

Australian History

Section 1: Founding of Melbourne

Settlement of the Port Phillip District

Historical Background

- The Port Phillip District is located around Port Phillip Bay, in Southern Victoria
- It had been inhabited by aboriginals for many thousands of years before it was first explored by Europeans in 1802
- After further exploration it was decided to establish a penal colony in the area, and such a settlement was founded in 1804
- This settlement proved to be a failure, however, and after its abandonment the Port Phillip District lay undisturbed by Europeans until a shortage of land in the Van Diemen's Land colony led to the establishment of Melbourne in 1835

Ideas behind settlement

- Settlers wanted new land to improve – land improvement believed to bring progress to society, lead to profits for individuals
- 'Terra nullius' doctrine – land not being improved so aboriginals had no rights to it
- John Batman made 'treaty' with aboriginals to buy land around Melbourne – desire for peaceful cooperation with aboriginals rather than extermination
- 'Batman's treaty with the aborigines at Merri Creek, 6th June 1835' Painting, 1875

Reasons for Settlement

- Whalers returned reports of the great land available on the mainland to Tas.
- Land shortage in Tasmania led people to move to mainland
- Government in Britain didn't want settlement in PFD – too expensive to govern
- Settlers wanted new land to 'improve' – land improvement believed to bring progress to society
- "The bush was a place to exploit and leave" – Historian Richard Waterhouse

The Squatters

- Many of the settlers who first arrived in the Port Phillip district were attracted by the prospect of making money out of the highly fertile land, and by so doing improve their social situation and brighten their future prospects
- European recognition of the agricultural potential of the Port Phillip District began with the arrival of the second wave of explorers in the 1830s
- John Batman, upon examining the Port Phillip District in 1835, declared 'I never saw anything equal to the land; I never was so astonished in my life'
- In the face of glowing descriptions such as this, as well as a shortage of arable land in Van Diemen's Land, other settlers soon followed in order to obtain their own slice of fertile land, and then to exploit it for as much money as possible
- Few of these squatters thought of their residence in the Port Phillip District as permanent
- Many came from middle class background, as capital was needed to start up runs

- Historian Richard Waterhouse writes; ‘The bush was a place to exploit and leave’
- For such men, there was little or no prospect of earning a decent income elsewhere:
 - In Britain at this time agricultural prices were low
 - Property was expensive
 - Law, medicine and other professions were already overcrowded
 - The prospects of promotion in the peacetime Army and Navy were slim
- As such, the initial settlers of the Port Phillip District genuinely wished to attain a better life for themselves
- After making their fortune, most intended to take their newfound wealth and either return to their families, or move on to bigger and better things.
- Wool was very valuable due demand from British clothing factories
- Most squatters lived in primitive conditions – didn’t invest in fences or proper accommodation, didn’t shave
- Most came alone with few women or kids – in 1838 were 2,000 men to 75 women
- “*A set of money making bachelors, half savages and half mad*” – Squatter N. Black

Middle Class Women

- Moved to PFD with their husbands and family in hope of improving their financial and social standing
- “[*For*] the poor industrious mechanic and labourer and his wife and family the advantage is beyond description” – Penelope Selby, 1840
- “*We are sure of making a comfortable independence for ourselves and put our children in the way of doing so*” – Penelope Selby, 1840

Distressed Gentlewomen

- Young middle class women who for some reason had neither a husband, or a family to support them
- Such women were prevented from working (except as a governess or teacher) by the social stigma that was attached to female employment at the time
- Some came in search of work – they could take many additional jobs which in Britain would have compromised their social standing
- Wanted to find a husband – in 1838 in the Port Phillip District there were only about 3 women for every 80 men
- Wanted to escape the poor social situation in which they had found themselves in Britain
- Genteel women not wanted in the 1840s – PFD needed skilled labourers
- “*What have my sisters to look forward to at home? Slavery all their lives to keep up an appearance*” – Penelope Selby, 1849

Servants and Shepherds

- Shortage of skilled labour led to high wages, attracted new migrants
- Before mid-1830s migration to Australia was limited, due to no government assistance, expensive fares, reputation of land of convicts – 5,000 migrants by 1830
- The industrial revolution, which began to develop in Britain in the late 18th century, caused great economic and social upheavals
- Huge numbers of people moved to the rapidly growing cities, where they took up dangerous, poorly paid jobs in the newly built factories

- Living standards in the city slums which developed to house these new laborers were very poor, with starvation and disease being quite common
- Hence, thousands of poor workers signed up for the migration assistance programs offered by the government from 1837 onwards
- Many of these immigrants came to the Port Phillip District, and settled there in the hope of building a better life for themselves and their families.
- ‘Famine in Ireland: searching for potatoes’ Sketch, 1847

Assisted Migration

- Emigration to Australia became socially acceptable in the 1840s
- Letters from successful migrants encouraged relatives to immigrate
- Official advertising glorified Australia as ‘utopia’ to promote migration
- Ideas that attracted many urban and rural poor:
 - The availability of cheap land
 - The prospect of leading healthy, happy lives with one’s family
 - The prospect of improving one’s social standing
- Reality was quite different, as squatters owned most of the land
- Many came to make their fortune in the gold rush – including upper and middle classes
- *“An idealised Arcadian society, a rural utopia, an Eden before the fall”* – Historian Richard White describing the way Australia was presented by migration promoters
- ‘Here and there’ Cartoon, 1848
- *“Maney people ... sent gloeing accounts of the country both for good wages and no scarcity of work and the healtheness of the climate”* – Sarah Davenport, 1841

Gold Rush migration

- News of discovery of gold led to 30,000 migrants arriving in 1851 alone
- Initially many were young men coming to make their fortunes
- Later many respectable and qualified tradesmen and businessmen came – attracted by growing prosperity
- Others attracted by breaking down of class barriers caused by gold rush
- Few gold-seekers made their fortune, but most made a living and 80% stayed on
- Victorian population increases 6-fold in 1850s, 70% of population foreign born

Ethnic change

- Although PFD still mostly Anglo-Saxon, prospectors came from continental Europe
- Young Chinamen came in search of gold – were resented by whites as being ‘alien’
- Almost all were young men without families
- Some interracial violence, government introduced 10 poll tax to restrict migration
- Most returned home after the gold rush ended
- *“The goldfields were ... the crucibles of nationalism and xenophobia”* – Historian Stuart Macintyre

John Batman

Background

John Batman was born on the 21st of January 1801, in Parramatta, New South Wales. In 1821 Batman moved to Van Diemen’s Land, and there he was given a grant of land and became a

farmer. As time went on he gradually purchased new lands to expand his holdings. Batman, who had become sympathetic for the aboriginals, became involved in a campaign to round up the native aboriginals and resettle them in a segregated area. Although this would be considered cruel by modern standards, Batman was not alone in believing that segregation was the only way for aboriginals to live in peace. For his services in connection with the aboriginal resettlement, Batman was granted even more land, bringing his total holdings up to 7,000 acres. Much of Batman's land was not very productive, however, and after hearing reports of the exploration of the southern coast of the mainland, he became enthused about the idea of settling there. In 1827 he applied for a grant of land in the area now known as southern Victoria, however his request was denied. Several years later, Batman revived the idea of continental settlement, and in 1835 he set sail from Launceston to explore the Port Phillip District.

Reasons for Settlement

John Batman's reasons for settling in the Port Phillip District were largely commercial. He wished to augment his already substantial land holdings in Van Diemen's Land by acquiring additional territories on the mainland. It should also be noted that at the time, Van Diemen's Land was experiencing a critical shortage of farmland. This had come about because, while the population of Van Diemen's Land continued to grow rapidly, the area of land available for cultivation could not be similarly increased (as naturally the Island has a limited area). In order to ease the land shortage and increase food production, many farmers from Van Diemen's Land wished to bring part of the mainland under cultivation. This desire to bring new land under cultivation was a subsidiary reason for Batman's settlement of the Port Phillip District.

Founding Role in Port Phillip District

In his expedition to the Port Phillip District, Batman explored Port Phillip Bay and the Yarra River. During this journey, he concluded his famous treaty with the local aboriginal 'chieftains' (as he called them). The agreement, now known as 'Batman's Treaty', stipulated that Batman would rent 600,000 acres of the aborigine's land, and in return they would receive an annual tribute of flour, blankets, knives and other such goods. Batman claimed that the aboriginals fully understood the implications of this agreement, however this is highly doubtful.

During further exploration of the Yarra River, Batman discovered a fertile area of land, with easy access to fresh water. This area, where now stands the Melbourne CBD, so impressed Batman that he wrote in his diary "this will be the place for a village". It is upon this humble phrase that Batman's claim of being the founder of Melbourne is based, although in reality both he and John Fawkner played equally important roles in the initial settlement of the area. Upon completing his explorations, Batman left some a few men in the area to guard his newly acquired territories, and returned home to Van Diemen's Land. These initial guardians were later reinforced by additional men, and gradually the settlement of Melbourne was born. Batman and his family moved to the newly founded settlement in 1836, and although he was somewhat active in the initial development of the Port Phillip District, Batman's influence after the first year or so of settlement was not very significant.

Attitudes Toward Aboriginals

Batman was a strong advocate of reconciliation with the local aboriginals. As a result of his experiences with aboriginals in his native Van Diemen's Land, Batman sought to obtain land for settlement by buying or renting it from the aboriginals, rather than simply taking it by force. Such sentiments were then very rare at the time, as most people considered the land to be unoccupied,

and under the de jure control of the British crown. Batman wanted the Port Phillip District to grow and become self sufficient, whilst still maintaining amicable relations with the local aboriginals.

John Pascoe Fawkner

Background

John Pascoe Fawkner was born in London on the 20th of October 1792. In 1801, his father, John Fawkner, was convicted of receiving stolen goods and sentenced to fourteen years jail. John and his family accompanied Fawkner Senior when, in 1803, he was sent to Australia as part of an attempt to establish a penal colony in Port Phillip Bay. The attempt failed, however, and Fawkner and his family were moved to the newly established settlement of Hobart in Van Dieman's Land. There John Fawkner Junior helped his father on the family farm. After a series of conflicts with the law between 1814 and 1819, Fawkner moved to Launceston to start afresh. He subsequently built a house, started a newspaper, established a bakery, a nursery, and a coaching business, practiced as a lawyer, and founded a hotel. After hearing intriguing reports of the southern coast of mainland Australia, Fawkner purchased a ship and mounted an expedition to explore the area.

Reasons for Settlement

Most of the initial settlers to arrive in the Port Phillip District were interested only in obtaining some land, and making as much money out of it as possible. This was not, however, Fawkner's main reason for settling in the Port Phillip District, although it was likely a subsidiary reason. Instead, he was motivated by the desire to prevent a penal colony from being established in the area. Fawkner strongly disliked the convict system because of the many negative experiences he had had with it when he was young, and he believed that establishing a free settlement in the Port Phillip District was the only way of preventing a penal settlement from being founded there.

Founding Role in Port Phillip District

After surveying a number of potential sites, the crew of Fawkner's ship (Fawkner was not with them at the time) founded a small settlement on the Yarra River on the 30th of August 1835. A few days later, Fawkner's group met up with some of John Batman's settlers, who informed them that they were trespassing upon Batman's land. However, the two groups eventually agreed to cooperate, and, as more settlers arrived in the succeeding months, the city of Melbourne began to take shape. Fawkner himself moved to Melbourne in October, and from the outset, he played an active role in both the financial and civic affairs of the district. Fawkner established Melbourne's first newspaper, opened a hotel, ran a bookselling business, and had considerable land holdings.

Later Activities in Melbourne

From 1841 until his death in 1869, Fawkner held a variety of administrative and parliamentary positions in the body responsible for the management of the Port Phillip District (the exact nature of this body varied over the years with administrative changes). In his role as a parliamentarian, Fawkner was very active in ensuring that no convicts were sent to the Port Phillip District, and also in his support for the separation of the Port Phillip District from New South Wales, which eventually occurred in 1850. In his later years, Fawkner was heavily involved in the legislative aspects of the goldfields. Despite his administrative achievements, Fawkner's main contribution to the Port Phillip District was to organise the first group of settlers who, along with John Batman's party, established the city of Melbourne.

Charles Joseph La Trobe

Background

Charles Joseph La Trobe was born in London on the 20th March 1801. La Trobe attended school in Switzerland (both his parents were Swiss), and later returned home to teach at a school in Manchester. In 1837, La Trobe was posted to the West Indies by the British government, in order to report on the effect of education on newly freed slaves. After writing three reports on the subject, La Trobe was offered the post of superintendent of the Port Phillip District of New South Wales, however as he had no administrative experience, La Trobe was required to attend a two month training course with the Governor in Sydney. He arrived at Melbourne to commence his duties in September 1839.

Role in Port Phillip District

La Trobe served as the superintendent of the Port Phillip District of New South Wales from 1839 until the formation of the colony of Victoria in 1851. La Trobe was then reappointed as the Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria, holding this office for a further three years before finally retiring in 1854. When La Trobe first took office, Melbourne was an almost lawless colonial backwater with a population of some 2,000 people. By the time La Trobe retired fourteen and a half years later, Melbourne had been transformed into a thriving modern city, complete with a railway line, telegraph wires, and a population of over 75,000. Over the years some historians have claimed, quite justifiably, that La Trobe did little to ease the difficulties that arose because of the rapid population expansion of the Port Phillip District. La Trobe has also been accused of grossly mismanaging the administration of mining licenses during the gold rush period, and of managing the district's finances very poorly. However, La Trobe did manage to maintain law and order, and to keep the government functioning not only through the initial early years of the colony, but also through the very difficult gold rush era. This remains his greatest and most enduring accomplishment.

Views on the future of the District

La Trobe believed that as the superintendent (and later Lieutenant-Governor) of the Port Phillip District, it was his role to educate and enlighten the citizens for whom he was responsible. La Trobe was a great patron of the arts, science and religion, believing all of these things to be an essential element of civilized life. Although the Port Phillip District was at the time quite a barbarous and materialistic place, La Trobe was confident that he could lay the foundations for a civilized and highly educated society. It was with this aim in mind that La Trobe initiated work for the establishment of such institutions as the State Library of Victoria, the University of Melbourne, and the Botanical Gardens.

Impact of Settlement on Aboriginals

Aboriginals before European Settlement

- Some 33 communities in Port Phillip District, speaking 10 languages
- Highly ordered society divided into tribes and clans – social practises including arranged marriage, inter-tribal gatherings, rituals and knowledge held by elders
- Sometimes had disputes over kidnapping women, desecration of sacred sites, etc.
- Population of circa 20,000 before settlement; declined to 4,000 by 1853.

Original Attitude towards Aborigines

Throughout the 1800s, European settlers believed that the aborigines had no claim to the land, as they had not been utilising it properly (i.e. by erecting buildings or raising crops). The settlers also believed that the aborigines required European protection in order to survive. It was commonly held that aborigines should convert to Christianity, adopt European customs and culture, and in general become 'civilised'. The overriding contempt in which the aborigines were held by the European settlers is illustrated by Edmund Finn, who in 1888 wrote '[Aborigines are] the most wretched-looking and repulsive specimens of humanity [that] could be found'.

Modern Attitude towards Aborigines

By the mid 20th century, however, European attitudes towards aborigines had begun to change. Beginning in the 1950s, various groups (including many whites) began to protest against the discrimination against aborigines still evident in much of Australian society. In 1962, aborigines were permitted to vote in Federal elections, and in 1967 a referendum giving aborigines full citizenship was passed with a 90% majority. In 1992, the Mabo case rejected the concept of *terra nullius* and recognised aboriginal land rights. These changes demonstrate the greatly increased level which 'white' Australians accept the equality of indigenous Australians.

Introduction of new difficulties

- Diseases spread from NSW colony even before settlement in Port Phillip
- Diseases included influenza, measles, tuberculosis and venereal diseases
- Birth-rate and overall population declined
- Europeans introduced alcohol, tobacco and opium
- Some tribes forced off traditional land onto land of enemy tribes – increased war
- Death and illness blamed on sorcery – revenge parties sent out to attack other tribes
- “[The] introduction of the habits, and vices ... of the European” – La Trobe, 1848
- ‘Natives Driven to Police Courts by the Police for Trespassing’ W. Cawthorne 1840

The Protectorate

- Set up by the humanitarian lobby in the British parliament out of concern for aboriginal welfare
- Set up in 1837, four protectors sent to different parts of Port Phillip colony
- Goals of protectors:
 - Make contact with aboriginal groups
 - Move them to reserves
 - Convince them to abandon traditional ways of life
 - Convert them to Christianity
- Why the protectorate failed:
 - Only four protectors
 - Protectors didn't speak aboriginal languages
 - Under-funded and resourced
- Abandoned after ten years

Aborigines pushed off land by settlers taking it over.

- Squatters often built huts on aboriginal camp sites
- Europeans often settled near water sources, just where the aborigines used to camp
- Many aborigines forced onto enemy territory or on fringes of white settlements

- *“The land itself was now disfigured and desecrated, studded with huts, crossed by tracks and fences ... dirtied and spoiled”* – Aboriginal poet Judith Wright, 1981

Settlers altered the land, aborigines could not get food

- Introduced livestock, who ate food of native animals, and dug up roots, etc.
- Native animals died out – aborigines lost food and clothing sources
- Native vegetation was cleared; new plants and grasses introduced
- *“Almost entirely occupied by cattle and sheep runs, whereby natives are deprived in great measure of the kangaroo, their principal food...”* – G.M. Langhorne, 1838

Loss of land resulted in loss of culture

- Aborigines had spiritual connection with the land
- Away from their land, cultural practises could not be maintained
- Tradition replaced with alcohol and tobacco, etc.
- *“The all-embracing net of life and spirit which had held land, and people, and all things together was in tatters”* – Judith Wright

Some settlers and aborigines cooperated and lived peacefully

- Some settlers allowed aborigines to remain on their land – aborigines willing to accept settlers, but did not want their land stolen
- William Buckley (an escaped convict) persuaded a certain tribe not to attack settlers
- Initially settlers and aborigines gave gifts to each other – Batman’s treaty honoured
- Aborigines curious of European goods – often went to Melbourne to trade goods
- At first, strong leaders kept certain tribes together, and ensured that they had a place to live and access to food.
- However after these leaders died, traditional life declined.
- *“I found their services useful”* – squatter Edmund Curr, 1840s

Other settlers were violent, and killed aboriginals or kicked them off their land

- Between 1,000 and 4,000 aborigines killed by white settlers
- Rumours of massacres of whole tribes and pitched battles in more remote regions
 - Did this when authorities wouldn’t or couldn’t intervene
 - Usually did it in secret, as aborigines were protected under the law.
- Sometimes conflict incited by aborigines spearing and eating sheep, and settlers taking the law into their own hands
- Sometimes violence incited by European men kidnapping aboriginal women, or aboriginal men ‘giving’ their wives to the whites, and not getting their expected gifts in return
- *“If I caught a black actually killing my sheep, I would shoot him with as little remorse as I would a wild dog”* – squatter Henry Meyrick, 1846

Sometimes aboriginals were violent

- Fought back due to dispossession of land, lack of food and attacks by whites
- Europeans on frontier somewhat afraid, always carried arms
- Used sorcery against the white settlers – evoked evil spirits
- Killed Europeans as revenge for European injustices against them
- Attacked or stole European property, e.g. sheep stolen and buildings burnt
- ‘Deadly Encounter’ cartoon from 1870s

The Native Police

- Formed in 1842 by Superintendent La Trobe
- One hundred men served in 10 year period
- Why they were formed:
 - Hoped they would become 'civilized'
 - To provide useful labour
- What they did:
 - Tracked down other aboriginals
 - Maintained order on the goldfields
 - 'Pacified' the western district
- Legacy:
 - Known for drunkenness
 - Accused of using their position to settle old scores with enemy tribes
 - Did not give up their traditional ways

Aboriginal survivors forced to join white society

- Entered workforce as servants, labourers and stockman
- Wages and opportunities increased after gold rush – labour in demand
- Younger aboriginals more adept at assimilation; more willing to abandon tradition

Melbourne and the Gold Rush

Before the Gold Rush

- Some progress since 1835 – new houses, churches, botanical gardens, post office
- Land speculation, food expensive, rapid development
- Hardly any women or older men – raucous drinking parties common
- *"A very inferior English town. The streets unpaved, unlighted, muddy, miserable, dangerous..."* – Description of Melbourne in 1851
- *"I have been transported 16 000 miles from civilization"* – La Trobe, 1839

Initial effects of the Gold Rush

- Tens of thousands of prospectors and their families arrived
- Massive shortage of accommodation – 1,000 new buildings built in 1853
- Shortage of consumer goods – merchants up from 3,400 in 1851 to 7,700 in 1854
- Infrastructure couldn't cope – 'tent city'
- Lack of proper sewage system led to high infant mortality
- Population of PFD up from 77,000 in 1851 to 411,000 in 1857
- *"A green putrid mass of sludge"* – Historian Graeme Davison re. Bourke Street

Melbourne: Later Gold effects

- Population of Victoria increased sevenfold between 1851 and 1861
- Produced 33% of world gold output in 1850s – one of the richest cities in the world
- Much of the wealth generated by this gold was invested back into Victoria, thereby stimulating commerce and trade
- The government embarked on an ambitious public works program, which included the construction of new roads, railways, bridges, a new town hall, telegraph wires and many impressive stone buildings.

- ‘Collins Street Melbourne’ painting 1839 vs. Collins Street (Looking West from Russel St) painting 1853

Other effects of Gold Rush

- New rivalry between Victoria and NSW – both rich and populous colonies
- Discovery of gold hastened the end of convict transportation to east
- Growth of regional towns near gold field – e.g. Bendigo, Ballarat, Beechworth
- The intense mining operations of the gold rush area caused significant environmental damage, e.g. deforestation, mining pollution, ugly mining pits
- The deforestation and intensive digging resulted in significant erosion and soil salination.
- “[Melbourne became a] great city, as comfortable, as elegant, as luxurious as any place in London or Paris” – Historian Weston Bate
- ‘Fauchery-daintree Collection’ – Goldfield photographs from 1858

Hopes of the liberals

- Hopeful that gold would bring wealth to ordinary working class people
- Celebrated newfound freedom from family, social or work constraints
- Popular tales of ‘diggers easting five-pound notes’ – ‘rages to riches’ tales popular

Fears of the conservatives

- Society had become too focused on riches, no hard work ethic
- Large numbers of young men congregating in the goldfields would give rise to revolutionary ideas, anarchy and social collapse – another lawless California
- Fathers and young men abandoning their families to work at the goldfields was indeed a real problem; by 1860 some abandoned children had to be accommodated in jail cells, as the orphanages were all full
- Conservatives also dismayed by the so called ‘moral decay’ of society, which was manifested in an increase prostitution, drunkenness, and lawlessness
- Breaking down of class barriers and loosening of ties with Britain
- Encouraged women to migrate; believed to be ‘civilising influence’, ‘God’s police’
- ‘Our Address’ Pro-family Cartoon
- “Gold threatened the settled order of things and the acceptance of their place by those at the bottom of it.” – Historian David Goodman
- “Men who rise quickly from penury to influence ... generally become the slaves of intemperance or avarice.” – Englishmen, 1857

Cultural and Educational Institutions

- Government/conservatives felt that educational and cultural institutions would ‘civilise’ the rough prospectors
- The fact that most of these projects were funded by the government shows how committed the conservative politicians were to maintaining a civilised English society
- Melbourne University in 1854
- Public Library of Melbourne 1854
- Museum of Natural History 1856
- Funded by government with gold money, pushed ahead by lawyer Redmond Barry
- “You who frequent public houses ... will be able to associate with the higher and more cultivated classes of society.” – Governor Hotham on Library, 1854

- “[Melbourne] University was conceived not only as an academy, but as a machine for the production of loyal English gentlemen.” – Historian David Goodman

Political Impacts

- Gold rush brought together thousands of idealistic young men from around the world, many of whom were committed to labour movement and social reform (chartists, socialists)
- The case of Melbourne building workers, who were among the first in the world to win the eight hour working day in 1856, provides an example of their success
- These liberal attitudes also led to such events as the Eureka stockade, where miners revolted against the excessive taxes levied upon gold prospectors
- Public sympathy for miners cause led to changes in the tax
- Such factors also led to the establishment of Victoria’s first Parliament in 1854, which featured a number of progressive features like secret ballot and universal male suffrage
- Real reform, however, was blocked by the Upper House, which was dominated by conservative squatters, who feared social changes would undermine their privileged status
- Australian Workers Union established – 8 hour day for builders in 1856
- As gold began to run out, former diggers and poor migrants wanted land from squatters – Selection Acts introduced in 1860 allowing squatter land to be bought
- “[Diggers were] brave and honest men who had come thousands of miles to labour for independence ... who would possess great wealth ... if allowed to cultivate the wilderness which surrounds us.” – Eureka Stockade leader Peter Lalor

Future hopes

- People believed Victoria was destined for greatness
- Burke and Wills expedition of 1858 showed confidence of the time, in aiming to cross continent from south to north
- “Generally affluent, self-confident, [and] progressive” – Historian Don Garden describing the Victorian attitude of the time
- “The glory of the south and the civiliser of the east” – The Argus, 1854 describing Melbourne city

Section 2: Federation

Hopes and Fears of which led to Federation

Fear of foreign invasion

- European Imperialism in Pacific area: French New Caledonia colonised 1853, German New Guinea founded 1884, Russian Navy scares 1882 & 1885 (moored off Australian coast – invasion fears)
- “The rumoured approach of a Russian fleet [is] ...a danger that we have never yet had to contemplate” – Town and Country Journal, 1885
- Colonists aware they were ‘surrounded and outnumbered’ by Asian nations
- Afraid of rising Japanese military power in 1890s – defeated Russia in 1904/5 war
- Fears exacerbated by distance from Britain (last troops withdrawn 1870); large Continent with many natural resources but small population
- Many felt that Federation would allow Australia to build a strong national defence – easier to collectively finance large battleships, united military

- Major-General Edwards defence report of 1889 called for joint military actions
- Fears about French, German, Japanese and Russian ambitions in the area proved to be unfounded
- ‘Chinese invasion’ cartoon
 - Chinamen and dragon represent Chinese
 - Many Chinese are swamping Australian map below
 - No Australian characteristics remaining
- ‘Coloured conquest’ cartoon:
 - Three figures represent Japanese, Chinese and Pacific Islanders
 - Much larger than all the Australians – big populations
 - Australians being pushed and shoved
 - Women and children not spared

Desire for common anti-immigration policy

- Anti-Chinese rally in 1888 in Sydney attracted 30,000 people
- Social Darwinism supported theories of racial hierarchy: British, other whites, Japanese, Chinese/Indians, Aborigines – belief in white superiority
- *“No nigger, no Chinaman, no lascar, no kanaka, is an Australian”* – Bulletin, 1887
- Colonies refused to sign 1894 Anglo-Japanese trading treaty, owing to fears about increased Asian immigration
- Fears that immigration would dilute Australia’s racial purity, lead to moral degradation – cartoon ‘the Mongolian Octopus’ in the Bulletin 1886, novel ‘The Coloured Conquest’ 1903, cartoon ‘Chinese Invasion Australia’ Boomerang 1888
- The Mongolian Octopus shows fears of what Asians would bring
 - Cheap labour – make Australians unemployed
 - Gambling to corrupt Australians – Fan-tan, Pak Ah-Pu
 - Corrupt young women, immorality
 - Diseases – small pox, Typhoid
 - Bribery and corruption of officials
- Feared of strange cultural practises of Asians – e.g. language, opium, appearance

Labour movement

- Hopes for good pay and working conditions, job security and 40-hour week
- Fears about depression, unemployment and poverty – ‘the Blade’ cartoon, 1890
- Depression of 1890s led to the formation of ALP – a united national trade union
- Desire to have uniform customs laws, end customs houses between colony borders
- Some trade unionists hoped Federation would bring better conditions and stronger economy
- Some Trade Unionists favoured a national approach to union movement - ALP
- *“There must be unity and cooperation if we ... as an Australian people [are] to find the solution of what is called the labour problem”* – Unionist William Spence 1892
- Wages boards established in Victoria in 1896; NSW and Vic introduced old age pensions in 1900 – change in idea of role of government, must protect workers
- Colonies disagreed about tariffs v. free trade: feared they would be disadvantaged in Federation (Vic protectionist, NSW free trade)

Development of unique Australian identity

- By 1891, 68% of population was Australian born
- Travel, communications and trade between colonies was increasing – railways
- Desire to have uniform customs laws, end customs between colony borders
- New Australian heroes, e.g. Ned Kelly
- People identified unique Australians characteristics: lack of class distinctions, respect for ability over authority, regard for independence and resourcefulness
- Artists began to paint and draw unique Australian landscapes – e.g. Tom Roberts
- Writers began to glorify the culture of the ‘bush’ – e.g. The Man from Snowy River, Clancy of the overflow, cartoon ‘Shearing the lambs’ 1890
- Australian motifs like emu, kangaroo and wattle began to appear
- *“Even the native-born Australians are Britons”* – politician Henry Parkes, 1889
- Historian John Hirst argues there was an ‘outpouring of enormous sentiment’ about Australia and its ‘divine’ destiny
- *“No people in the world have been so manifestly marked out by destiny to live under one Government as the people of this island continent”* – 1898 poster
- Fears about larger and more populous states dominating the federation were largely resolved by the creation of the Senate

Inclusion and Exclusion from Australian citizenship

Inclusion and exclusion from citizenship

- Groups included in this view of citizenship included Australian born people of British origin, British-born, mothers and families, workers, and elderly people
- Excluded groups included Asians, Aborigines, and South Sea Islanders
- Organisations campaigning for women’s suffrage set up in all states in 1880s and 1890s

Aboriginals under the Constitution

- ‘The Commonwealth has the power to deal with the people of any and every race...except the Aboriginal inhabitants’ – Section 51(xxvi)
- ‘In reckoning the numbers of the people of the Commonwealth...aboriginal natives shall not be counted’ – Section 127

Immigration Restriction Act 1901

- Universally supported – only one dissenter; only the method of discrimination was disputed, not the racial policy itself
- Some favoured direct ban on Asian immigration, others favoured indirect method
- Final act stipulated that permission for immigration would be refused if immigrant failed a 50-word dictation test (originally in English, after 1905 in any language)
- Test was not given to everyone, only Asians and ‘undesirables’
- *“The unity of Australia is nothing, if it does not imply a united race”* – Deakin
- *“All aboriginal inhabitants of Africa, Asia and Polynesia should be subjected to the test”* – Barton giving confidential instructions about the test

Pacific Islanders Labourers Act 1901

- Prevented recruitment of Pacific Islander Labourers by sugar plantations in Queensland – the aim was to expel any coloureds already in Australia

- Ordered that any already there leave by 1907
- Much more openly racist than Immigration Restriction Act
- *"A handsome new years gift for a new nation"* – Edmund Barton, 1901.
- *"A radical act of racial expulsion"* – Historian Marilyn Lake

Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902

- As of 1890s, Aborigines could vote in all states but WA and Qld.
- Under Section 41 of Constitution, all people who could vote in colonies could vote in Commonwealth elections
- As of 1901, women had the vote in SA and WA; suffragette campaigns in all others
- The Act removed the vote from aborigines, but gave it to all white men and women
- *"All persons...whether male or female married or unmarried"* – Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902.
- *"No aboriginal native of Australia Asia Africa or the Islands of the Pacific except New Zealand"* – Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902.

Benefits and Responsibilities of Citizenship

- Australia gained the reputation of being a place of 'social experimentation', whereby the government introduced various schemes to help and protect mothers, workers, elderly, etc.

The Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904

- Set up a court to settle industrial disputes between unions and employers
- Part of the ideal that the government should seek to create a new and fair society, leaving behind the ills of the old world – also attempted to prevent strikes
- Helped to secure better wages and working conditions – made trade unions stronger
- Strikes continued, e.g. 1908 BHP miners strike at Broken Hill, death threats
- Some argued court would stifle working class power
- *"Such legislation multiplies the opportunities of the masses for obtaining those reasonable concessions which hitherto too often required to be wrung from reluctant hands."* – Deakin
- *"It helped change the social structure of the nation by encouragement it gave to workers to join a trade union so as to be able to bring a matter before the Court"* – Historian Bob Lewis

Tariffs and New Protection

- Debate about tariffs after Federation
- Tariffs were Federal responsibility, so national approach needed
- Protectionist Party wanted high tariffs to protect local industry
 - Based in Victoria which wanted to protect its developing manufacturing industry
 - Led by Alfred Deakin.
- Free Trade Party wanted low tariffs to protect exports
 - Based in NSW this wanted to protect its wool and meat exports
 - Led by George Reid.
- Customs Tariff Bill passed in 1902 after 12 months of debate
 - Placed tariffs on 139 separate items
 - Debate over tariffs still not settled
- To secure the support of the labour party, the Protectionist Party had to convince them that tariffs would benefit workers

- Deakin came up with the idea of ‘new protection’, which involved tying tariffs with wages
- Excise Tariff (Agricultural Machinery) Act of 1906
 - Placed a £6 tax on machinery produced in Australia
 - Placed a higher £12 tariff was on imported machinery
 - The tax on local machinery could be waived if the manufacturer paid ‘fair and reasonable’ wages
- In 1907 Harvester manufacturer Hugh Victor McKay applied for the exemption
 - He claimed that he paid ‘fair and reasonable’ wages.
 - This was opposed by the Union
 - The case went to the Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Court
- The Judge, Henry Bournes Higgins, had to decide what ‘fair and reasonable wages’ were.
- He did some research and determined that 7 shillings per day would be enough to “support the wage earner [and his family] in reasonable and frugal comfort”.
- McKay only paid six shillings per day, and so his request to waive the tax was denied.
- McKay appealed to the High Court
 - He argued that the Constitution did not give the Commonwealth power over wages
 - The High Court upheld McKay’s appeal and declared the Excise Tariff Act *Ultra Vires*
- Importance of the ‘Harvester Case’
 - Set the precedent for a minimum wage
 - Set the precedent that wages should be based on the needs of the workers rather than the whims of the employers or market conditions.
- “*The idea that Australia should safeguard its citizens was a central theme in the ‘New Protection’*” – Historian Mark Peel

Public Education

- Role of education after Federation was seen to be to teach children how to be a good citizen
- Boys and girls would also learn their respective roles and functions in society
- From 1901 to 1914, the first secondary and technical schools were also opened
- Schools tried to instil the appropriate cultural values in kids, including national loyalty and commitment to democracy
- Students taught about the evils of alcohol and smoking
- Boys taught to be ‘gentlemanly’, girls taught to be modest and gentle
- Technical schools set up to teach women how to cook, sew, do laundry, make clothing, etc.
- Boys were trained as military cadets
- “*We want children to be not merely lawyers, or carpenters, or engineers, or dairy experts, but citizens.*” – Academic Walter Murdoch 1908

Invalid and Old Age Pension Act of 1908

- Paid pensions of £26 to over 65s and permanently disabled
- Only whites of low incomes were eligible – aboriginals and Asians excluded
- Pensions were no longer seen as charity – seen as duty of the state
- “*States are beginning to realise the sense of deep national responsibility to every single unit in the community.*” – Attorney-General Groom

Women and Motherhood

- Population growth important for developing the nation – need to fully use the land

- Needed babies to provide soldiers to defend country
- Average family size declined from 7.5 children in 1840s to 2 children in late 1900s.
- Maternity Allowances Act 1912 introduced maternity allowance of a month's wages for white women, even if they were unmarried – encourage birth-rate
- *“The future of the Commonwealth, and especially the possibility of maintaining a ‘white Australia’, depends upon the question whether we shall be able to people the vast areas of the continent.”* – Commission on the decline of the birth-rate, 1903.

National Defence and Conscription

- Still fears of Japanese or Chinese invasion
- Defence Act of 1903 provided for a citizen army to be raised in wartime
- Act was amended in 1909 to introduce compulsory military training for males aged 12 and 26 – provided basis for First AIF in WWI
- Aborigines and Chinese excluded from army
- ‘The sentinel of the Pacific’ cartoon from the Bulletin, 1906
- *“It is the duty of every citizen in an emergency to assist in the defence of the Commonwealth.”* – Billy Hughes, 1901

Section 3: World War Two

Attitude to War

Australia entered war in support of Britain

- Tensions in Europe had been growing for some time – war was expected
- PM Menzies September 3: *“It is my melancholy duty to inform you officially that...Great Britain has declared war upon [Germany], and that, as a result, Australia is also at war.”*
- Australians mostly supported the war – no opposition from any party
- Britain seen as the ‘mother country’; Australia’s protection from Japan
- Australia entered war reluctantly
- Memories of the horror of WWI were still fresh – no celebrations
- Response much less emotional and hysterical patriotism than in WWI: *“There was much less flag-waving and noisy patriotism in the community than there was in the 1914-1918 struggle”* – Errol Knox ‘While You Were Away’

Australia did not at first do much to help

- No immediate offer troops like in WWI – feared Japanese attack
- Government established two forces: militia force to remain in Australia, and a ‘special force’ (the Second AIF) to go overseas
- Australians felt the war was of little importance – apathetic due to phoney war
- Many wanted to stay home to enjoy newfound prosperity after depression – GDP per capita up 42% from 1931 to 1940

Feelings changed after the defeat of France

- Many felt Menzies wasn’t doing enough – uninspiring and indecisive
- *“We Australians...need enthusiastic leaders with a ‘do or die’ attitude. We want action and stirring speeches, not a monotonous lecture.”* – Letter to the Sydney Morning Herald, 20 May 1940

- Government lost majority in September 1940 election – forced to rely on two independents
- Menzies resigned Aug 1941 after losing support of his party
- In October, the independents defected and John Curtin came to power

Australian loyalties switched from Britain to America

- Australia declared war on Japan independently – didn't wait for UK
- *“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 or kinship with the United Kingdom.”* – John Curtin, December 1941
- Curtin had an argument with Churchill when he ordered Australian troops home from the Middle East to defend Australia
- Confidence in Britain shaken after defeat at Singapore in Feb 1942
- In 1942, Australia ratified the 1931 Statute of Westminster, making Australia a fully independent nation at last

National Unity – ‘All in!’

- In 1943 elections, labour won 66% of the lower house seats and 100% of upper house seats up for election
- Daily Telegraph cartoon 1942: “To the last man and the last shilling”
- Cartoons emphasised teamwork and glorified industry workers too – ‘Team Work: Don't let your team down’ and ‘Our job to clothe the men who work and fight’
- Historian Darian-Smith argues that divisions of class, gender, race and ethnicity remained, despite ‘rhetoric of unity’
- Historian Micheal McKernan asserts that John Curtin *“unified Australia as no Prime Minister had done before him”*
- Micheal McKernan argues that burden fell heavier on working classes
- Middle class women argued they needed domestic help – limited to one servant per household under Domestic Servants Order
- Middle-class women had more resources to appeal Manpower Directorate

Government Response

- National Security Act of 1939 allowed government to override constitution for defence needs, but little done until after Pearl Harbour

Reduction in imports and diversion to war effort led to rationing of goods

- Petrol rationed 1940 – tension between city dwellers and country dwellers
- *“In the cities, where transport in trains, trams and buses is ... petrol which is wholly used for pleasure should be cut out. In the country cars are an absolute necessity.”* – Letter to the Sydney Morning Herald, 19 May 1941
- Newsprint, tobacco, firewood, gas, tea, sugar, clothing, shoes and butter all rationed
- Photograph of tailor Mr V. Langsford wearing his recycled ‘austerity suit’
- People grumbled, but most went along with it
- Image of empty store with sign: “No matches. No cigarettes. No tobacco. Sorry.”
- Profiteering and black market widespread: *“If black marketing is defined as any breach of rationing ... or price regulations, it is indisputable that it exists on a far from negligible scale.”* – Sydney Morning Herald, 4 July 1944

Government intervened in many other areas of life – mobilised nation for war

- Personal identity cards introduced
- Wages, rates of profits and prices of many goods were fixed
- Cartoons of the ‘squander bug’ – encouraged people to save money for war effort
- Manpower Directorate (1942) allowed government to direct people to certain jobs – about 50% of population in war work or military by 1943
- Conscription of males into the militia – Australian military 575,000 strong by 1945
- Citizens encouraged to be frugal and unselfish: *“the great challenge today is to each individual...to forget self and order his or her life for the welfare of the nation.”* – John Curtin

Post-war effects of increased government powers

- Many, like rationing and labour allocation, were lifted after the war
- Commonwealth greatly increased its prestige and importance
- Desire for worker’s state – Labour victory in 1946 with 58% lower and 92% upper
- Greater role of the federal government led to a greater sense of national unity – people more likely to see themselves as ‘Australians’
- Modest pension schemes introduced for widows and mothers in 1941/42
- Commonwealth pursued initiatives in previously state areas – education and loans and banking, retained income tax power gained under Uniform Tax Case (1942)

Worker Responses

Strikes continued during the war

- Government tried to sort out problems via negotiation before strike began
- Unions: war should not be used as excuse to reduce wages or working conditions
- Hardcore socialists opposed the war as an ‘imperialist war’ until Barbarossa
- Industrial action in NSW coalfields in 1944 – threats to conscript strikers
- *“My son is fighting in defence of the very thing that these men are striking for. His father and I would be ashamed if he came back and found that the things he had been fighting for had been lost at home.”* – Wife of a striker and mother of a servicemen, letter to the Sydney Morning Herald, 20 August 1941

Nevertheless, most workers coped well and supported war

- Christmas holidays cut drastically – only 3 days
- Working hours lengthened – shifts up to 13 hours, seven days a week
- Housing and working conditions poor – dirty, noisy, dangerous and boring
- Population was not very sympathetic for strikers – *“I’m crook at the munitions workers and all those who are striking, it makes my blood boil when I think of our soldiers ... and these cows are striking for a few extra pence”*, Josie Arnold 1941

Aliens and Aboriginals

Enemy Aliens treated badly

- ‘Alien’ – anyone who was not an Australian citizen: 52,000 identified
- ‘Enemy Alien’ – any citizen of Australia’s enemies: 22,000 identified
- All Australians of German, Italian and Japanese heritage had their movement monitored and freedoms restricted – even Australian citizens

- Some were interned in camps, though many eventually released for farm work
- Templar Germans interned in Tatura, Victoria
- Fear of spies: *"If we intern 5,000 enemy aliens and trap only one spy I say we have done a great service to ourselves"* – letter to Sydney Morning Herald, August 1940

Fair bit of persecution

- Spontaneous attacks on aliens – shops looted, sacked from jobs
- Against Japanese because of racial discontent
- Against Italians – often from working-class background and worked in retail

African-American troops

- At first not allowed in Australia
- Americans – ‘overpaid, oversexed and over here!’
- Seen as threat to *"the maintenance of the White Australia policy in the post-war settlement"* – Advisory War council, 12 January 1942
- Eventually policy was changed: 100,000 afro-Americans passed through Australia

Aboriginals at first treated badly and denied employment

- Initially, some even called for the aboriginals to be interned: *"it seems to me that they should all be removed far inland from any likely enemy landing places...as if taken by the Japanese they might prove very useful to them as guides"* – Mr S McClintock from Perth wrote to the Prime Minister, April 1942
- Only those of ‘substantial European origin or descent’ allowed to join the military

Labour shortage led to growing acceptance of Aboriginals

- In mid 1941, aboriginals accepted into various military branches
- Some 6,000 served in regular and irregular forces
- In military, aboriginals were able to obtain social respect and economic power
- *"There was a job to be done ... all of a sudden the colour line disappeared."* – Oodgeroo Noonucal, poet and political activist

Attitudes to Women

Some middle-class women offered their services immediately

- Established volunteer para-military organisations, wore uniforms
- Women’s Australian National Services (WANS) – learnt military skills
- Armed forces and industries ignored them
- Ridiculed by press as ‘playing soldiers’
- Seen mostly as an annoyance by government

Growing labour shortage led to industries needing to employ women

- In November 1940, Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration decided that industries could employ females, but only for war work
- Women conscripted for war work under 1942 Manpower Directorate
- Some resistance to this – borrowing babies to argue for exemptions

Unions and many men were opposed

- “There will be plenty of work for all women during the present emergency ... practically every woman can knit, crochet or sew.” – Australasian, September 1939
- Undermine male dominance as ‘breadwinner’
- Women not be capable of doing the work – war was a man’s job
- Women would increase unemployment – take men’s jobs

Auxiliary military formations established in 1941

- Women’s Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF) – 27,000 served
- Women’s Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS) – 3,000 served
- Australian Women’s Army Service (AWAS) – 24,000 served
- Non-combat roles: clerks, drivers, mechanics, wireless operators and cooks
- Women’s role can be exaggerated: comprised only 6.5% of servicemen (66,000)
- Women paid lower wages: two-third of male wage in military, 55-90% in civilian jobs

Wartime effects of female employment

- Married women had trouble balancing work and home commitments
- Women experienced greater personal and economic freedom, young people more reckless owing to dangers of war
- Widespread fears about declining morals – divorce, prostitution and child delinquency rose, young girls/married women having affairs with US soldiers
- Albert Tucker – *“Schoolgirls from 14 to 15 would rush home after school and put on short skirts made out of flags ... and go tarting along St Kilda road with GIs.”*
- Immorality denounced by newspapers – Albert Tucker’s Images of Modern Evil
- Many still unsettled by female employment – Bulletin cartoons, such as May 1942: “Women: ‘Young man you should be in uniform!’ Man Replies: ‘You shouldn’t!’”
- Government 1942 radio broadcast: *“This splendid little army of patriotic women is doing a man-sized job by releasing [men] to fight the Japanese. They are doing all that any woman can do to assist Australia’s war effort.”*
- Ads still appealed to feminine ideals, e.g. ‘Ponds Lipstick’ and ‘Lux Soap’ posters

Post-war effects of female employment

- Many women returned to the home after the war, wages declined again
- Women had proved that they could shoulder responsibility – greater expectations
- True social change nevertheless took time – National Wage Case of 1974 for equal minimum wages, as of 2001 women still earned on average \$166 less than men

Consequences of War

General Statistics

- 39,400 Australians died in the war
- 993,000 men served in the armed forces throughout the war

Australian society much more united than in WWI

- Australia itself was under threat from Japan – war brought home
- Everyone was able to meaningfully contribute to the war – soldiers, factory workers, farmers – rationing spread burden amongst population
- No huge division about conscription – settled early on

- The huge demand generated by the war saw nearly everyone employed with decent wages – all vestiges of the depression vanished
- Union power and belief in workers' rights lived on during and after war

Important political changes

- Australia also became much more diplomatically active in world affairs
 - Switch from British to US allegiance
 - Opening of embassies around the world
- Federal government gained much power
 - Increased prestige and visibility
 - New powers in education, welfare, taxation
 - Renewed Australian identity
- Japanese threat demonstrated Australia's vulnerability
 - Government decided to boost immigrant population
 - Relaxed white Australia policy to take migrants from East Europe

Women and aboriginals

- Attitudes towards aboriginals softened, but underlying prejudice stayed for some decades
- Women gained power, freedom and respect, but:
 - Still did not obtain equal wages
 - Many encouraged by government and husbands to abandon work after war
 - Women were now more reluctant to have many kids

Section 4: The Vietnam War

Background Information

Why was there concern about Vietnam?

- The countries of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia were all part of the French colony of Indochina until World War Two
- During WWII Indochina was occupied by the Japanese. When the French attempted to reimpose their control after the war, they were opposed by a communist organisation known as the Vietminh
- Led by revolutionary leader Ho Chi Minh, the Vietminh soon began a guerrilla war against the French military forces in Vietnam
- A peace agreement was finally reached in 1954, whereby the French forces were withdrawn, and Vietnam was divided in two at the 17th parallel
- The northern part of the country came under communist control, and the southern part came under the control of a pro-western dictator named Ngo Dinh Diem
- Determined to reunite the country under Communist rule, the North Vietnamese began in 1959 to support and equip pro-communist guerrillas fighting against the South Vietnamese government. These fighters collectively became known as the 'Viet Cong'
- During the 1960s, America based much of its foreign policy – including its policy towards Vietnam – upon the Cold War
- Thus, the United States believed that the communist guerrilla activity in South Vietnam was all part of a grand plan orchestrated by the Soviet Union and China, in attempt to spread the communist revolution across the world

- The US also feared that, if South Vietnam fell to communism, other nearby countries (such as Cambodia and Laos) would fall to communism soon afterwards. These countries would in turn spread communism further and further afield, until Thailand, Indonesia, Taiwan, India, etc, had all fallen to communism
- This so-called 'domino theory' was one of the primary reasons for American concern about Vietnam

Timeline of Involvement

- *1956 – few hundred US advisors sent to train South Vietnamese forces*
- August 1962 – The first Australian military advisers are sent to South Vietnam to help train the South Vietnamese military forces.
- July 1964 – First Australian battle casualty in Vietnam War.
- November 1964 – National Service Scheme introduced to increase size of Australian army
- *March 1965 – First combat ground US forces enter Vietnam*
- June 1965 – Australian regular forces sent to Vietnam after US requests additional assistance from allies
- 1968 – Australian military forces in Vietnam reach peak strength of 7,672
- *1968 – US military forces in Vietnam peak at 536,000*
- *November 1969 – policy of Vietnamisation announced*
- November 1971 – Last regular Australian forces withdrawn from Vietnam
- *August 1972 – Last regular US forces withdrawn from Vietnam*
- December 1972 – Last Australian military advisors withdrawn from Vietnam
- *March 1973 – Last US military advisors leave Vietnam*
- January 1973 – Governor-General officially declares Australian involvement in Vietnam War over

National Service

- The National Service system obligated all twenty-year-old Australian males (excluding aboriginals) to register with the government. Failure to comply was an offence, and could be punishable with a fine
- As there were more available twenty-year-olds than were required for military service, the government selected who would be conscripted by a specially-devised lottery system, based on birth dates
- Those whose birth dates were drawn out were informed that they were required to report for duty, whilst those whose birthdays were not drawn out were informed that their service had been postponed indefinitely. In practice these men were never called up
- All exemptions or deferments were decided on a case-by-case basis, and were not granted automatically. Moral objection to war in general was an acceptable reason, but objection specifically to Vietnam War was not
- Conscripts were obliged to serve for two years in the regular army (reduced to eighteen months in 1971), with a further three years of part-time service in the army reserve
- Unlike in previous wars, Australian conscripts were liable for service in Vietnam, although those who vocally opposed the war were often posted to service within Australia instead.
- Between 1964 and 1972, some 800,000 males registered for service, of whom some 65,000 were called up

Evidence for initial support for the war

Opinion polls showed strong support for war

- Sept 1965: 56% for, 28% against
- Sept 1966: 61% for, 27% against
- May 1967: 62% for, 24% against

War supported by many important institutions

- Liberal Party
- Democratic Labour Party
- Catholic Church
- Most major newspapers – The Age April 1965 spoke of “*inescapable obligations which fall on us because of our geographical position, our treaty obligations and our friendships*”
- Pro-war cartoons – Geroge Molnar Sydney Morning Herald 1966: “*He’s complaining ... about not getting his registration card. He wants to burn it.*”

Election results

- Coalition in power in 1963 (46% of vote)
- Coalition increase majority in 1966 (50% of vote)

Strong belief in need to support US ally

- Perceived need to uphold ANZUS and SEATO treaties
- Idea of earning ‘brownie points’ with the US
- Australian official in US embassy 1964: “[*in Vietnam*] we could...pick up a lot of credit with the United States.”

Belief in need to stop communism

- The domino theory widely upheld
- Fear that if communists were not stopped soon ‘Australia would be next’
- Belief in forward defence – draw the line as far north as possible
- Menzies 1965: “*The takeover of South Vietnam would be a direct military threat to Australia*”
- Needed to combat the threat posed by radical communist China

South Vietnam had requested our help

- Menzies 1965: “The Australian Government is now in receipt of a request from the Government of South Vietnam for further military assistance”

Evidence for declining support for the war

Three huge moratorium marches held in capital cities across the nation

- First Moratorium May 1970 – 200,000 people nationwide
- Second Moratorium September 1970
- Third Moratorium June 1971
- Demonstrated opposition to the war from all sections of society – socialists, unions, students, middle-class, mothers, etc

Various anti-conscription and anti-war protest groups

- Draft Resistance Movement Feb 1968 – Make the entire conscription system unmanageable, non-compliance
- Youth Campaign Against Conscription June 1965 – petition in the Australian: “[*Vietnam war*] would be a moral wrong and an unjust call upon our lives.”
- Save our Sons Movement 1965 – women opposed to draft, helped draft resisters
- Protestors organised anti-war rallies and burned draft cards
- Radical unions organise strikes the refusal in May 1965 of Australian-crewed tugboats to service an American warship.
- Conscientious objectors – John Zarb imprisoned 1968 for not reporting for duty

Election results

- Coalition powerful in 1966 (50% of vote)
- Coalition returned in 1969 but with reduced majority (43% of vote)
- Labour wins in 1972 for first time since 1949 (Coalition 41% of vote)

Opinion polls show declining support for the war

- Sept 1966: 61% for, 27% against
- Oct 1968: 54% for, 37% against
- Nov 1969: 39% for, 51% against
- Nov 1970: 42% for, 50% against

Media coverage brought home destructiveness of war

- Reporters were on the ground and largely uncensored
- People could watch the day’s fighting every night on TV
- People exposed to increasing Australian death toll – 520 killed, 2,400 wounded
- Anti-War Cartoons – Moratorium ad; “Four out of five of these men choose their carers”

Communist threat subsided

- Détente with USSR in late 1960s
- End of cultural revolution in China
- Lack of ‘domino theory’ as had been warned

Questions about the morality of the war

- Images of civilians being attacked – Phan Thị Kim Phúc running from napalm
- General Nguyen Ngoc Loan executing a Viet Cong prisoner in Saigon
- My Lai massacre undermined credibility
- Herald Sun in March 1970 spoke of “*the growing futility of the slaughter in Vietnam*”