australia.

A hard question faced plainly. Not everyone welcomed the newcomers: some were met with name-calling, with signs and snubs, and with the leftover rules of the White Australia policy. The difficult part of this history is that the same society that offered a new home also made some of its new people feel like strangers for years. The ending of the policy, and the Racial Discrimination Act 1975, are part of the impact too: 20th-century migration changed Australia’s laws and its idea of itself.

Worked demonstrations

Demonstration 1 — Reading a primary source: the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* (E05).

Source A — *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* (Commonwealth of Australia), section 3(a), restated in plain words with one short exact phrase.

In plain words: the Act barred from Australia anyone who failed a dictation test. An officer could ask a person to write out “a passage of fifty words in length in a European language directed by the officer” — and because the officer chose the language, a person could be made to fail on purpose.

(The Act is on the Federal Register of Legislation; the short phrase is as quoted in the Wikipedia article on the Act. Retrieved 24 August 2026.)

Question	Answer, and why the answer works
What kind of source is this?	A government document — a law passed by Parliament. A law is strong evidence of what a government <i>did</i> , not just what people said.
Who made it, and when?	The first federal Parliament, in 1901 — the very start of the nation. The date tells us the new nation chose this rule as one of its first acts.
What does it say, in plain words?	Anyone who failed a dictation test could be barred. The officer chose the language, so the test could be a trick aimed at one group.
Whose perspective does it show?	The perspective of the Parliament that made it — and behind that, of voters who wanted a “White Australia”. A law shows the view of the people with the power to act.
What can it <i>not</i> tell us?	Not how the test felt to the people it shut out, and not the views of the Asians it targeted. For those sides we need other sources — letters, newspapers, and objects like the boat in Part 5. Every source is one window, not the

whole view.

Demonstration 2 — Using the Figure 9 dataset to back a claim (E04).

Claim: After World War II, the places Australia's people were born changed quickly.

Step	Working
Evidence	Figure 9: in 1901, Italy, Poland and the Netherlands do not appear among the top birthplaces. In 1954 — only nine years after the war — Italy is second with 119,897, Poland has 56,594 and the Netherlands 52,035. The United Kingdom stays first and grows.
Reasoning	Births cannot add 119,897 Italy-born people in a few years; only arrivals can. The timing matches the post-war programs in Figure 2 (the displaced persons program and the Italian agreement), so migration is the best explanation.
Limits	The figures count people; they do not give reasons. To confirm the <i>why</i> , we cross-check with the programs (Figure 2), with the push–pull diagram (Figure 4), and with first-hand sources such as Bonegilla letters and photos (Figure 5).

Practice questions

Guided

S1. Sort these four reasons for coming to 20th-century Australia into push factors and pull factors: (a) home wrecked by World War II in Europe; (b) a fare of only £10 under the Assisted Passage Migration Scheme; (c) war in Vietnam after 1975; (d) paid work waiting on the Snowy Mountains Scheme.

S2. Using Figure 1, name one date that shows a *pull* factor at work and one date that shows a rule made *against* a group of people.

S3. Using Figure 2, match each group to its program: (1) British boys wanting farm training in the 1920s; (2) a Dutch family in 1954; (3) a Hungarian in 1957; (4) a British family in 1960. Programs: (a) Assisted Passage Migration Scheme; (b) agreements with the Netherlands, Italy and Greece; (c) Dreadnought scheme / Big Brother Movement; (d) refugee intakes.

S4. Complete the sentence using Source A: “The dictation test was a trick because ... and ...”

S5. Using Figure 5: (a) in what month and year did Bonegilla open? (b) give two things that survive today as primary sources of migrant life there.

S6. Using Figure 6: (a) what share of Snowy workers were migrants? (b) name two things the scheme built. (c) why does the figure give a death toll, and what does including it show about how we should tell this history?

S7. Using Figure 9, how many *more* United Kingdom-born people were counted in 1954 than in 1901? Show your working.

S8. Match each key word to its meaning: (1) refugee; (2) displaced person; (3) dictation test; (4) assisted passage. Meanings: (a) a ticket paid for, or paid in part, by a government; (b) a person who has had to flee their own country because of war or bad treatment; (c) a spelling test used as a trick to turn people away; (d) a person left homeless by war, far from their old homes.

On your own

U1. Make your own push–pull diagram for one of these groups: Europeans after World War II, or Vietnamese after 1975 (VC2HH6K09.E02). Use at least two push factors and two pull factors from Parts 2, 4 and 5, and label each one. Model: Figure 4.

U2. Source A shows the perspective of the people with the power to act. Whose perspective is *missing* from Source A? Say whose, and suggest one kind of source that could supply it (VC2HH6K09.E05).

U3. Compare the first years in Australia of a displaced person sent to Bonegilla in 1949 with a “Ten Pound Pom” arriving in 1955 (VC2HH6K09.E02, E05). Give two similarities and one difference in their experiences.

U4. Choose one contribution to Australia’s work or social life made by a 20th-century European or Asian migrant group (VC2HH6K09.E03). Explain the link from then to now, with one named place, person or figure.

Writing task

W1 — Migration story (VC2HH6K09.E05). Build a migration story of 150–300 words for **one** person or family, choosing from: a displaced person at Bonegilla in 1949; a “Ten Pound Pom” on the ship *Orontes*; a Hungarian refugee in 1957; or a Vietnamese refugee arriving by boat like the *Tu Do* in the late 1970s. Your story must use at least **two** sources from this section (for example: Source A; Figure 2; Figure 3; Figure 5; Figure 8; the *Tu Do* at the Australian National Maritime Museum; a census row from Figure 9). Include: why they left (a push or pull factor); the journey; the arrival and first years; and one sentence each on (i) whose perspective your story is told from, and (ii) one impact on Australian society.

Rules of evidence for this task: every claim must be backed by a fact from this section; use names, dates and figures where you know them; and if you write about the hard parts (the trick test, interning, racism), tell them plainly, the way a historian would. Then read your story aloud to a partner and answer one question from them.

Oral history task

O1 (VC2HH6K09.E06). Prepare questions and record an oral history of migration: interview a family member, an older friend or someone older who lives near you about their journey to Australia, or their family’s journey, using the question map in Figure 10. Then outline the journey and the circumstances of arrival, and check what you heard against at least one other source (a date from Figure 1, a program from Figure 2, a census snapshot from Figure 9). *If your family history is unknown or hard to trace*, interview an older person you know about where their family came from, or retell one story from this section as if you had interviewed the person. Every history counts; no one is left out of this task.

Planning an oral history: interviewing a migrant or their family

An oral history is history gathered by speaking with people about the past. Use this map to build your questions.

1. BEFORE THE JOURNEY

- Where were you born? What was your home town like?
- What work did you do? What school did you go to?
- Why did you decide to leave?

2. THE DECISION AND THE JOURNEY

- Who helped you decide — family, friends, a poster, a scheme?
- How did you travel — ship or plane? How long did it take?
- What do you remember most about the voyage?

3. ARRIVING IN AUSTRALIA

- What was your first day like? Where did you live first?
- What was the hardest part? What surprised you?
- What job did you get first? What foods did you miss?

4. SINCE THEN

- What do you keep from your first home — language, food, photos?
- How has Australia changed since you arrived?
- What would you tell someone migrating today?

Ask open questions (not yes/no ones), listen more than you talk, record with permission, and check what you hear against dates and documents.

A planning map for an oral history interview about migration, in four stages: before the journey; the decision and the journey; arriving in Australia; and since then, with three open questions for each stage.

Figure 10. A question map for your oral history. Ask open questions, listen more than you talk, and record with permission.

Answers

- S1.** Push: (a) home wrecked by World War II; (c) war in Vietnam. Pull: (b) the £10 fare; (d) paid work on the Snowy.
- S2.** Example: pull — 1947, the displaced persons program (or 1949, work begins on the Snowy Mountains Scheme — paid work pulling migrants). Rule against a group — 1901, the Immigration Restriction Act. (Other readings are fine if the event matches the idea.)
- S3.** 1–c; 2–b; 3–d; 4–a.
- S4.** ... because the officer chose the language, and he could pick one the person did not know, so a person could be made to fail on purpose.
- S5.** (a) December 1947. (b) Any two of: letters, photos, and the hut buildings of Block 19.
- S6.** (a) Seventy per cent. (b) Any two of: 16 major dams; 9 power stations; 2 pumping stations; 225 km of tunnels and pipelines. (c) The death toll is part of the cost paid in lives, many of them migrant lives; including it keeps the story honest, not just proud.
- S7.** $616,532 - 495,504 = 121,028$ — about 121,000 more United Kingdom-born people.
- S8.** 1–b; 2–d; 3–c; 4–a.
- U1.** Look for: at least two labelled push factors (e.g. for Europeans: war-wrecked homes, few jobs; for Vietnamese: war, danger for the losing side, refugee camps) and two pull factors (e.g. paid work and cheap fares; a permanent home and family), laid out like the model in Figure 4.
- U2.** Example: the perspective of the people the test shut out — Asians and other targeted newcomers. A source that could supply it: a letter or diary by a person refused entry, a newspaper written by the targeted community, or an object and story like the *Tu Do* boat. (Any missing group named with a matching source type is fine.)
- U3.** Similarities might include: both came under government-assisted programs; both faced a strange country, new work and some prejudice; both often started in basic housing (a hut at Bonegilla; a migrant hostel). A difference: the displaced person had fled war and homelessness and often could not go home, while the Ten Pound Pom kept the right to go home — and about 250,000 did.
- U4.** Accept any contribution with a clear then-to-now link and one named fact (e.g. Italian market gardens and Carlton's "Little Italy" in what Australians eat today; the Snowy's electricity and water; Broome's pearling and its Japanese cemetery; Greek Melbourne; Vietnamese food and public life).
- W1.** Checklist: a push or pull factor named; the journey and first years covered; two sources used and named; one perspective sentence; one impact sentence; hard parts told plainly. Mark on the quality of the reasoning: claims backed by evidence, and more than one side in view where the story has more than one side.
- O1.** No single answer. Check that the questions are open (not yes/no), that the outline covers the journey and the arrival, and that what was heard was checked against one other source.
-

Teacher notes

Teaching sequence (one suggested order). 1) Key words and Figure 1 as a first look at the story, linking back to Section 1D's push–pull machine. 2) Part 1 with Source A read slowly (the difficult-histories turn, and the steelman paragraph). 3) Part 2 with Figures 3 and 4; hold the two facts about Calwell in mind at once. 4) Part 3 with Figures 5 and 6 as the experiences core. 5) Part 4 with Figure 7 as the Asian-labour continuity from 1D. 6) Part 5 with Figure 8, ending the policy step by step. 7) Part 6 with Figure 9 as the data core, then Part 7 impacts. 8) Demonstrations, practice, then W1 as the evidence-based assessment task and O1 as the oral-history project.

Difficult histories. The dictation test as a trick, the White Australia policy, the interning of Japanese residents at Broome, racism faced by newcomers, and the boat arrivals of 1976 onwards are part of this story and are told plainly, in a few sentences each. The framing is the same as Section 1D: these rules and acts were unfair, and they are also evidence — perspectives of the people with the power to act.

Contested and defined terms. *White Australia policy* is presented as a historians' term, attributed as such at first use. *Refugee* is presented as a UN legal term with its agreed meaning. "*Enemy alien*" is presented as the government label of the time, quoted and flagged as not our words. The steelman paragraph in Part 1 gives the restrictionist case its strongest fair form before the case against it; students are assessed on the quality of their reasoning (claims backed by evidence; more than one side in view), not on which side they reach.

Vocabulary. General vocabulary is kept at or below Year 6 level. Subject terms (refugee, displaced person, dictation test, assisted passage, migrant hostel, interned, census) are defined at first use in Key words. The curriculum's own words are not quoted in this section; the industry name "pearling" (used in VC2HH6K09.E03) is kept as the standard historical term. The gate script for this section is src/gate_2c.py.

Scope notes. This section contains no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content. The Broome pearling crews are limited to the Asian crews named in the sources (Japanese, Malay, Manilamen, Chinese), matching the section's Asia thread; First Nations peoples are not part of this section's content. Refugee intakes shown in Figure 8 are limited to Europe and Asia, per the content description.

Sources

All sources are real and citable; where a source is restated in plain words, the card says so, and exact phrases are quoted only in short fragments. Retrieved 2026-08-24.

- Victorian Curriculum 2.0, History, Levels 5–6 band: content description VC2HH6K09 and elaborations VC2HH6K09.E01–E06 (listed by code in the marked block).
- *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* (Cth), section 3(a) — Federal Register of Legislation; the short phrase in Source A is as quoted in the Wikipedia article on the Act; the rest is restated in plain words.
- Wikipedia, *Immigration to Australia* (programs, intakes and ship names; ABS census birthplace tables for 1901, 1954 and 2016; 2021 overseas-born share).
- Wikipedia, *White Australia policy* (the 1901 Act; the dictation test figures 1902–09; dismantling: Holt 1949, Migration Act 1958, 1966, Whitlam 1973, Racial Discrimination Act 1975, 1978).
- Wikipedia, *Arthur Calwell* (first Minister for Immigration 1945; "populate or perish"; chief architect of the post-war program; believer in White Australia).
- Wikipedia, *International Refugee Organization* (founded 1946, closed 1952) and *displaced persons* figures; Australia's 182,159 DPs.
- Wikipedia, *Assisted Passage Migration Scheme* (the £10 fare; more than 1 million 1945–72; peak 1969; about 250,000 returned; the two-year rule; famous arrivals).
- Wikipedia, *Bonegilla Migrant Reception and Training Centre*; and the National Heritage List entry *Bonegilla Migrant Camp – Block 19* (listed 7 December 2007).
- Wikipedia, *Snowy Mountains Scheme* (began 17 October 1949; completed 1974; workers, countries, deaths; Sir William Hudson; what the scheme built).
- Wikipedia, *Broome, Western Australia*, and its pearling history (Asian crews; the town's reliance on the industry; the interning of Japanese residents; the Japanese cemetery's 919 divers).
- Wikipedia, *Vietnamese Australians* (the 1976 Darwin boat arrival; about 2,000 boat entrants 1976–82; Fraser's 50,000+; the 1975–97 intakes; Anh Do; Hieu Van Le); Australian National Maritime Museum, the boat *Tu Do* (acquired 1990).
- Wikipedia, *Hungarian Australians*, *Italian Australians*, *Dutch Australians* and *Greek Australians* (14,500 Hungarians; 201,428 Italians 1949–59; 50,000 Dutch in the 1950s; Greek Melbourne).
- Wikipedia, *Empire Settlement Act 1922*, *Big Brother Movement* and *Dreadnought scheme* (the interwar British programs).

How individuals and groups helped change Australian society

History 6 · Level 6 · Chapter 2 — Australia 1900–2000: Federation and the changing nation · Section 2D. Teaching order: fourth of five, after 2C (20th-century migration from Europe and Asia: causes, experiences and impacts) and before 2E (interpretations of 20th-century developments).

Owens: VC2HH6K10 (the significant contributions that individuals and groups — migrants among them — have made to change in Australian society).

§2A disposition (binding, TOC §2A): taught in neutral context (migrants and other notable Australians). .E01 (biographies of First Nations individuals) **excluded**; the individuals named in .E01 do not appear anywhere in this section. .E03 retained **without its First Nations individuals** — the retained cast is drawn from non-Indigenous cultural and social groups. .E02 retained whole.

Achievement-standard coverage: the standard's sentence on continuity and change in Australian politics and society across 1900–2000; this section carries its migration and contributions half.

Elaborations drawn on: VC2HH6K10 .E02 (contributions of well-known Australians with migrant backgrounds) and VC2HH6K10 .E03 trimmed (notable figures in science, sport, education and the arts; First Nations individuals cut at authoring).

Contested term (CONTESTED_TERMS Rule 1): *contribution* is defined at first use in the student text (the curriculum uses the term but does not define it); the definition there is the operational definition for every task in this section. *Change*, *continuity* and *significance* (curriculum terms per VC2HH6S10 .E01) are also defined at first use.

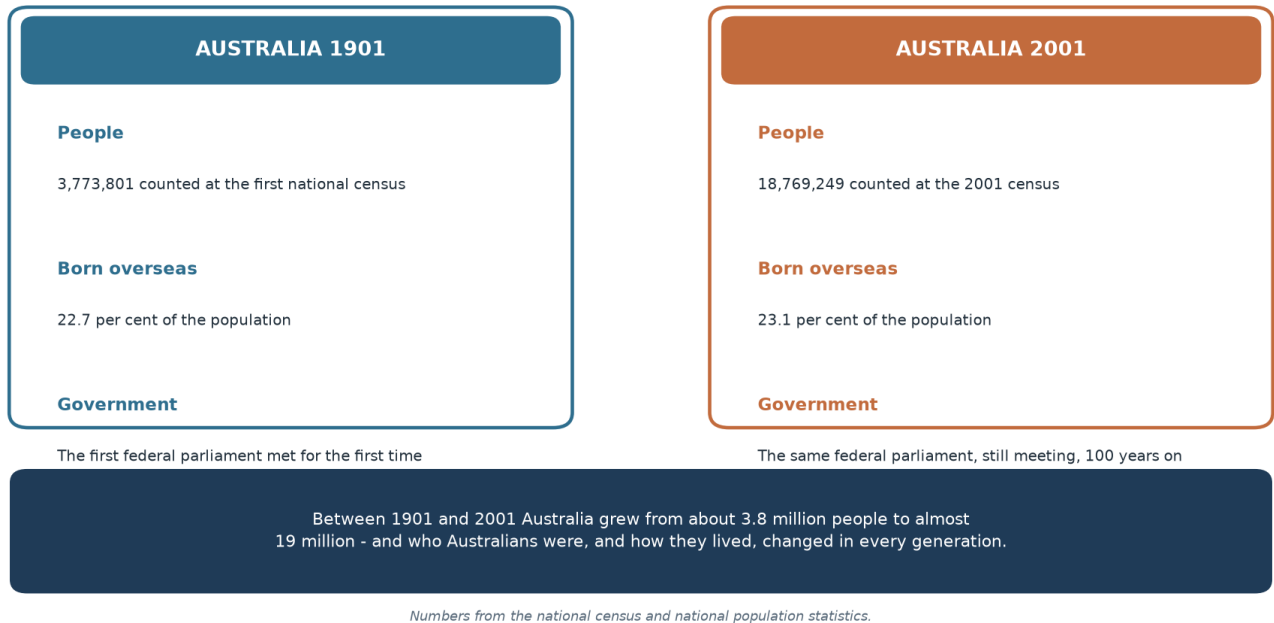
Where this fits: 2D is 2C's companion: 2C studies why migrants came and what they experienced; 2D studies what individuals and groups **gave** and how society changed as a result. Source reading here is informal; the formal source engine lives in 3C–3D, significance criteria in 4C, and the exit writing standard in 4D. No section of this book assumes prior First Nations learning (TOC §4).

What we are learning

In 2A you studied how the colonies became one nation in 1901. In 2B you saw how the rights and lives of women, children and migrants changed after Federation. In 2C you followed the migrants themselves — why they came, what they went through, and what happened when they arrived.

This section asks the next question: **what did all these people — and the people already here — give to Australia, and how did that change the country?**

How much had Australia changed? 1901 and 2001



A two-column comparison headed Australia 1901 and Australia 2001. Left column, 1901: population 3,773,801 people at the first national census; 22.7 per cent of people were born overseas; the first federal parliament met for the first time. Right column, 2001: population 18,769,249 at the 2001 census; 23.1 per cent born overseas; the same federal parliament still meeting, one hundred years on. A strip at the bottom reads: between 1901 and 2001 Australia grew from about 3.8 million people to almost 19 million — and who Australians were, and how they lived, changed in every generation. A note says the numbers come from the national census and from national population statistics.

Before we start, one word needs care: **contribution**. The curriculum uses the word but does not define it, so here is how this section uses it:

A **contribution** is something a person or group gives to the society they live in — work, ideas, knowledge, food, inventions, art, money or help — that makes life different for other people. Other meanings of the word exist, but every task in this section uses this one.

You already know the two words historians use to talk about change over time:

- **Change** — what becomes different over time.
- **Continuity** — what stays the same over time.

A good history of Australia in the 1900s holds both at once. This section sorts the **contributions** that changed Australian society, names the **individuals** and **groups** behind them, and keeps one eye on what stayed the same.

A note on fairness, because history must be honest: for most of this period, Australia's migration laws were not fair to everyone. At Federation in 1901 the new national parliament passed the Immigration Restriction Act, the first of the laws known as the **White Australia policy**. These laws were designed to keep out people who were not white and British. The dictation test that officials used to shut people out was removed in 1958. In 1966 the rules began to open up, and in 1973 the last rules that picked migrants by race were removed. In 1975 the Racial Discrimination Act made it against the law to treat people unfairly because of their race. The contributions you will read about here were made **at the same time as** that story — and, in time, helped change it.

Multicultural is one more useful word: a society is multicultural when it contains many different cultures — languages, foods, beliefs and ways of living side by side. In 1901 most Australians were born in Australia or the British Isles. By 2000, people from almost every country on Earth called Australia home.

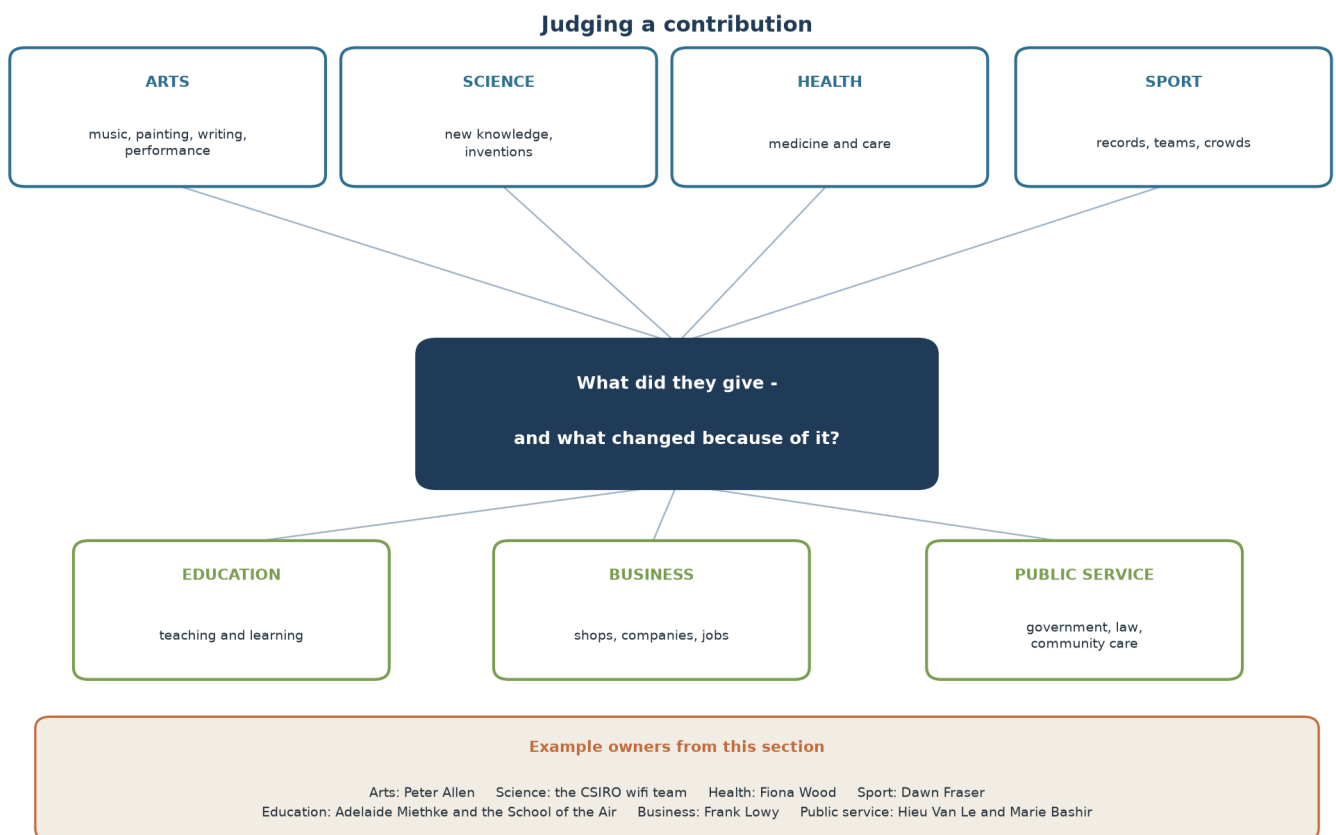
How do we judge a contribution?

Historians sort contributions by **field** — the area of life they touch. This section uses seven fields:

- **Arts** — music, painting, writing, dance and performance.
- **Science** — new knowledge, inventions and discoveries.
- **Health** — medicine, hospitals and care for the sick and hurt.
- **Sport** — games, records and the teams and crowds behind them.
- **Education** — teaching, schools and helping people learn.
- **Business** — shops, companies, jobs and new ways of buying and selling.
- **Public service** — government, law, and looking after the community.

Then they ask two questions of any contribution:

1. **What did this person or group give?** (the contribution itself)
2. **What changed as a result?** (the consequences — for work, food, health, fun, fairness, or the way Australians see themselves)



A concept map titled Judging a contribution. A centre card asks: what did they give, and what changed because of it? Around it sit seven field cards: arts (music, painting, writing, performance), science (new knowledge, inventions), health (medicine and care), sport (records, teams, crowds), education (teaching and learning), business (shops, companies, jobs), public service (government, law, community care). A bottom strip gives example owners from this section: arts, Peter Allen; science, the CSIRO wifi team; health, Fiona Wood; sport, Dawn Fraser; education, Adelaide Miethke and the School of the Air; business, Frank Lowy; public service, Hieu Van Le and Marie Bashir.

Four Australians from migrant families

The curriculum names four well-known Australians who were migrants themselves or came from families that migrated. Here they are.

Hieu Van Le (born 1954) — from refugee to governor. Hieu Van Le was born in Vietnam. In 1977, two years after the Vietnam War ended, he fled by boat. He and 42 other people made it to Australia, landing near Darwin in November 1977 with nothing. He learned English, studied at the University of Adelaide, and built a career looking into financial crime at ASIC — the government body that makes sure money matters are run honestly — rising to senior roles as an investigator and manager. He served as Lieutenant-Governor of South Australia from 2007, and on 1 September 2014 he became the **35th Governor of South Australia** — the first person of East Asian background to serve as a state governor in Australia. He finished that role on 31 August 2021 and received the Companion of the Order of Australia in 2016. Think about the distance travelled: a young man who arrived by boat with nothing later stood at the head of a whole state in the King's name. That is one measure of how much Australian society changed in his lifetime.

Sir Frank Lowy (born 1930) — from wartime Europe to Westfield. Frank Lowy was born in Czechoslovakia (today Slovakia). As a boy during the Second World War, he and his family were forced to live in a fenced-off part of town; his father was killed in the war. Frank survived. In 1946 he sailed for what was then called Palestine; the British held him in a camp on Cyprus, and he later served as a soldier in the 1948 war there. In 1952 he came to Australia to join family. He met John Saunders in 1953, and the two built a small business that grew into **Westfield**. Their first shopping centre, Westfield Place, opened at Blacktown in Sydney's west in July 1959, and the company listed on the stock exchange in 1960. Shopping centres changed how Australians shop, meet and work. Australia gave Lowy high honours for this work: the Order of Australia in 2000, and in 2017 the title "Sir", for his service to business and to giving; he founded the Lowy Institute for international policy in 2003 and has given large sums to medical research and hospitals.

Marie Bashir (born 1930) — doctor, healer, governor. Marie Bashir was born at Narrandera to parents who came from Lebanon. She became a doctor in 1956 and one of Australia's leading psychiatrists — a doctor who cares for people's mental health. In 1972 she founded Rivendell, a service helping children and families, and in 1993 she became a professor at the University of Sydney, teaching doctors about mental health. On 1 March 2001 she became the **Governor of her home state — the first woman in Australia** to hold that role — and served until 1 October 2014. Between 2007 and 2012 she was also the head of the University of Sydney. In 2014 she received one of Australia's highest awards. Her life's work — caring for people's minds, and then serving a whole state — shows how one person can contribute twice over.

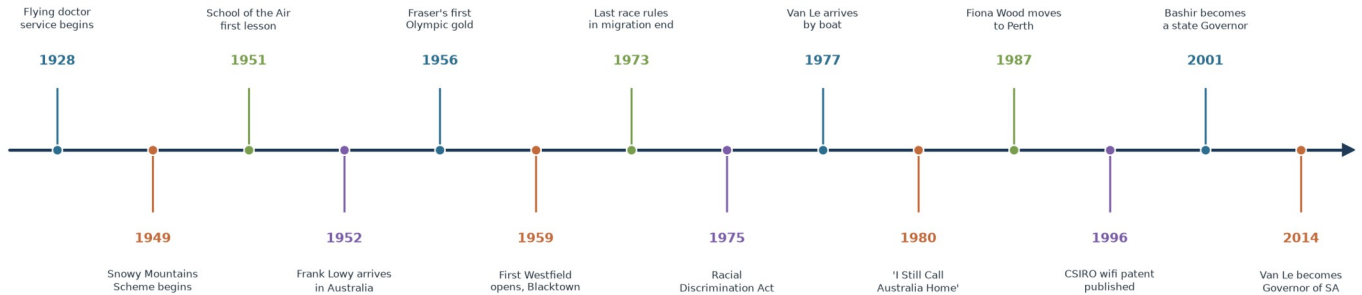
Marita Cheng (born 1989) — from Cairns to robotics. Marita Cheng was born in Cairns, the daughter of Chinese parents, and raised by her mother, who cleaned hotels for a living. She studied engineering and computer science at the University of Melbourne, and while still a student she started **Robogals** (2008), a group of volunteers who run robotics workshops to get schoolgirls excited about engineering and technology. By 2012 Robogals had run workshops for more than 3,000 girls across 80 schools. In January 2012 she was named **Young Australian of the Year**. She went on to found technology companies that build robots and apps, including an app that uses a phone camera to describe the world for blind users. Her contribution is double: she builds technology, and she opens the door for girls who were never told engineering was for them.

Four Australians from migrant families

Hieu Van Le PUBLIC SERVICE Born in Vietnam, 1954; arrived by boat, 1977 35th Governor of South Australia, 2014-2021 First person of East Asian background to be a state governor in Australia	Sir Frank Lowy BUSINESS Born in Czechoslovakia, 1930; arrived 1952 With John Saunders, built Westfield; first centre opened at Blacktown, 1959 Title 'Sir' in 2017 for service to business and giving
Marie Bashir HEALTH + PUBLIC SERVICE Born at Narrandera, 1930; parents from Lebanon Doctor and psychiatrist; founded Rivendell, 1972 First woman in Australia to be a state Governor, 2001-2014; top national award in 2014	Marita Cheng SCIENCE + EDUCATION Born at Cairns, 1989; daughter of Chinese parents Founded Robogals, 2008: robotics workshops for schoolgirls 2012 Young Australian of the Year; builds robots

Four profile cards in a two-by-two grid. Card one, Hieu Van Le, public service: born in Vietnam in 1954; arrived by boat in 1977; 35th Governor of South Australia 2014 to 2021; the first person of East Asian background to be a state governor in Australia. Card two, Sir Frank Lowy, business: born in Czechoslovakia in 1930; arrived in 1952; with John Saunders he built Westfield, whose first centre opened at Blacktown in 1959; given the title “Sir” in 2017 for service to business and giving. Card three, Marie Bashir, health and public service: born at Narrandera in 1930 to parents from Lebanon; doctor and psychiatrist; first woman in Australia to be a state Governor, 2001 to 2014; one of Australia’s highest awards in 2014. Card four, Marita Cheng, science and education: born at Cairns in 1989, daughter of Chinese parents; founder of Robogals in 2008; 2012 Young Australian of the Year; builds robots and apps.

Contributions across a century, 1928-2014



The lives in this section, in order of years. Positions are spaced evenly; the year labels give the true dates.

A horizontal timeline titled *Contributions across a century, 1928 to 2014*, with fourteen dated points alternating above and below a central line. Above the line: 1928, the flying doctor service begins; 1951, the first School of the Air lesson; 1956, Dawn Fraser wins her first Olympic gold; 1973, the last race-based migration rules end; 1977, Hieu Van Le arrives by boat; 1987, Fiona Wood moves to Perth; 2001, Marie Bashir becomes the first woman in Australia to be a state Governor; 2014, Hieu Van Le becomes Governor of South Australia. Below the line: 1949, the Snowy Mountains Scheme begins; 1952, Frank Lowy arrives in Australia; 1959, the first Westfield centre opens at Blacktown; 1975, the Racial Discrimination Act passes; 1980, Peter Allen records *I Still Call Australia Home*; 1996, CSIRO's wifi patent is published. A note reads: *the lives in this section, in order.*

Notable Australians who changed everyday life

Contributions also come from people who were not migrants — and from ideas. Here are five more stories from five fields, whose work changed daily life.

Science: the CSIRO team that helped give the world wifi. CSIRO is Australia's national science agency. In the 1970s a CSIRO radio astronomer, **John O'Sullivan**, worked out a clever way to make pictures from radio telescopes sharper. In the early 1990s he led a team — with Graham Daniels, John Deane, Diethelm Ostry and Terry Percival — that used the same maths to solve a new problem: sending data quickly between computers without wires, even in buildings where signals bounce off walls. Their work was patented in 1996, and it sits inside the wifi you use at school and at home today. CSIRO's team won major science awards for it, including the Prime Minister's science award in 2009 and the European Inventor Award in 2012. Few contributions touch more lives than this one.

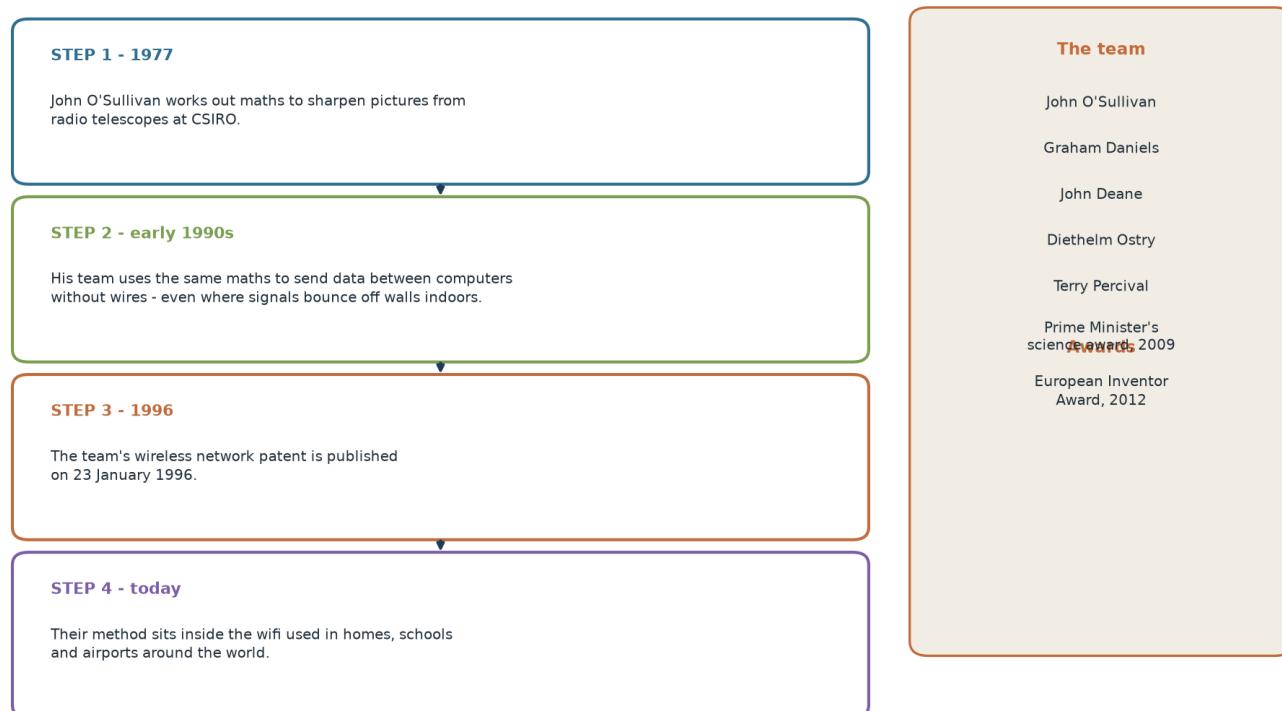
Sport: Dawn Fraser (born 1937). Dawn Fraser grew up in Balmain in Sydney, the youngest of eight children in a family with very little money; her father came from Scotland. She became the greatest swimmer of her age. She won the 100 metres freestyle at three Olympic Games in a row — Melbourne 1956, Rome 1960 and Tokyo 1964 — the first woman ever to do that in one event, and she took eight Olympic medals in all. In 1962 she became the first woman to swim 100 metres freestyle in under one minute. She was named Australian of the Year in 1964, and after swimming she coached, ran a hotel, and served as the member for Balmain in her state parliament from 1988 to 1991. Her contribution: records that lifted women's sport into the headlines, and a life that showed a working-class girl could stand at the very top.

Education: the School of the Air. In the outback, children lived hundreds of kilometres from the nearest school. The Reverend **John Flynn** had already helped bring medicine to the inland: in 1928 his Australian Inland Mission started the aerial medical service that became the Royal Flying Doctor Service, the world's first flying ambulance. In 1950–51 an educator named **Adelaide Miethke** had a matching idea: use the same radios to bring lessons to outback children. The base officially started at Alice Springs in September 1950, and the **first School of the Air lesson went out on 8 June 1951**. Children gathered around pedal radios — sets kept going by pedalling, like a bicycle — to hear their teacher. Radio lessons ran until 2009, when most schools moved online, and Schools of the Air still teach outback children in every state except Tasmania. Distance stopped being a reason to miss out on school.

Arts: Peter Allen (1944–1992). Peter Allen was born Peter Woolnough at Tenterfield, grandson of a town saddler (his song “Tenterfield Saddler” tells that family story). He became one of Australia’s most loved songwriters and performers, helping to write huge songs such as “I Honestly Love You” and “I Go to Rio”, and winning an Oscar and a Golden Globe for helping to write “Arthur’s Theme”. In 1980 he released “**I Still Call Australia Home**”, a song about missing your country when you are far away. From 1987 it played over Qantas advertisements, and for a generation of Australians it became the sound of coming home. In 2013 it was added to the Sounds of Australia register at the National Film and Sound Archive. Allen received the Order of Australia for his service to the performing arts. Songs are contributions too: they change how a people feels about itself.

Health (and migration): Fiona Wood (born 1958). Fiona Wood was born in England, trained as a doctor in London, and migrated to Perth with her family in 1987. She became Western Australia’s first female plastic surgeon in 1991 and led the burns unit at Royal Perth Hospital. From 1993, with scientist Marie Stoner, she developed **spray-on skin**: a way to grow a patient’s own skin cells and spray them onto terrible burns so the body can heal with far less scarring. Her team treated many of the Australians badly burnt in the 2002 Bali bombings, and the technique is used around the world. She was named Australian of the Year in 2005.

From radio telescopes to wifi



A stepped flow diagram titled From radio telescopes to wifi. Step one, 1977: John O’Sullivan works out maths to sharpen pictures from radio telescopes at CSIRO. Step two, early 1990s: his team uses the same maths to send data between computers without wires, even where signals bounce indoors. Step three, 1996: the team’s wifi patent is published on 23 January 1996. Step four, today: the method sits inside the wifi used in homes, schools and airports around the world. A side note lists the team: John O’Sullivan, Graham Daniels, John Deane, Diethelm Ostry, Terry Percival — and the awards: Prime Minister’s science award 2009, European Inventor Award 2012.

Groups that changed Australia

The content description speaks of individuals **and** groups. Three groups stand out for what they gave to Australian society in the 1900s.

The workers of the Snowy Mountains Scheme (1949–1974). Starting on 17 October 1949, Australia built one of the biggest engineering projects in the world: the Snowy Mountains Scheme, high in the Snowy Mountains of south-

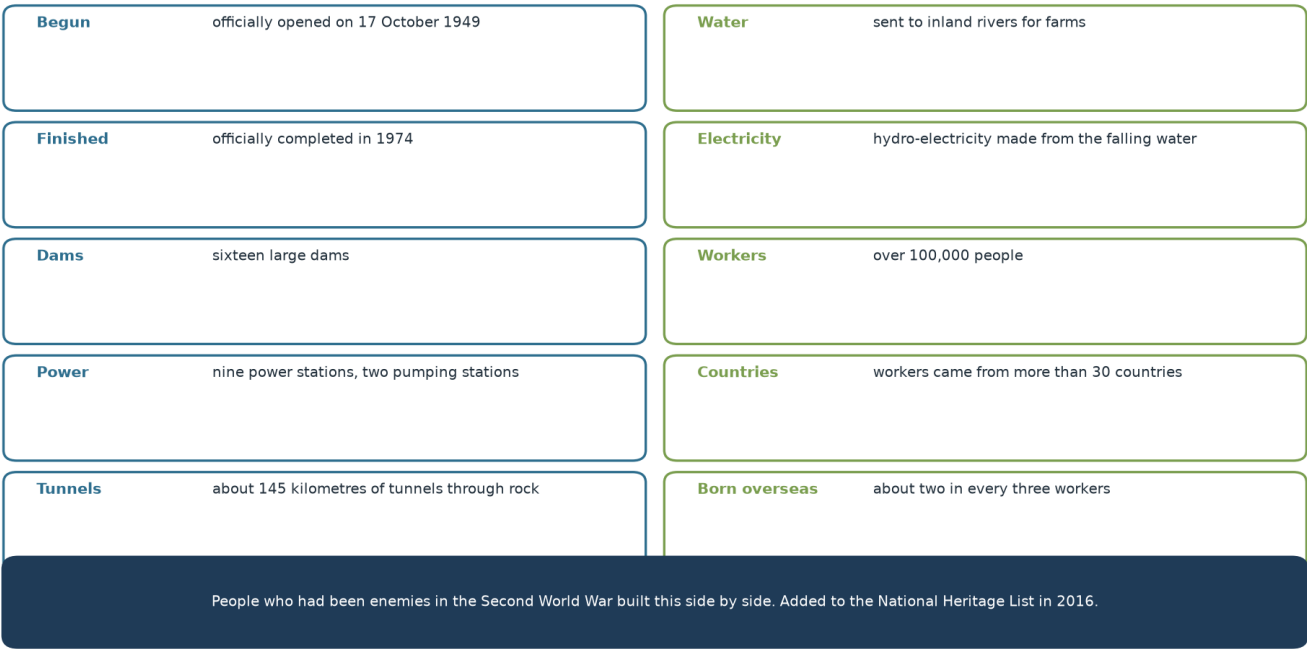
eastern Australia. Workers built sixteen large dams, nine power stations, two pumping stations and about 145 kilometres of tunnels through solid rock, to catch mountain water, send it to inland rivers for farms, and make hydro-electricity. Over 100,000 people worked on the scheme, from more than thirty countries; about two in every three were born overseas. Many had been enemies in the war that had just ended — now they worked side by side. The scheme was officially completed in 1974 and was added to the National Heritage List in 2016. It changed Australia’s farms and power supply, and it taught Australians something new about working side by side with people from many countries.

Post-war Greek and Italian communities. In the 1950s and 1960s (studied in 2C), hundreds of thousands of migrants came from Greece and Italy. They changed Australian cities in ways you can still taste: coffee shops, pasta and pizza restaurants, olive oil, fresh fruit and vegetable markets, and festivals in suburbs like those of Melbourne’s north. They also built clubs, churches and schools that kept their languages alive while their children grew up Australian.

The Vietnamese community. When the Vietnam War ended in 1975, refugees began to leave by boat and by plane. Between 1975 and 1997 the United Nations refugee agency counted 108,808 Vietnamese refugees resettled in Australia, with big waves in the late 1970s and again in 1983–84, and family reunion through the late 1980s. In 2021 the census counted 268,170 residents born in Vietnam and around 334,780 Australians with Vietnamese ancestry. Vietnamese Australians have contributed in every field — food (famous chefs and busy restaurants), business, medicine, engineering, science and public life. The journey of Hieu Van Le, above, is one of this community’s stories.

The Snowy Mountains Scheme, 1949-1974

One of the biggest engineering works in the world



A labelled fact figure for the Snowy Mountains Scheme, 1949 to 1974. A header reads: one of the biggest engineering works in the world. Facts listed: begun officially on 17 October 1949; completed officially in 1974; sixteen large dams; nine power stations; two pumping stations; about 145 kilometres of tunnels through rock; water sent to inland rivers for farms and used to make hydro-electricity; over 100,000 workers from more than thirty countries; about two in every three workers born overseas; added to the National Heritage List in 2016. A bottom strip reads: people who had been enemies in the Second World War built this side by side.

Groups that changed Australia

GROUP	WHEN	WHAT THEY GAVE
Snowy Mountains Scheme workers	1949-1974	Mountain water for farms and clean power for cities and towns - plus a working example of people from 30 countries building together
Greek and Italian communities	1950s and 1960s arrivals	Coffee shops, restaurants, markets and festivals in the big cities, plus clubs and language schools that kept their cultures alive
The Vietnamese community	Arrivals growing from 1975	Food, businesses, and professionals in medicine, engineering and science - and a growing place in public life

Each row: a group, the years it arrived or worked, and the contribution it gave to Australian society.

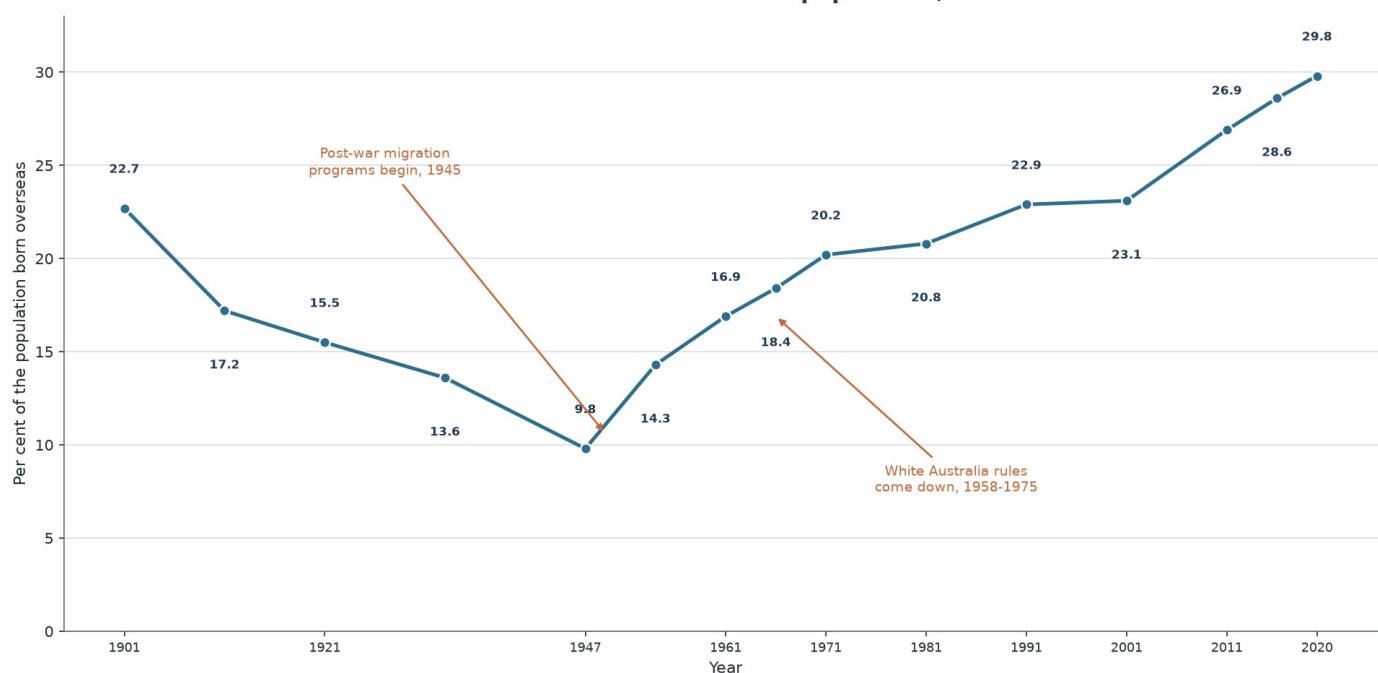
A three-row table titled Groups that changed Australia, with columns group, when, and what they gave. Row one: Snowy Mountains Scheme workers, 1949 to 1974, mountain water for farms and clean power for cities and towns — plus a working example of people from thirty countries building together. Row two: Greek and Italian communities, 1950s and 1960s arrivals, coffee shops, restaurants, markets, festivals, clubs and language schools in the big cities. Row three: the Vietnamese community, arrivals growing from 1975, food, businesses, professionals in medicine, engineering and science, and public life.

What changed — and what stayed the same

Count the people, and you can see the change land like a wave. Australia's censuses show that the share of people born overseas dropped to a low of 9.8 per cent in 1947 — then climbed, decade after decade, to 28.6 per cent in 2016 and 29.8 per cent by 2020. Two of the biggest reasons sit inside this chapter: the post-war migration programs you met in 2C, and the end of the White Australia policy between 1958 and 1975.

And the continuity? More than you might think. The federal parliament that first met in 1901 still meets today. Australians still vote, still argue about laws, and still ask who belongs — the same questions, answered in different ways in every generation. **Change and continuity travel together:** that is the heart of this section.

Australia's overseas-born share of population, 1901-2020



Census counts; 2020 is the national statistics estimate. Source: national population statistics (ABS).

A line chart of the share of Australia's population born overseas, from censuses and national statistics, 1901 to 2020. The line starts at 22.7 per cent in 1901, falls through 17.2 in 1911, 15.5 in 1921 and 13.6 in 1933 to a low of 9.8 per cent in 1947, then climbs through 14.3 in 1954, 16.9 in 1961, 18.4 in 1966, 20.2 in 1971, 20.8 in 1981, 22.9 in 1991, 23.1 in 2001, 26.9 in 2011 and 28.6 in 2016 to 29.8 per cent in 2020. Two notes mark the chart: the White Australia rules come down, 1958 to 1975, under the falling-to-rising elbow; and post-war migration programs, from 1945, under the first years of the climb. The title reads: Australia's overseas-born share of population, 1901 to 2020.

Worked examples

Example 1 — reading a real document: the official award words (with help)

Historians treat every source like a witness: ask what it is, who made it and why, what it says, and what it cannot say. Our witness is a real document: the official written words read out when **Marita Cheng** was named Young Australian of the Year. This text is the award's **official words**: the written statement an awarding body makes about the person it celebrates.

The official award words, published by the Australian of the Year Awards, say Cheng “has demonstrated vision and leadership well beyond her years” while still a university student, and that she “is dedicated to encouraging young women to become interested in a career in engineering”.

Step	What we ask	What we find
1. What is it?	What kind of source is this?	An official statement made at the time of the award — a primary source for how Australia praised her in 2012.
2. Who made it, why?	Who wrote it, and what did they want?	The national award body. It wants to praise and celebrate , so it picks out the good — it is not a balanced report of her whole life.
3. What does it say?	Read it word for word.	She showed vision and leadership as a student, and works to interest young women in engineering.
4. What can we learn?	Use it as evidence.	That by 2012 Australia's top national award could go to a young

Step	What we ask	What we find
5. What can't it say?	Find its blind spots.	woman from Cairns for encouraging girls into technology — evidence of how ideas about who contributes had changed. Nothing about how hard the work was, what failed first, or what critics said. We pair it with interviews and news reports for that side.

Key idea. The official award words are evidence of what a society chose to **praise** at a moment in time. Pair praise sources with everyday sources (interviews, news reports, records of the work itself).

SOURCE 1
OFFICIAL AWARD WORDS

What it is: the official award words for the 2012 Young Australian of the Year award

Who made it: the national Australia Day awards body

About: Marita Cheng, founder of Robogals

It says:

"...has demonstrated vision and leadership well beyond her years..." while still a university student, and "...is dedicated to encouraging young women to become interested in a career in engineering."

Where: the recipient page of the Australian of the Year Awards website (read 24 August 2026)

What does this source show - and what can it not show?

A source card for Worked Example 1. The card is headed SOURCE 1, official award words. Fields on the card: what it is, the official award words for the 2012 Young Australian of the Year award; who made it, the national Australia Day awards body; about, Marita Cheng, founder of Robogals; two quoted lines, she has demonstrated vision and leadership well beyond her years, and she is dedicated to encouraging young women to become interested in a career in engineering; where, the recipient page of the Australian of the Year Awards website; read, 24 August 2026. A bottom strip asks: what does this source show, and what can it not show?

Example 2 — reading numbers as a source (with help)

Our second source is a set of counts: the share of Australians born overseas, measured at each census (the official count of the whole population).

Step	What we do	What we find
1. Read the chart	Find 1947 and 2016.	9.8 per cent born overseas in 1947;

Step	What we do	What we find
		28.6 per cent in 2016.
2. Describe the change	Say it in one line.	The overseas-born share almost trebled in seventy years, after falling for forty years before that.
3. Ask <i>why then?</i>	Match the timing to events.	Big government migration programs began just after the war in 1945, and the race-based rules of the White Australia policy came down between 1958 and 1975 — the climb follows.
4. State a cause	One reason for the change.	Government programs that brought migrants from Europe, then from all around the world; fairer laws.
5. State a consequence	One result of the change.	A more multicultural society: more languages, foods and festivals — and new debates about belonging.

Key idea. A chart of counts is a source too. The **shape** of the line (fall, low point, long climb) is the evidence; the migration programs and the law changes are the causes that fit the shape.

Practice questions

With help

Q1. Sort these contributions into the seven fields on the sorter figure: (a) spray-on skin for burns patients, (b) Robogals workshops for schoolgirls, (c) Dawn Fraser's Olympic record, (d) "I Still Call Australia Home", (e) Westfield shopping centres, (f) the office of Governor of South Australia, (g) wifi for homes and schools.

Q2. Match each person to the true statement: (a) Hieu Van Le — (i) founded Robogals; (b) Frank Lowy — (ii) first woman in Australia to be a state Governor; (c) Marie Bashir — (iii) arrived by boat in 1977 and became the 35th Governor of South Australia; (d) Marita Cheng — (iv) built Westfield with John Saunders.

Q3. Using the timeline figure, put these in order, starting with the one that happened first: the Snowy Mountains Scheme begins; Marie Bashir becomes Governor; the first School of the Air lesson; CSIRO's wifi patent is published; Frank Lowy arrives in Australia.

Q4. Name two things the Snowy Mountains Scheme built, and say what the scheme's water and electricity were for.

Q5. What was unusual about the workers on the Snowy Mountains Scheme? Give two facts from the figure.

Q6. Using the wifi figure, explain in one sentence how radio astronomy work led to wifi.

Q7. Complete the ladder: the dictation test was removed in _____; race-based selection of migrants ended in _____; the Racial Discrimination Act passed in _____.

Q8. Continuity and change: from this section, give (a) two things that changed in Australian society between 1901 and 2001, and (b) one thing that stayed the same.

On your own

Q9. In three linked sentences, explain how the life of Hieu Van Le shows a changing Australia. Use the words *because* and *as a result*.

Q10. Choose one group from this section (Snowy workers, Greek and Italian communities, or the Vietnamese community). Write four sentences about its contribution, and name one real source a historian could check your sentences against (for example: census counts, photographs, award records, or newspapers).

Q11. Compare Dawn Fraser and Fiona Wood. Write one way their contributions were the same, and one way they were different (think about field, who was helped, and how the change happened).

Q12. “Anyone can make a contribution that changes Australia.” Do the lives in this section support this claim? Choose two people from this section and use them as evidence for your answer, whether you say yes or no.

Evidence task — a contribution profile

Write an evidence-based explanation, ten to twelve sentences, answering: **How did one person or group from this section contribute to changing Australian society?**

Choose from: Hieu Van Le, Frank Lowy, Marie Bashir, Marita Cheng, the CSIRO wifi team, Dawn Fraser, John Flynn and Adelaide Miethke (School of the Air), Peter Allen, Fiona Wood, the Snowy Mountains Scheme workers, the Greek and Italian communities, or the Vietnamese community.

Your profile must:

1. say **who** the person or group is, and **when** they lived or worked;
2. describe **what they gave** — the contribution itself, in its field;
3. explain **what changed as a result** — at least one consequence, using *because* or *as a result*;
4. include **two facts with a named source** for each (a page, award record, census, or collection you could show your teacher);
5. end with a **significance** judgement: how many lives did this touch, and do we still see it today? (Remember: *significant* here means important to many people and still remembered — say why your choice meets that test.)

Use the planning frame below. Marking looks for reasoning and evidence, not for which person you choose: who/when correct (2 marks), contribution described in its field (2), consequence linked with a cause word (2), two sourced facts (2), significance judgement with a stated reason (2).

CONTRIBUTION PROFILE - PLANNING FRAME

1. WHO AND WHEN

Name or group: _____
Dates: _____
Where they came from: _____

2. WHAT THEY GAVE

Field: arts / science / health / sport / education / business / public service
The contribution itself: _____

3. WHAT CHANGED

Because ... _____
As a result ... _____

4. MY SOURCED FACTS

Fact 1: _____ Source named: _____
Fact 2: _____ Source named: _____

5. SIGNIFICANCE

How many lives did it touch? _____
Can we still see it today? _____
Why does it meet the test? _____

Every fact must come from a source you can name.

A planning frame for the evidence task. A banner reads: contribution profile, planning frame. Five boxes in order: box one, who and when, with prompts for name or group, dates, and where they came from; box two, what they gave, with prompts for the field (arts, science, health, sport, education, business, public service) and the contribution itself; box three, what changed, with prompts beginning with because and as a result; box four, my sourced facts, with two blank rows each ending in source named; box five, significance, with prompts for how many lives were touched and whether we can still see it today. A footer reads: every fact must come from a source you can name.

Answers

Q1. (a) health, (b) education, (c) sport, (d) arts, (e) business, (f) public service, (g) science.

Q2. (a)–(iii); (b)–(iv); (c)–(ii); (d)–(i).

Q3. Snowy Mountains Scheme begins (1949); first School of the Air lesson (1951); Frank Lowy arrives (1952); wifi patent published (1996); Marie Bashir becomes Governor (2001).

Q4. Any two of: sixteen large dams, nine power stations, two pumping stations, about 145 kilometres of tunnels. The water went to inland rivers for farms (irrigation); the scheme made hydro-electricity.

Q5. Any two of: over 100,000 people worked on it; they came from more than thirty countries; about two in three were born overseas; some had been enemies in the Second World War and now worked side by side.

Q6. Example: The maths O’Sullivan worked out to sharpen radio telescope pictures was used by his team to send data between computers without wires, and that method was patented in 1996 and now sits inside wifi.

Q7. 1958; 1973; 1975.

Q8. (a) Any two of: the population grew from about 3.8 million to almost 19 million; the share born overseas rose from 22.7 per cent (1901) to 29.8 per cent (2020); new foods, languages and festivals became part of daily life; new technology (wifi, flying doctors, Schools of the Air) changed services. (b) Any one of: the federal parliament still meets; Australians still vote and debate laws; the same constitution still sets up the government (studied in 2A).

Q9. Example: Hieu Van Le arrived in Australia by boat in 1977 with nothing, **because** war had made Vietnam unsafe; he studied and worked hard, and **as a result** he became the 35th Governor of South Australia in 2014 — the first state governor of East Asian background — which shows how far Australian society had changed in one lifetime. Accept any three-sentence chain with a true cause and a true result.

Q10. Answers vary. Check: four true sentences about the group’s contribution, and a real, nameable source (census data, award records, photographs, news reports or official web pages).

Q11. Example same: both used their talent to lift Australia’s name — one in sport, one in medicine — and both were named Australian of the Year (Fraser 1964, Wood 2005). Example different: Fraser’s contribution was her own performance in the pool; Wood’s was a medical method that keeps helping patients around the world. Accept any true same/different pair.

Q12. Answers vary; mark the reasoning, not the side chosen. A strong “yes” uses, for example, Cheng (raised by a single mother in Cairns) and Fraser (a working-class girl from Balmain). A thoughtful “not always, but often” answer may note barriers such as the White Australia policy and argue that contributions still came despite them. Award: uses two people from the section as evidence, links their stories to the claim, and answers the question directly.

Teacher notes

Teaching sequence (one suggested flow). Session 1: “What we are learning” + the 1901/2001 comparison figure; introduce the definition of *contribution* and the White Australia framing. Session 2: the four profiled individuals (profiles figure + timeline figure); worked example 1. Session 3: the four everyday-life Australians (wifi figure); Q1–Q3. Session 4: the groups (Snowy figure, groups figure); Q4–Q7. Session 5: the overseas-born chart + worked example 2; continuity and change discussion; Q8–Q10. Session 6: evidence task drafting and sharing; Q11–Q12 as exit tickets.

Difficult history (CONTENT_POLICY: honest, age-appropriate, never sensational). Three moments need care. (1) Frank Lowy’s wartime loss: his family was Jewish, he was forced into a ghetto in Hungary, and his father perished in the Holocaust — the student text carries these facts in two plain sentences (forced into a fenced-off part of town; his father killed in the war) because “Jewish”, “ghetto” and “Holocaust” all sit above the vocabulary ceiling; teachers may name them aloud. (2) Vietnamese refugee journeys by boat: stated factually; some students may have family experience of forced migration — keep the sharing invitation optional and respectful, as in 2C. (3) The White

Australia policy: taught plainly as unfair laws that were changed, with the dates of change; the framing is that contributions were made despite and alongside it, which is what the evidence shows.

Scope notes (TOC §2A, binding). VC2HH6K10 taught in neutral context: the CD’s clause naming the groups whose contributions are studied is delivered through migrants (.E02 whole) and other notable Australians (.E03 trimmed). .E01 is excluded entirely — none of its named individuals appears in this section, in any figure, or in any task. No task requires access to excluded material, and no elaboration id outside .E02/.E03 is drawn on. Nothing here assumes prior First Nations learning (TOC §4). This section teaches knowledge content only (D11); the source-reading it models is informal and hands forward to 3C–3D, significance to 4C, and the writing standard to 4D.

Fact check. Every named person, date, award, count and percentage in the student text was checked against the sources below on the retrieval date shown. Where sources gave slightly different figures (e.g. the Snowy workforce overseas-born share), the conservative figure is used.

Vocabulary gate. Student-facing text (“What we are learning” through “Answers”, including figure alt text) checked at ceiling rank 6 (Yr6) with `load_ladder/check_text/tokenize` from the house vocabulary gate: CLEAN (no words placed above Yr6), verified 2026-08-24. Subject terms (*contribution, change, continuity, significance, multicultural*) are defined at first use per D4/CONTESTED_TERMS Rule 1. Gate-driven substitutions apply in the student text only; the exact official forms are retained in these notes: New South Wales → “her home state”/“her state” (the ladder places both “Wales” and “NSW” above ceiling); Dame/knighted → “title ‘Sir’” (2017) and “one of Australia’s highest awards”/“top national award” (2014); citation → “official award words”; Prime Minister’s Prizes for Science → “Prime Minister’s science award”; Luke Nguyen → unnamed chefs. Quoted curriculum and award wording is exempt as official wording.

Sources for this section (all read 24 August 2026 unless noted).

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3. ABS, *Migration, Australia* (cat. 3412.0): overseas-born share series 1901–2016 and 2020 estimate (29.8 per cent), <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/migration-australia/latest-release> — dataset for worked example 2 and the overseas-born figure.
4. Wikipedia, “Hieu Van Le” (birth 1954 Quảng Trị; boat arrival November 1977, 42 people, Melville Island/Darwin; University of Adelaide economics and MBA; ASIC early 1990s–2009; Lieutenant-Governor 2007–2014; 35th Governor, took office 1 September 2014, term ended 31 August 2021; AC 2016; first person of East Asian background appointed an Australian state governor), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hieu_Van_Le
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8. Wikipedia, “Dawn Fraser” (born 4 September 1937 Balmain; last of eight children; father from Embo, Scotland; 100 m freestyle gold 1956/1960/1964; eight Olympic medals; first woman under one minute, 59.9 s,

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Different interpretations of a 20th-century development: migration, politics and “the lucky country”

Curriculum links (audit metadata). This section owns VC2HH6K12 (differing readings of a significant 20th-century development in Australian society). Draws on elaborations VC2HH6K12 .E01 (whole - comparing interpretations of migration, and of political development in Australia, and why they conflict) and VC2HH6K12 .E03 (whole - the ‘lucky country’ debate). Elaboration .E02 is excluded (TOC.md §2A) and is not taught here; the section teaches the CD in a neutral context through migration, political development and the lucky-country debate. Achievement-standard sentence served: the one covering continuity and change in Australian politics and society across 1900–2000, migration included.

Teaching sequence (for the teacher). 1. Hook with the nickname: write “the lucky country” on the board and ask whether it is praise or a warning. Hold both answers - that split is the whole section. 2. Teach the frame early (Part 1): an interpretation is an answer built on evidence; two readers can build two answers. Return to the frame after every figure. 3. Parts 2-3 lay the facts (policy timeline, population chart) before any judging - evidence first, verdicts later. 4. Worked demonstration 1 models the lucky-country debate; use the debate figure to run a live class debate with teams choosing three pieces of evidence each. 5. Worked demonstration 2 models comparing two interpretations (View A / View B); students then run the same chart on Hancock against later historians in Q10. 6. Close with the writing task; mark on reasoning (defined terms, named evidence, weighing both sides), not on the conclusion a student reaches.

What you will learn in this section

In the 20th century, Australia became one nation, fought in two world wars, welcomed millions of newcomers and picked up a nickname: “the lucky country”. In this section we ask one big question: **was Australia lucky - and is that even the right question?**

We will work the way historians work:

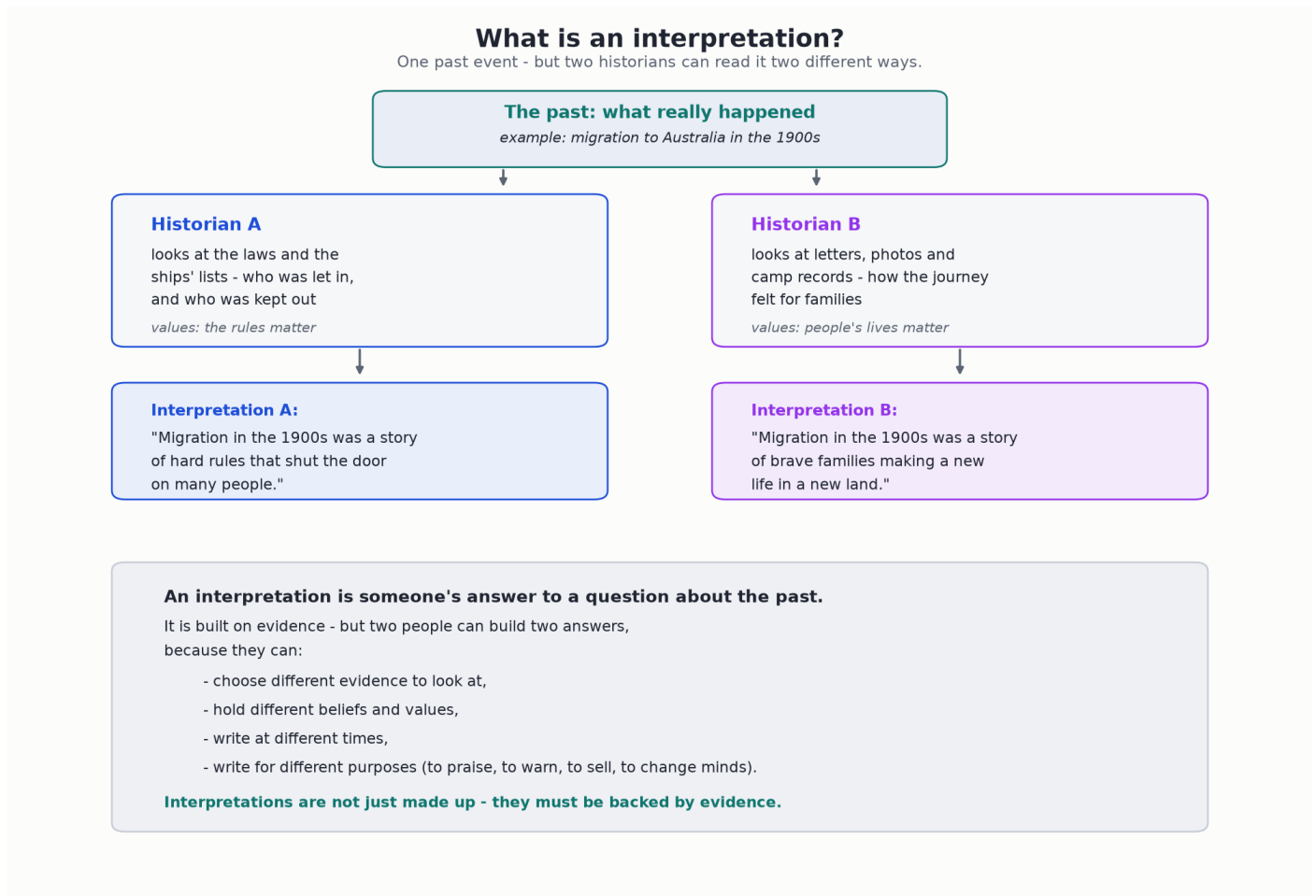
- gather **evidence** (real facts, dates, laws and counts);
- compare **interpretations** (answers about the past, built on evidence);
- debate a **claim**, and judge it on its evidence - not on feelings.

Some words we will use, defined as we meet them:

- **interpretation** - someone’s answer to a question about the past, built on evidence. Two historians can give two different interpretations of the same facts.
- **perspective** (or **viewpoint**) - the point of view a person looks from, shaped by their life and beliefs.
- **contested** - disagreed about. A contested claim is one that careful people can argue on both sides of.
- **migration** - the movement of people to a new country to live. A **migrant** is a person who moves.
- **Federation** - the joining of the six colonies as one nation, the Commonwealth of Australia, on 1 January 1901.
- **the White Australia policy** - the name given to the laws and habits, starting in 1901, that kept people out of Australia because of their race.
- **census** - an official count of every person in a country. Australia takes one about every five years.
- **slump** and **downturn** - years when many businesses close and many workers lose their jobs.
- **pension** - money a government pays older people so they can live.
- **contribution** - what a person or group adds or gives. **Significance** - how important something is, and to whom.
- **continuity** - what stays much the same over time. **Change** - what becomes different. **Cause** - what makes something happen. **Consequence** - what happens as a result.

Part 1: One past, many readings

The past happened once. But the story we tell about it can be told in more than one way. Look at the figure:



Concept diagram showing one past event read by two historians who choose different evidence and values, producing two interpretations, with the four reasons interpretations differ

The figure shows two readings of the same past - migration to Australia in the 1900s. Historian A looks at the laws and the ships' lists; Historian B looks at letters, photos and camp records. Both must back their reading with evidence - an interpretation is not made up. Yet they differ, because writers can:

- choose different evidence to look at,
- hold different beliefs and values,
- write at different times,
- write for different purposes (to praise, to warn, to sell, to change minds).

When careful, sensible people disagree about a claim, we say the claim is **contested**. This whole section is about one contested claim: *Australia was the lucky country*.

Part 2: The new nation chooses its doors (1901 to 1945)

On 1 January 1901 the six colonies joined as one nation - **Federation**. The new Commonwealth Parliament met, and within a few years it passed laws that show both sides of the lucky-country story.

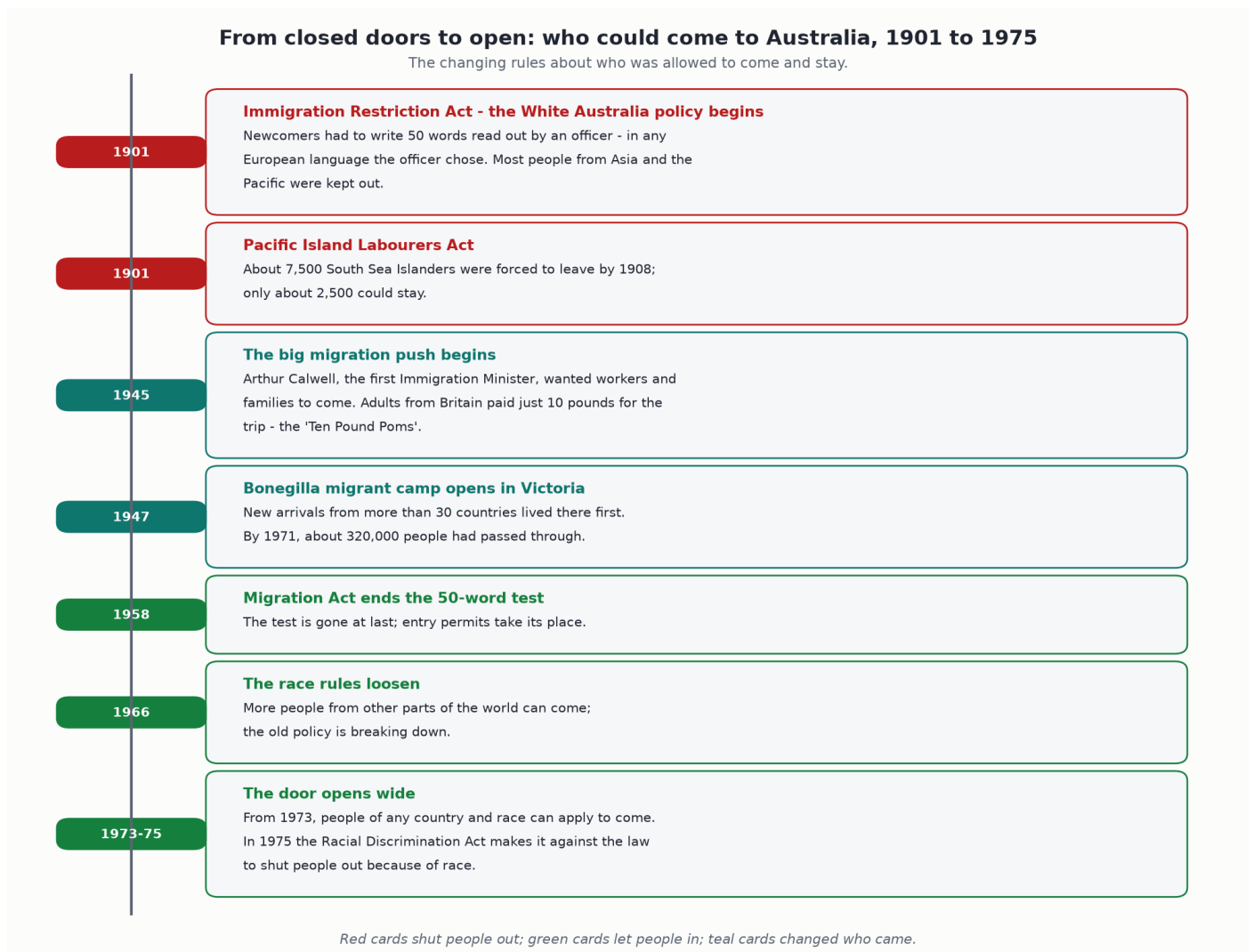
The doors close. The *Immigration Restriction Act* of 1901 set newcomers a test: write down 50 words read out by an officer - in any European language the officer chose (Commonwealth Parliament, *Immigration Restriction Act*, 1901). The test was built so that people from Asia and the Pacific would fail. In the same year, the *Pacific Island Labourers Act* led to about 7,500 South Sea Islanders being **deported** - sent away by the government - by 1908, while about 2,500 were allowed to stay. Together, these laws began what people called the **White Australia policy**.

The doors open - for some. In 1902 the *Commonwealth Franchise Act* gave most women the federal vote and the right to stand for parliament - among the first such laws in the world (Commonwealth Parliament, *Commonwealth Franchise Act*, 1902). That right to vote is called **suffrage**. Yet the same 1902 law still shut many people out of voting because of race. Lucky and unfair in the same decade: that mix is exactly why the claim is contested.

The government steps in to help. In 1907 a judge, H.B. Higgins, set a **basic wage** - the lowest pay a worker should get - of 7 shillings a day, enough for a family of five to live simply (H.B. Higgins, *Harvester judgment*, 1907; shillings were the money of the time, and 20 shillings made one pound). In 1908 the Commonwealth Parliament passed a law giving **pensions** to older Australians (*Invalid and Old-Age Pensions Act*, 1908). Few countries did these things so early.

And the land bit back. The dry years around 1900 - almost ten years with little rain - broke many farmers. From 1929 the world **slump** hit Australia hard: by 1932 nearly one worker in three had no job at all. On 19 February 1942, war came close: Japanese planes bombed Darwin, killing about 236 people, and about 100 air attacks hit northern Australia in the years that followed. In the early 1990s, another **downturn** left about one worker in nine with no job by 1992.

Here is the whole door story, 1901 to 1975:



Timeline of Australia's migration rules from the White Australia policy in 1901, through the post-war migration push and Bonegilla, to the ending of the 50-word test and the Racial Discrimination Act of 1975

Part 3: The big push - migration after 1945

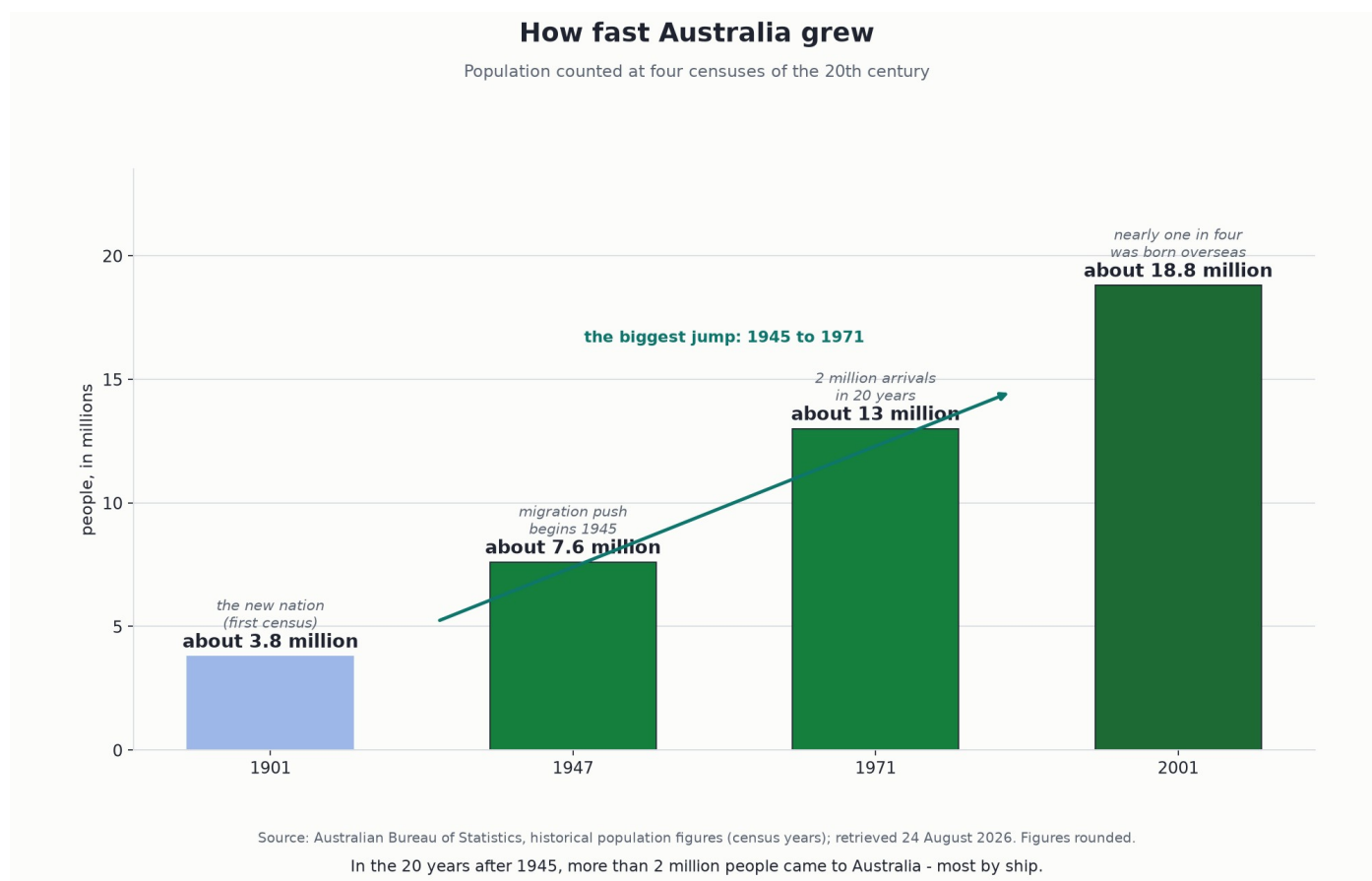
After the Second World War, Australia's first Immigration Minister, Arthur Calwell, pushed a simple idea: fill the country with people or lose it. His **slogan** - a short catch-phrase - was "populate or perish": grow, or lose what you

have. The government paid most of the ticket money for many newcomers. Adults sailing from Britain paid just 10 pounds each, which earned them the nickname ‘**Ten Pound Poms**’.

New arrivals first stayed in camps such as **Bonegilla**, in north-east Victoria. It opened in December 1947 and closed in 1971; about 320,000 people from more than 30 countries passed through it (Bonegilla site records, National Archives of Australia; retrieved 24 August 2026). In the 20 years after 1945, more than 2 million people came to Australia - most by ship. Many did the hardest jobs, building roads, dams and factories, and changed the food, music and shops of every big city.

Not all of it was easy. Some newcomers lived in camps for years, did the lowest-paid work, and missed family members who were not allowed to come while the old race rules lasted. The rules themselves loosened only slowly: the 50-word test ended with the *Migration Act* of 1958; from 1973, people of any country and race could apply to come; and in 1975 the *Racial Discrimination Act* made it against the law to shut people out because of race.

Look at what the push did to the count of people:



Bar chart of Australia's population at four censuses, growing from about 3.8 million in 1901 to about 18.8 million in 2001, with the biggest jump between 1945 and 1971

By 2001, nearly one person in four living in Australia had been born overseas. That is a **change** you can see in one chart - and its **cause** is written under it.

Part 4: “The lucky country” - a warning becomes a boast

In 1964 a writer named Donald Horne published a book about Australia called *The Lucky Country*. Its opening words became famous:

A book that gave Australia a nickname

SOURCE - the first lines of a book, 1964

Donald Horne, *The Lucky Country*, Penguin Books, Melbourne, 1964.

(The book is held in the National Library of Australia; retrieved 24 August 2026.)

"Australia is a lucky country run mainly by
second rate people who share its luck. It lives on
other people's ideas..."

- Donald Horne, opening words, 1964

Horne's own note: he meant it as a WARNING, not as praise.

Years later he said people had used his words the wrong way.

What Horne MEANT

- Australia had done well, but much of it came from good luck: rich land, few people, and help from stronger friends.
- He wanted Australians to STOP and think, not to feel too pleased with themselves.

How the words were USED

- Most people heard them as praise:
"We ARE the lucky country!"
- The phrase became a boast - the opposite of what its writer meant.
- A lesson for historians: check what a writer REALLY meant.

The same words, read two ways - that is interpretation in one example.

Source box showing the opening lines of Donald Horne's *The Lucky Country* (Penguin, 1964), his note that he meant the words as a warning, and two panels contrasting what he meant with how the words were used

Read the quote again, slowly. Horne did not say Australia was great. He said Australia was *lucky* - doing well because of rich land and strong friends - and he warned that living on luck, and on other people's ideas, is risky. He meant the words as a warning.

Most readers heard praise. Within a few years, "the lucky country" had become a **boast** - the opposite of what its writer meant. Horne spent the rest of his life saying people had used his words the wrong way.

Stop and notice what just happened: the same words, read two ways. That is **interpretation** in one example - and a lesson for historians: always check what a writer really meant.

Part 5: Testing the claim - the evidence

Now we put the claim on trial. First, define the word. In this section, "**lucky**" means: doing well more because of chance (rich land, few people, help from strong friends) than because of its own choices and hard work.

Here is the evidence, sorted two ways:

Evidence hunt: was Australia "the lucky country" in the 20th century?

We use "lucky" to mean: doing well more by chance than by its own choices and work.

Evidence FOR: "Australia was lucky"

Huge land, rich in wool, gold, iron

-> the riches were already there

A small population on a big continent

-> few people, much land and food

Gold and wool money paid for schools,

-> railways and cities (1900s)

Women won the federal vote in 1902 -

-> among the first in the world

A fair basic wage set in 1907 - 7

-> shillings a day for a family of five

Old-age pensions from 1908 - early

-> help for older people

Australia was never taken over by

-> another country, even in two world wars

From 1975, a government scheme helped

-> people pay for doctors (Medibank, then Medicare)

Evidence AGAINST: "luck was not enough"

The dry years around 1900 broke many

-> farmers - no rain for almost a decade

The 1930s slump: by 1932 nearly 1 in 3

-> workers had no job at all

On 19 February 1942, Darwin was bombed -

-> about 100 air attacks hit the north

Two world wars killed tens of thousands

-> of Australians far from home

Early-1990s downturn: about 1 in 9

-> workers had no job by 1992

Australia leaned on Britain, then the

-> United States, for trade and safety

Many migrants did the hardest jobs and

-> lived in camps for years

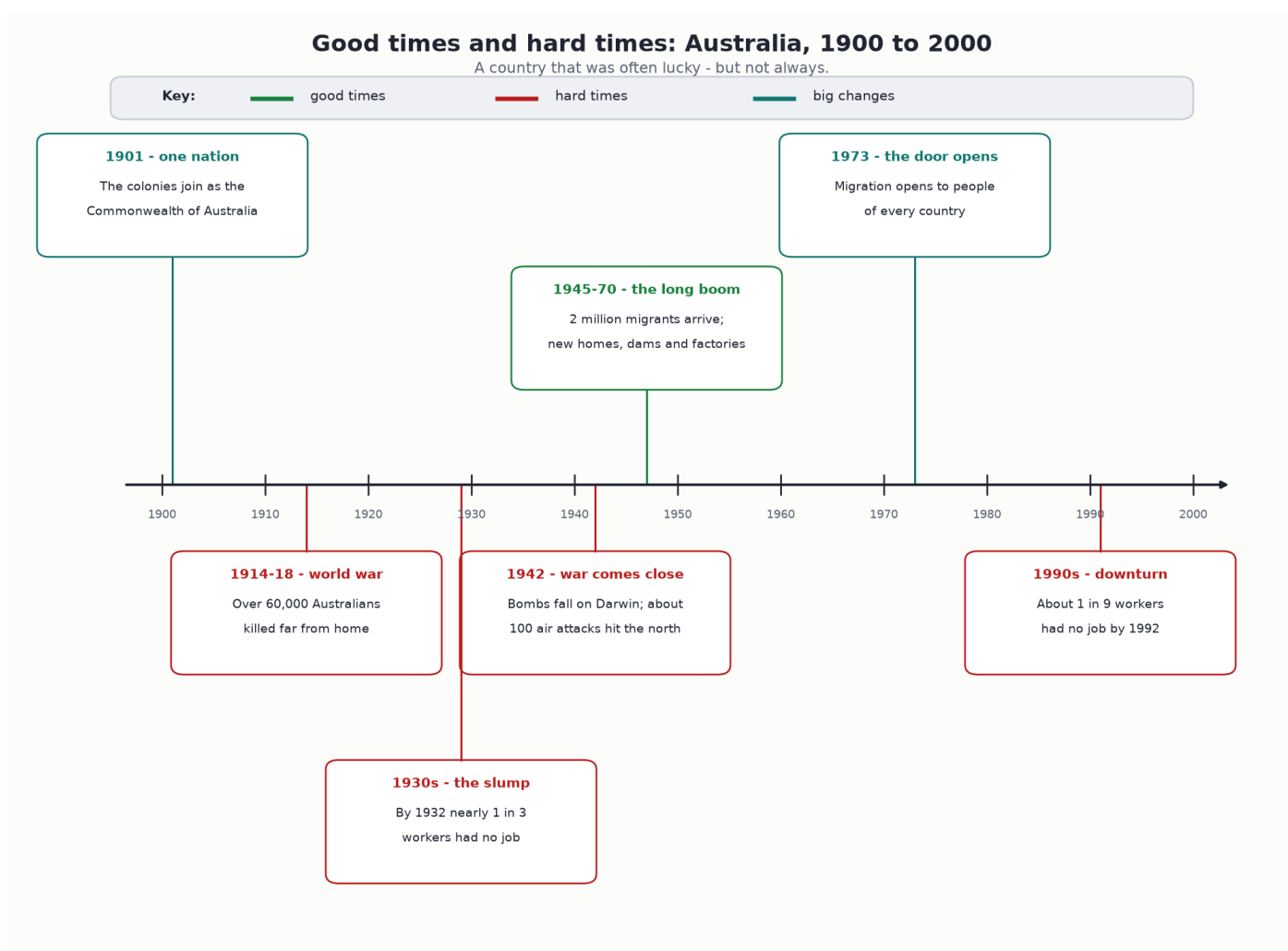
Horne's point: luck is not skill - relying

-> on luck can make a country stop thinking

Both lists use real facts - your job in the debate is to decide which story the facts tell.

Two-column evidence table for and against the claim that Australia was the lucky country, with real facts on each side

And here is the century in one line - the good years and the hard years side by side:



Timeline of good times and hard times in Australia from 1900 to 2000, including Federation, the world wars, the 1930s slump, the bombing of Darwin, the post-war boom and the 1990s downturn

Worked demonstration 1: how to argue the claim like a historian

Step	What we do	Why it works
1	Define “lucky” before arguing.	A debate about an undefined word is noise.
2	FOR team opens with three pieces of evidence: “Wool and gold money built our early schools and railways - the riches were there before we worked for them.”	An opening is a claim plus evidence, not an opinion.
3	AGAINST team answers the real point: “The dry years broke farmers, and by 1932 one worker in three had no job - luck did not save Australia then; hard work and new laws did.”	A reply must hit the other side’s best evidence.
4	The judge decides on evidence: “The FOR team named dates and real laws; the AGAINST team answered them. AGAINST wins on evidence - even though I agree with FOR.”	Deciding on evidence keeps feelings out of the decision.

The full debate frame, with the rules of a fair debate:

Debate frame: "Australia was the lucky country" in the 20th century

A contest of evidence, not of opinions. Each step below is one part of the debate.

Step 1 - Define your terms (both teams must agree on this)

"Lucky" means: doing well more because of chance (good land, rich minerals, few people, help from strong friends) than because of its own choices and hard work.

If you cannot define the word, you cannot win the debate.

Step 2 - FOR team

Pick your 3 strongest pieces of luck:

- rich land, gold and wool money
- few people on a big continent
- early wins: votes for women 1902,
a fair basic wage 1907
- never taken over, even in war

Step 3 - AGAINST team

Pick your 3 strongest answers:

- the dry years broke many farmers
- 1930s: nearly 1 in 3 had no job
- war came close: Darwin, 1942
- migrants did the hardest jobs
- luck is not skill - it can run out

Step 4 - The judges decide on evidence, not on which side they like

Did each team use real facts and dates? Did they answer the other side's best point?

Did they explain WHY their evidence matters - not just list it?

A good judge can say: 'The AGAINST team won, even though I agree with the FOR team.'

That is how you separate what you feel from what the evidence shows.

Rules of a fair debate

1. Use facts and dates - not feelings.
2. Attack the argument, never the person.
3. Listen, then answer the other side's real point.
4. If the other side scores a good point, say so.

Debate frame for the lucky-country claim: define the word, FOR team evidence, AGAINST team evidence, how judges decide, and four rules of a fair debate

Part 6: Two views of the same story

Back to migration. Two careful historians could write these two accounts of the same century:

Two views of the same story: migration in the 20th century

Same facts, weighed in different ways - two historians could write both.

View A - migration built modern Australia

A story of building, growth and welcome.

After 1945, more than 2 million newcomers

built homes, factories, roads and dams.

New foods, music, shops and languages

changed every big city.

By 2001 nearly one person in four

was born overseas.

Migration helped the population grow from

3.8 million (1901) to 18.8 million (2001).

View B - the story has unfair chapters

A story of exclusion, hard work and waiting.

For about 70 years, rules shut people out

because of their race or country.

Many newcomers did the hardest, lowest-paid

jobs that others would not do.

Some lived in camps like Bonegilla

for years while they found their feet.

Families were split up when some members

were not allowed to come at all.

Both views use true facts. Historians disagree about which side matters most -
that is what makes an interpretation contested (disagreed about).

Two-panel comparison of two interpretations of 20th-century migration - View A, migration built modern Australia, and View B, the story has unfair chapters - each backed by true facts

Both accounts are true as far as they go. They are **contested** not because one side makes things up, but because the historians weigh the same facts in different ways.

Worked demonstration 2: how to compare two interpretations

Question	View A (building and welcome)	View B (shutting out and hard work)
What evidence is chosen?	Counts: 2 million arrivals; population up from 3.8 to 18.8 million; new homes, factories and cities.	Laws: the 50-word test; deportation; camps; lowest-paid jobs.
What does the writer value?	Growth, and what a nation built.	Fairness, and who was shut out or made to wait.
When is it written?	In a time proud of the post-war boom.	In a time that saw the old race rules fail.
What is the writer's purpose?	To celebrate what migration built.	To make sure shutting-out is never repeated.
The claim, in one line	Migration built modern Australia.	The migration story has unfair chapters.

The same comparison works for Australia's political development. In 1930 the historian W.K. Hancock published a famous book, *Australia*. He described Australians as "**independent Australian Britons**" - free and equal at home, and

proud to be British (W.K. Hancock, *Australia*, Ernest Benn, London, 1930). Historians writing after the 1970s read the same century in a different way: they see a young nation slowly letting go of Britain - its own laws, its own migration rules, its own voice. Why the difference? Hancock wrote in 1930, when most Australians still felt British; later historians write after the Empire ended, and they can see the whole story. Different times, different evidence chosen, different questions - the same past, two interpretations.

Practice questions - with help

Q1. Use the interpretations figure. (a) What evidence does Historian A look at? (b) What evidence does Historian B look at? (c) Give two reasons two people can build two answers from the same past.

Q2. Use the policy timeline. (a) What test did newcomers face from 1901? (b) What happened to about 7,500 South Sea Islanders by 1908? (c) Which 1975 law made it against the law to keep people out because of race?

Q3. Use the population chart. (a) About how many people were counted in 1901? In 2001? (b) Which stretch shows the biggest jump? (c) Write one sentence, using the word *because*, giving a cause for that jump.

Q4. Use the Horne source figure. (a) In your own words, what did Horne mean? (b) How did most people use his words? (c) What habit of a good historian does this teach?

Q5. Use the evidence figure. Sort these facts into the FOR list or the AGAINST list: (a) women won the federal vote in 1902, among the first in the world; (b) by 1932 nearly one worker in three had no job; (c) wool and gold money paid for schools and railways; (d) Darwin was bombed in 1942; (e) pensions for older people from 1908; (f) many migrants did the hardest jobs and lived in camps for years.

Q6. Use the good-times-and-hard-times timeline. (a) Name two hard times shown. (b) Name the long stretch of good times. (c) Pick one event and say which debate side - FOR or AGAINST - would use it, and why.

Q7. Use the two-views figure. (a) Give one fact View A leans on. (b) Give one fact View B leans on. (c) Both views use true facts. Why do the views still differ?

Q8. Use Worked demonstration 2. (a) Which row of the table asks what the writer values? (b) Give one way View A and View B differ in the evidence they choose. (c) A third historian writes only about new foods, music and shops. Which view does that evidence fit, and why?

Practice questions - on your own

Q9. Compare View A and View B of migration (two-views figure). Explain why the two interpretations are contested, using the words *evidence*, *values* and *time*.

Q10. Hancock wrote in 1930 that Australians were “independent Australian Britons”. Later historians see the same century as a young nation slowly finding its own voice. Give two reasons why these interpretations differ.

Q11. Debate prep (the lucky country). Write the strongest opening you can FOR the claim, with three pieces of evidence from this section. Then write the strongest reply AGAINST it, with two pieces of evidence. Name at least one source or figure.

Q12. You are the judge. Using the rules in the debate figure, write three or four sentences saying which side - FOR or AGAINST - made the better case in Q11, and why. Judge the evidence, not your own view.

Evidence-based writing task

Write a short argument (about 150 words): “**Australia was the lucky country in the 20th century.**” Discuss.

Your argument must include:

1. an opening sentence that defines “lucky” the way this section does;

2. at least one piece of evidence FOR the claim and one AGAINST it, each with a date;
3. one source or figure from this section, named in your writing;
4. a closing sentence that weighs both sides and gives your own view, marked by reasons.

Check before handing in: every term is either explained in this section or a word a Year 6 reader knows; every claim has a fact behind it; you argued with evidence, not feelings.

Answers (questions with help)

Q1. (a) The laws and the ships' lists - who was let in, and who was kept out. (b) Letters, photos and camp records - how the journey felt for families. (c) Any two of: they choose different evidence; they hold different beliefs and values; they write at different times; they write for different purposes.

Q2. (a) They had to write down 50 words read out by an officer, in any European language the officer chose. (b) They were deported - sent away by the government - though about 2,500 were allowed to stay. (c) The *Racial Discrimination Act* (1975).

Q3. (a) About 3.8 million; about 18.8 million. (b) 1945 to 1971 - the count jumps from about 7.6 million (1947) to about 13 million (1971). (c) Example: "Because more than 2 million newcomers arrived after 1945, the count jumped from about 7.6 million to about 13 million by 1971."

Q4. (a) Australia was doing well because of luck - rich land, few people, strong friends - and that was a danger, not a credit. (b) As praise and a boast - "we ARE the lucky country". (c) Check what a writer really meant before using their words.

Q5. FOR: (a), (c), (e). AGAINST: (b), (d), (f).

Q6. (a) Any two of: the world war of 1914-18; the 1930s slump; 1942, Darwin bombed; the 1990s downturn. (b) The long boom, 1945-70. (c) Example: Darwin in 1942 - AGAINST, because bombs falling on your own country are not luck; they show the century's hard years. OR: the long boom - FOR, because two decades of good years look like luck paying out.

Q7. (a) Any View A fact: 2 million newcomers built homes, factories and dams; the population grew from 3.8 to 18.8 million; by 2001 nearly one person in four was born overseas. (b) Any View B fact: for about 70 years the rules shut people out because of race; newcomers did the hardest, lowest-paid jobs; some lived in camps like Bonegilla for years; families were split. (c) Because they weigh the same facts in different ways - they value different things and ask different questions.

Q8. (a) The "what does the writer value?" row. (b) View A chooses counts and buildings; View B chooses laws, camps and jobs. (c) View A - new foods, music and shops are evidence of what newcomers added.

Model responses (point form)

Q9. Both views are built on true facts, so the contest is not about making things up. Evidence: View A chooses growth counts and buildings; View B chooses the shutting-out laws, camps and hard jobs. Values: View A values what a nation built; View B values fairness and who was made to wait. Time: View A reads proudly from the boom years; View B writes after the old race rules failed. Same century, two readings both backed by evidence - that is what contested means.

Q10. Reason 1 - time: Hancock wrote in 1930, when feeling British was ordinary; later historians write after the Empire ended and can see the whole story. Reason 2 - evidence and questions: Hancock leans on pride and British ties and asks "who are Australians inside the Empire?"; later historians lean on later steps - Australia's own laws, its own migration rules, its own voice - and ask "how did Australia become its own nation?"

Q11. FOR opening, example: the riches were luck - wool and gold money built early schools and railways; Australia won early wins, like women's federal vote in 1902 (among the first in the world) and the basic wage of 1907; and it was never taken over, even in two world wars. AGAINST reply, example: luck did not save the farmers the dry years broke, nor the one worker in three with no job by 1932 - hard work and new laws did; and the long boom was built by 2 million newcomers doing the hardest jobs (evidence figure and timeline).

Q12. Judge model: say which side defined "lucky" first; which side named dates and real sources; whether each side answered the other's best point; then decide - "on evidence, the X team wins, even though I agree with the Y team." A judge who cannot name the losing side's best point has not judged yet.

Writing task - model points. Opening: "lucky" means doing well more because of chance than because of its own choices and hard work. FOR with dates: the riches were already there (wool, gold, iron); women won the federal vote

in 1902, among the first in the world; basic wage 1907 and pensions 1908 came early. AGAINST with dates: by 1932 nearly one worker in three had no job; in 1942 Darwin was bombed; many migrants did the hardest jobs for years. Named source: Horne's *The Lucky Country* (1964), meant as a warning. Closing, example: "The luck was real, but so was the work - Horne's warning still stands: a country that lives on luck stops thinking." Mark on the weighing and the evidence, not on which side the student picks.