

# How does a society respond to war?

## Investigating Australia during the 'Battle for Australia' in 1942

Australia is widely recognised as one of the most tolerant and democratic societies in the world, a great believer in and protector of individual human rights, and generally a place of harmony and progress. Our record is not unblemished, and could be improved, but is better than that of most other countries of the world.

However, it could be argued that a major reason for this civic success is that we have rarely been tested and put under stress as a nation.

One time when Australia was tested was during 1942 — when Australians lived in fear of a possible Japanese invasion. How did our democratic values and our society stand up under this test?

In this article you will be asked to look at a variety of features and characteristics of Australia during 1942, and asked to make a judgement about how well Australia as a democratic society responded.

The three key questions for you to answer at the end are:

- To what extent is government justified in limiting individual rights during war or other national crises?
- To what extent do citizens have an obligation to put national security above individual rights during such crises?
- How well and successfully do you think Australian society responded to the social pressures of 1942?

## 1942 The 'Battle for Australia'

During 2002 the Queensland ANZAC Day Commemoration Committee and Ryebuck Media have produced a variety of resources to help teachers celebrate and commemorate 1942 — the year of the 'Battle for Australia'.

The resources have included:

- Three articles in *STUDIES*, on the Battle of the Coral Sea (*STUDIES* 1/2002), the American 'invasion' (*STUDIES* 2/2002), and the Home Front (focusing on Citizenship)
- A CD ROM distributed free of charge to all Queensland secondary schools, and available for purchase at a special reduced rate for all other schools. For more details go to the ANZAC Day Commemoration Committee of Queensland website at [www.anzacday.org.au](http://www.anzacday.org.au)
- A video and 68 page booklet. For more details contact Ryebuck Media on 03 9500 2399 or go to [www.ryebuck.com.au](http://www.ryebuck.com.au)

### Curriculum Guide: Student Learning Outcomes

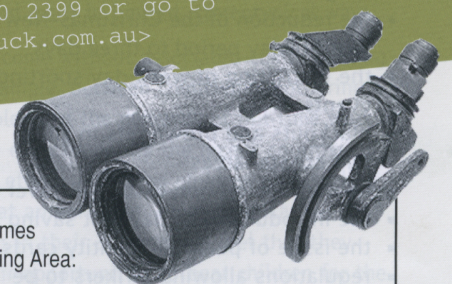
By the end of this article students will be better able to achieve these learning outcomes that are common to most states' and territories' Society and Environment Key Learning Area:

#### Time, continuity and change (History)

- Understand some of the major events, people and developments in Australian history
- identify some key forces for change and continuity
- describe and explain lasting and changing aspects of Australian society and environments.

#### Culture and identity

- Analyse the ways societies or communities maintain cohesion and allow diversity
- analyse the core values of groups and societies.





To help you make judgements about the impact of war on society in 1942 you need to be clear about your own values — what you think is appropriate citizenship behaviour.

Answer these questions now, then come back to them at the end of the unit and see if you would change anything.

Statements: It's OK during war to:	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Suspend all normal civil rights			
Lock up people who were born in enemy countries			
Give extra powers to the Federal Government			
Publish propaganda to stimulate hatred of the enemy			
Impose censorship on mail and media			
Make all citizens contribute equally to the war effort			
Use the talents of every citizen as required			
Pass over control of the war to our powerful allies			
Conscript men and women for the armed forces			
Conscript men and women into particular jobs			

## Investigation

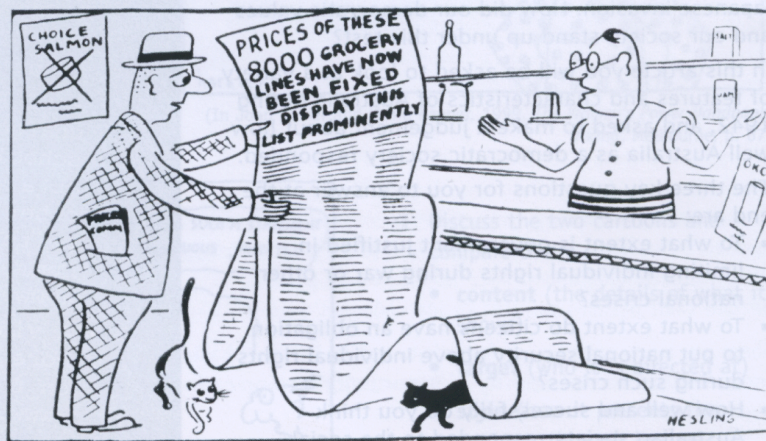
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### *Citizenship during war and ... Government controls*

The growing seriousness of the war from late in 1941 and during 1942 resulted in an increase of government control of peoples' lives. Between December 1941 and September 1943 the Commonwealth Government passed a number of measures which increased the Government's control of the war. Some were more stringent than others, but all give an indication of increased Government concern and involvement in the war.

Among these measures were:

- the reduction of the Christmas–New Year holiday period to three days
- the restriction of week-day sporting events
- blackouts and brownouts in cities and coastal areas
- restrictions on non-essential travel
- the introduction of daylight saving
- the issue of personal identity cards
- regulations allowing strikers to be drafted into the army or into the Army Labor Corps
- the fixing of profit margins in industry
- restrictions on the costs allowed for building or renovations



"We can display the list prominently, but how about the goods?"

- the setting of some women's pay rates at near-male levels
- controls on the cost of dresses
- rationing of clothing, footwear, tea, butter and sugar
- the pegging of prices.

New boards and bodies were created to implement the increased controls. By July 1943 there were more than 200 special wartime boards and commissions, and over 2300 regulations made under the *National Security Act*. The Commonwealth Public Service increased from 30 000 employees in 1940 to 100 000 in 1943.



Consider each of the changes above.

- 1 Place them in two columns in a table like this:

Serious changes to normal society	Less significant changes to normal society

- 2 How might the serious changes you identify have an impact on the nature of Australian democratic society at that time? (For example, you might decide that the pegging of the price of goods at a set level might make people more able to afford those goods, and therefore more equal and harmonious. On the other hand, you might decide that such an action violates a basic principle of Australian society, the right to compete and engage in a free market economy, and is a major change to an accepted and desirable characteristic.)
- 3 Discuss your findings in class.
- 4 Which of these changes, if any, would you expect to be maintained after the end of the war?
- 5 Do you think that Government suspension of many rights and liberties in wartime is justified?

## Investigation

2

### *Citizenship during war and ... propaganda*

Another potentially divisive pressure had entered Australian life very soon after the beginning of the Pacific war. When Japan entered the war the Commonwealth Government published anti-Japanese posters, and broadcast anti-Japanese radio advertisements. Popular newspaper cartoonists were active in presenting the Japanese in derogatory ways. How would this affect Australian society? Look at the following information about what was happening, and discuss the questions that follow.

#### A Government posters

The Department of Information intends to go ahead with the distribution of the much-discussed 'Fear' posters, showing an ugly Japanese soldier grasping at a map of Australia. Senator Ashley, the Minister for Information: 'It's time we stopped playing "kiss in the ring" in this country, and realised the danger confronting us ... Too long have we pictured the Japanese as a smiling, polite gentleman. He is very much the reverse of that.'

*Herald*, 5 March 1942

### COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA **IDENTITY CARD AND CIVILIAN REGISTRATION**

**ALL BRITISH SUBJECTS IN AUSTRALIA**  
(whether natural-born or naturalised)  
**AGED 16 YEARS OR OVER as at 15th March, 1942**  
(EXCEPT those serving on the paid strength of the Navy, Army or Air Forces)  
**ARE REQUIRED TO APPLY FOR**

**an**  
**IDENTITY CARD AND CIVIL REGISTRATION**  
under the National Security (Manpower) Regulations  
**NOT LATER THAN 25th MARCH, 1942**

No application is required from children under 16 years of age.  
Aliens must not use Forms CR1 or CR2 but register separately under  
Aliens Control and Aliens Service Regulations.

#### **HOW TO APPLY FOR IDENTITY CARD AND CIVIL REGISTRATION**

- (1) MEN AND YOUTHS—Use Form CR1 } Forms are now obtain-  
WOMEN & GIRLS—Use Form CR2 } able at Post Offices.
- (2) Complete the Form CAREFULLY in accordance with  
instructions thereon.
- (3) Post or deliver the Form to the Divisional Returning Officer  
for the Commonwealth Electoral Division in which you reside.

If your application is in order, a Personal Identity Card will  
be posted to you. You will require to carry the Identity Card  
with you for emergency purposes.

Failure to apply for Civil Registration will render you liable  
to a penalty under the National Security Act, and failure to  
possess an Identity Card in an emergency will involve you in  
great personal inconvenience.

Therefore . . . APPLY AT ONCE

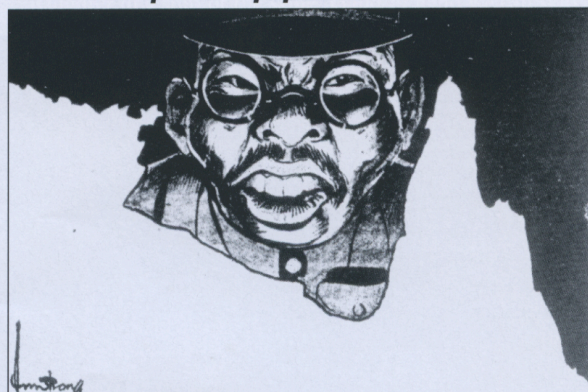
By Authority of  
The Government of the  
Commonwealth of Australia: E. J. WARD,  
Minister for Labour and  
National Service.

Supplies of Paper are limited. Do not waste Cards or Envelopes.

— Obtain and use —

**ONE CARD PER PERSON; ONE ENVELOPE PER FAMILY OR  
HOUSEHOLD**

#### B An example of a popular cartoon



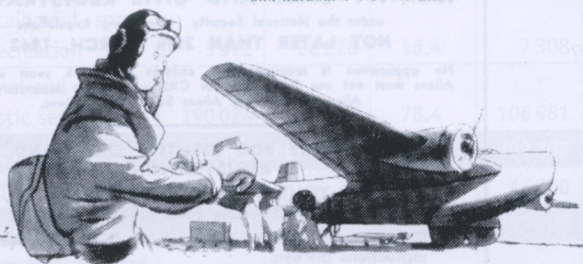


## The maps he made on our luggers



We take people much at their face value in Australia. We are frank ourselves and we expect frankness in others.

We have learned that this can be a mistake, and our teacher has been the Jap. For years he's traded on our coasts, his divers have manned our pearling luggers, his whalers have refitted in our ports. He seemed harmless enough, though most of us wondered why he was so keen about photography—why he was so careful when he made his soundings coastwise or in our bays and harbours. Now we know.



## bring Japanese bombers to Broome

The maps he made for navigation then, bring his bombers now to our shores. His spies have told him how and when to strike. For this is no war of a moment's decision—this is a war Japan has planned for years.

The infamous Tanaka Memorial was submitted, by the corrupt Premier Tanaka, to the Emperor on July 25th, 1927. It was described on the title page as "The Memorial of Premier Tanaka—a Japanese secret design for the conquest of China as well as the United States and the rest of the world." It went on:

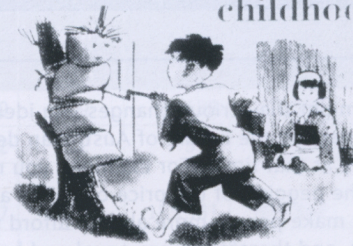
"In the future, if Japan wants to control China, she must first crush the United States, just as in the past she had to fight the Russo-Japanese war.

"But in order to conquer China, Japan must first conquer Manchuria (now called Manchukuo) and Mongolia. In order to conquer the world Japan must first conquer China. If Japan succeeds in conquering China, the rest of the Asiatic countries—and the South Sea countries—will fear us and surrender to us."

Mr. Tanaka went a bit astray. Australia doesn't fear Japan—won't surrender a square inch of territory. Australia is ready, equipped, with her allies by her side, ready for a fight in which she would rather perish than lose. Jap planning, nevertheless, we shall throw the Mikado marauders back where they belong.

We've always despised them—  
***NOW WE MUST  
SMASH THEM!***

## Trained to hate from childhood



Hate is the basis of Japanese militarism . . . hate for the foreigner because he is a foreigner . . . hate—cold, calculated hate—which has been fostered for generations.

Young Japan learned to hate while we were playing with marbles and enjoying the freedom of democracy. Young Japan studied its army text books with vicious enthusiasm—with hate based on propaganda which "taught" how Japan's legitimate demands had been thwarted on every hand by foreigners.

Soon, they were told—every son of Nippon would be given a chance of wreaking vengeance on all who attempted to obstruct the divine mission of the Emperor. The elementary schoolboy of 10 or 12 was sent out to bayonet practice with his heart full of this synthetic hate. Before lunging at the hanging bag, he stuck a few straws on the top for hair and dished on a pair of blue, foreign eyes, and he hoped one day that it would be a real foreigner at the end of his bayonet—not an effigy—any foreigner, especially a white one.

## ...are they to ravage our homes?



In every country he has conquered, the Japanese has murdered, plundered, burned and tortured. Men and women have been put to the sword, and their homes to the fire. No one has been safe from the cruel, bloodstained hands of Japanese soldiers. But, as Japan has sowed, so shall she reap.

We Australians (you and I, reared from birth in the ways of peace, stand now in righteous anger. Yes, there is anger in our hearts against the lies, brutality and murders of Japan, and in our hearts there is love for freedom greater than our love for life. We stand united with our Allies to protect our homes and our heritage. We shall throw back the Jap where he belongs.

We've always despised them—  
***NOW WE MUST SMASH THEM!***

The maps he  
made on our  
luggers



## D Government radio broadcast campaign

A series of broadcasts called 'The Jap As He Really Is' was designed to improve civilian morale. The broadcasts stressed in the crudest terms and in the most simplistic way the supposed inferiority and undesirability of the Japanese. There was a strong reaction to them, as the selection of letters below shows.

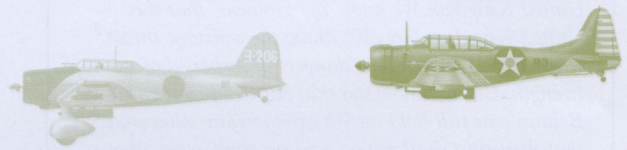
- 'Sir, It is disastrous that at this time, when we need so much wisdom and confidence, an official spate of propaganda is loosed to stir the very feelings which make wisdom and confidence impossible ... We can fight better if we know we are fighting for a better world; but this stirring of contempt makes the world worse for everybody. Are our leaders blind to the results of what they are doing? It is time they showed the best in themselves by calling for the best in ourselves.'

- 'Sir, The Minister for Information should ignore the request to cease broadcasts describing 'The Jap as he really is'. I suggest that only by their continuance can the serious position facing Australia be brought home to most of our people. It would have been better for our own skins and helpful to the continuance of our existing free institutions if these broadcasts had been introduced many years ago.'
- 'Sir, Is it not high time that some Australians ceased to advocate friendly (they call it dignified) treatment towards our unscrupulous enemy the Jap? ... The Jap is a dirty piece of work, and must be treated as such. He hates Australians with a cold, calculating hatred, which fine phrases will never allay, so the more we know of his loathsome ways the better.'

*Argus 7 and 8 April 1942*

- 1 Why might the Government want to encourage hatred of the enemy in wartime?
- 2 What aspects or attributes of the enemy are stressed in this propaganda? Why?
- 3 How effective do you think such images would have been? Explain your reasons.
- 4 How do you explain the very different responses to the campaign in the letters?
- 5 What impacts do you think such a campaign would have on the Australian democracy?

- 6 A public opinion poll about the radio broadcasts revealed that only half the people interviewed had heard them, but of those who had, forty-four per cent approved of them, fifty-four per cent disapproved and two per cent were undecided. Does this information influence your answer to the question above?
- 7 Do you think encouragement of hatred of the enemy in wartime is justified?



## Investigation 3

### *Citizenship during war and ... national sovereignty*

Another element of democracy is national sovereignty — where the citizens of a country are independent and in charge of their own nation, and are not subject to rule by any other nation. Look at these six incidents from the war, and decide what it tells you about the status of Australian national sovereignty during the war.

#### A War against Germany

In 1939, when Germany invaded Poland, Britain declared war against Germany. Australian Prime Minister Menzies, in a public broadcast, said:

*Fellow Australians, it is my melancholy duty to inform you officially that, in consequence of a persistence by Germany in her invasion of Poland, Great Britain has declared war upon her and that, as a result, Australia is also at war.*

- 1 Why was Australia at war?

- 2 What does this tell you about the independence or national sovereignty of Australia at this time?

#### B War against Japan 1941

In December 1941 the Japanese attacked the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and invaded Malaya and Thailand. War had now come to the Pacific — at a time when Australia's main ally, Britain, was desperately fighting for survival in Europe. The United States, however, was a Pacific colonial power, and could be expected to wage a full war effort against the Japanese, where Britain could not.

Look at the wording of the official notice of war, published in the Government Gazette of 9 December. Compare this to the proclamation of war of 3 September 1939. How are they different? What does this difference suggest about Australia's developing independence during the war?



## Proclamation

*I, Alexander Gore Arkwright, Baron Gowrie, the Governor-General aforesaid, acting with the advice of the Federal Executive Council and in the exercise of all powers me thereunto enabling, do hereby declare and proclaim that a state of war with the Japanese Empire exists and has existed in the Commonwealth of Australia and its Territories as from the eighth day of December, One thousand nine hundred and forty-one at five o'clock in the afternoon reckoned according to the standard time in the Australian Capital Territory.*

*By His Excellency's Command,  
John Curtin, Prime Minister.*

**GOD SAVE THE KING!**

**Commonwealth of Australia Gazette, no. 252, 9 December 1941**

- 3 Who has decided that Australia should be at war?
- 4 How is this different to 1939 and the war against Germany?

### 'Australia looks to America'

On 27 December 1941 Prime Minister John Curtin wrote an important article for the *Melbourne Herald*. Look at this extract from the article.

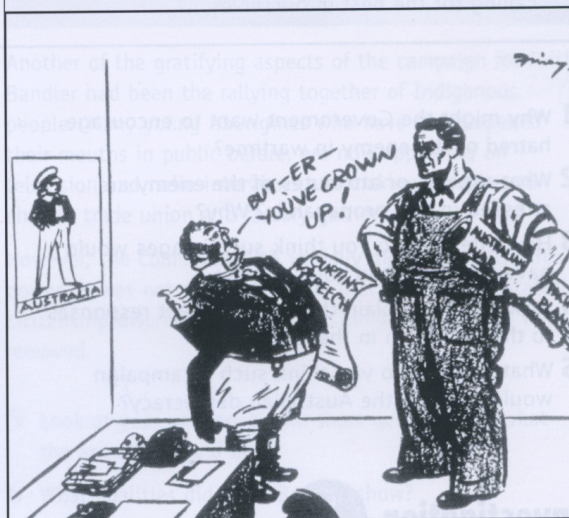
*'Without any inhibitions of any kind, I make it quite clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links of kinship with the United Kingdom. We know the problems that the United Kingdom faces. We know the constant threat of invasion. We know the dangers of dispersal of strength. But we know too that Australia can go, and Britain can still hold on. We are therefore determined that Australia shall not go, and we shall exert all our energies towards the shaping of a plan, with the United States as its keystone, which will give to our country some confidence of being able to hold out until the tide of battle swings against the enemy.'*

**Herald 27 December 1941**

- 5 What attitude does Curtin have towards the United States and Britain?
- 6 Why?
- 7 What does this suggest about Australia's changing international position?
- 8 What effect might the existence of such a conflict of views have on Australia's attitude towards its British ties?
- 9 How might this show a development of national sovereignty?
- 10 What did the adoption of the Statute of Westminster mean for Australia?

## C Curtin and Churchill

Australia sent much of its Army, Navy and Air Force to Europe and north Africa to help in the British war effort against Germany, Italy and France (after its surrender to Germany). Then in December 1941 Japan entered the war, and Curtin wanted Australian troops returned from the Middle East to the Pacific to defend Australia and fight the Japanese. A dispute arose between Churchill and Curtin over where the troops should be sent — to Burma, as Churchill wanted, or back to Australia and New Guinea. Churchill, on his own initiative, ordered the troops to Burma. Curtin immediately protested vigorously and Churchill gave way. The troops returned to Australia.



## E The Statute of Westminster

An important element in Australian constitutional development was the passing of the *Statute of Westminster Adoption Act* by the Commonwealth Parliament in October 1942.

Since Federation in 1901 Britain had maintained control over areas of law-making in Australia — especially those laws related to external affairs and international shipping. Australia could remove this legal dependence on Britain by adopting the *Statute of Westminster*, a British Act passed in 1931 specifically to allow commonwealth countries to cut such legal ties. By adopting the statute, the Australian Government could remove Britain's power to make laws that affected Australia without Australia's approval. This action had been available to Australia since 1931, but it was not until October 1942 that it was in fact adopted.





## F General MacArthur

American General Douglas MacArthur was welcomed to Australia as a saviour, because he was bringing with him American troops and supplies to fight the Japanese in Papua–New Guinea.

He was Supreme Allied Commander of the South-West Pacific Forces. This meant that MacArthur was in charge of who fought where and when. Australia's top soldier was General Blamey, and his job was to advise the Prime Minister about what Australia should be doing. But Curtin took strategic advice from MacArthur, often bypassing advice from Blamey. MacArthur was once quoted as claiming that 'Curtin ... more or less offered him the country on a platter'.

Placed under the American Commander of Allied Air Forces, the RAAF all but lost its separate identity. At one point Curtin told reporters that he was 'subject, in effect, to a form of direction by a representative of another government'.

Many believed MacArthur hogged the publicity limelight, and refused to credit Australian soldiers with victories — at best referring to 'Allied' soldiers when he could not credit victories to American soldiers.

- 11 What does this suggest about Australia's national sovereignty at the time?
- 12 Looking at all this evidence, what has happened to Australia's independence or sense of national sovereignty during the war?
- 13 Some historians argue that during the war Australia basically swapped dependence on Britain for dependence on the United States. Discuss this idea. Do you agree with it?
- 14 Do you think a Government would be justified in giving up or weakening national sovereignty for security from a powerful ally during war?



Questions



## Citizenship during war and ... military and civilian conscription

### Military conscription

War can create potentially disastrous and divisive political issues at work in the community. In late 1942 the issue which had divided Australia in 1916 and 1917 re-emerged: conscription for overseas service. How would the issue affect national unity in this time of total war?

There had been calls for conscription for overseas service from very early in the war. By 1942 the Australian Army was made up of two parts: the volunteer AIF (Australian Imperial Force), who could be sent to fight anywhere; and the conscripted AMF (Australian Military Force) which could be compelled to serve only on Australian territory. But in 1939 section 5 of the *Defence Act* had been amended to include parts of Papua-New Guinea as Australian territory under the Act, so some AMF troops were actually fighting in Papua side by side with the AIF.

In late 1942 Prime Minister Curtin decided that a single army was needed, and that it must be able to be sent beyond New Guinea. To achieve this, the *Defence Act* would need to be amended. Labor had a majority in both houses, but would Labor members of parliament support the extension of the existing conscription power to new areas? Or would the Labor Party and government again tear itself to pieces, as in 1916 and 1917? Curtin had to let his party make the decision if he were to avoid such a split. He began his moves at the November 1942 Conference, the policy-making body of the ALP.

*'By leave Mr Curtin made a statement regarding the use of Australian military forces ... The position had to be ended whereby a man could be sent to Darwin, where he could be bombed, but not to Timor to save Darwin from being bombed ... If an area was vital to Australian strategy, then that area must be the one to which Australia must give full weight ... If the war went well, the U.S. forces would go north, and those forces must be replaced by Australian forces in areas not now in Australian territory. The U.S. had saved Australia, and the government had had a desperate fight to get aid for Australia ... Now the position was that a barrage of criticism in Australia and the U.S. was directed at Australia that it would have Americans defend Darwin, but not Australians fight for the Philippines ...'*

**Australian Labor Party Conference Report, 1942**

- 1 What does Curtin see as the main reasons for having conscription?

Opposition to Curtin's proposal came from within the Labor Party. Arthur Calwell epitomised this opposition:

*'As a youth I was an anti-conscriptionist in the 1916 and 1917 campaigns, and I am as much an anti-conscriptionist in 1942. I see no fundamental difference ... To me it does not matter where a man goes after he leaves Australian territory on compulsory service. To me geography does not matter. Whether the compulsion is for the south-west Pacific or for Europe, it is still military conscription for overseas service, and, therefore, abhorrent to the traditional democratic principles of this country, and something that should be abhorred and shunned.'*

**Commonwealth of Australia, House of Representatives Debates, 10 December 1942, p. 1713**

- 2 What does Calwell see as the main reasons for not having conscription?
- 3 Curtin had the numbers in Parliament to pass the measure he wanted. Why do you think he put the issue into the public arena for discussion?

The majority of the states' labour organisations endorsed Curtin's proposal (only Victoria and Queensland opposed it) and in January 1943 Curtin was authorised by his party to go ahead and make the appropriate amendment to the *Defence Act* — an amendment which was passed in February 1943.

One other relevant factor may, however, be seen in the public opinion poll taken in November 1942:

*'Interviewers for Australian Public Opinion Polls called on cross-sections of people in hundreds of representative centres, in all states, and asked this question: 'Should the militia and the AIF be combined into one army, able to go anywhere our government decides?' Of each 100 people interviewed, sixty-seven said 'Combine them into one army', twenty-two said 'Keep the militia and AIF separate', and eleven were undecided ... Men and women, as groups, held almost identical views.'*

**Gallup Poll No. 8, November 1942**

- 4 Here we see people voluntarily giving up a freedom. Why would they do this?





Jan 27, 1943

# WOMEN'S CALL-UP SAME AS MEN'S 18 To 21, Single, May Be First Group

CANBERRA. — The compulsory call-up of women, announced last night, will follow broadly the principles of the men's call-up.

Final age groups have not been decided, but they are expected to include women from 18 to 35.

At first only women aged, say, 18 to 21, may be affected — probably single women or widows without dependents.

Later as the woman-power need becomes more acute, and vacancies for women in war industries are created by the diversion of men to the fighting services, the higher age groups will be called upon and even married women.

In the first six months of 1943, about 64,000 women will be required for the auxiliary services and the expanded munitions programme. In addition many thousands more will be needed to replace men who must be withdrawn from war and other essential production.

## Civilian conscription

In 1942 the Government did not only have military conscription, it also had civilian conscription — called 'Manpower'.

Manpower gave the Commonwealth Government the power to compel civilians to take on jobs in industries where there was the greatest need. For example, the Government could order women workers in the city to go to a country town to operate fruit canning machines during the harvest season.

How would citizens react to this unprecedented government power over their working lives? Look at the following evidence, from a conservative newspaper editorial, the trade union movement, and a cartoonist reflecting public opinion



'Mr Curtin and members of his cabinet have ... added ... to their stature by their decision to regiment manpower and womanpower more effectually for war purposes. It has long been evident that the talents and energies of the community were not being utilised to the extent that an all-in war effort demanded, despite the very credible showing in enlistment and in industry that Australia has made ... It has long since become evident that the real sinews of war are not money but human effort, and the only way to increase wartime effort is to transfer human energy from peacetime effort ... Regimentation far beyond anything previously contemplated had to come, and the scheme approved by the Australian war cabinet appears at first sight to be sufficiently bold and comprehensive to meet all requirements. At the same time it promotes due deliberation and fairness to all.'

Argus, 21 January 1942

'Representatives of federal industrial unions decided yesterday to support fully the federal government's manpower regulations because they 'believed that all sections of Australian people should unite in an effort to defeat the Axis powers' ... Delegates indicated, in agreeing to the regulations, that the decision was influenced by the fact that a Labor government was in power, and that the regulations would be administered chiefly by Mr Ward, Labor minister, in whom the industrial unions had absolute faith ... The recommendation was: (a) That the policy of the trade union movement of Australia is that of determined opposition to the forces of Nazism and fascism, and of whole-hearted support and assistance to the democratic countries in resisting and defeating the aggression of the Axis forces. (b) That an examination of the National Security (Manpower) Regulations reveals certain principles that are fundamentally in opposition to the policy and traditions of the trade union movement, such as restriction of freedom to seek employment as best suits the workers' economic needs, and the compulsory restriction of the job of certain classes of workers. (c) While disagreeing with such principles, conference, because of the existing state of national emergency and the necessity for all sections of the community to make such sacrifices as are necessary to secure victory for the democratic forces, agrees to accept the regulations and to assist the government in implementing them.'

Argus, 13 February 1942.

- 5 Again we see Australians here agreeing to give up a freedom. Why would they do this?
- 6 Do you think a government is justified in introducing conscription, for the military or for industry, during war? Is it justified in doing so during peace?

Questions



## Investigation

# 5

### Citizenship during war and ... 'disloyalty'

One of the great tests of wartime is the attitude to and treatment of those who do not agree with the majority view, or who might be seen to be a dangerous element in society.

Look at the following evidence and decide what it tells you about the degree of tolerance exercised by the majority of citizens during the war.

#### Pacifists

- 'I just felt that we shouldn't be in the war. I had these pacifist convictions that you couldn't overcome evil with evil ... But there wasn't any protest movement that I know of ... although of course until Russia came into the war the extreme left-wing people were against the war too.'  
(Margaret Holmes)
- 'I would never have enlisted for active service. I wanted to be a conscientious objector at one stage but there were family problems about that and I backed off. And I spent most of the war looking remarkably like a young man evading military service.'  
(Nial Brennan)
- 'My generation thought of pacifists as disloyal people; as a matter of fact to my way of thinking they were sabotaging the war effort of the majority of Australians.'  
(Bill Graham)

Joanna Penglase and David Horner, *When the War Came to Australia*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1992 pages 14–15

- 1 Why would there have been so few pacifists in Australia in 1942?

#### Jehovah's Witnesses

Members of this religion did not believe in war, nor in saluting the national flag. In Victoria an Act was passed to make saluting the flag compulsory.

*'Mr Holkway [Minister for Education] said instances had occurred where children of adherents of the Jehovah's Witnesses sect ... had refused to salute the flag on their parents' instructions. The Bill requires boys to salute and girls to stand to attention and repeat the following declaration: 'I love God and my country; I honour the flag; I will serve the King and cheerfully obey my parents, teachers, and the laws.'*

**Argus 30 October 1940**

The document below is from the Victorian Government Archives, and is the report of a police investigation into a complaint about the behaviour of two women members of the Jehovah's Witness church. The complainant was a woman from a small Victorian country town.

*'Two women called at her home at about 2 p.m. on Sunday 15/2/42 saying that they had a message for her and at the same time showed her a small square sheet of paper on which there was certain writing covered over by cellophane. Mrs P... did not read or examine the literature shown to her. One of the women had a bible under her arm ... They did not attempt to sell or leave any Jehovah literature and did not in any manner refer to this illegal organisation. The women ... were reported to be members of the Jehovah Witness sect prior to it being banned. I am told that the children of these two women were expelled from the [local] state school for failing to salute the flag on Monday mornings.'*

**Public Record Office Victoria, 3/192,130 3053, X1578 of 17 March 1942**

- 2 Why would the Victorian Government have made this expression of patriotism compulsory?