

ABSENT VOTE.
BALLOT-PAPER
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
The Military Service Refuse
STATE OF

AGAINST THE ODDS

THE VICTORY OVER CONSCRIPTION IN WW1

EDUCATION RESOURCE



John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library. Records of Tom Fitzgerald.
Pat Hickey addressing rally, 21 October 1916. JCPML00687/15/4.



LIVING
PEACE
MUSEUM
AUSTRALIA

 **ANZAC**—2014—2018—
CENTENARY
Sharing Victoria's Stories & Making Connections

 **VICTORIA**
State
Government

HTAV
HISTORY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

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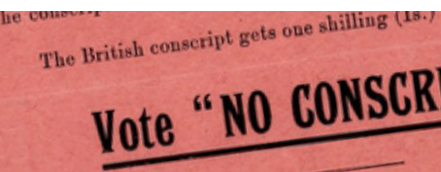
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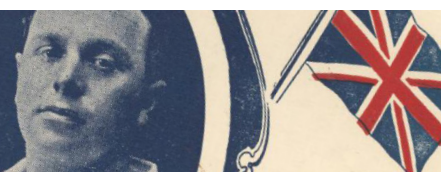
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INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

These education resources focus on the conscription debate in Australia during World War One and are made up of three parts:

1. **An online exhibition**
2. **Documentary**
3. **Education kit**

When used together, the resources provide content information and educational tasks to help students develop their understanding of the conscription referendums.

HISTORICAL CONTENT

These resources help students understand:

- ✓ arguments for and against conscription
- ✓ the historical context of World War One that led to both the 1916 and 1917 referendums
- ✓ techniques used by pro- and anti-conscriptionists to sway public opinion to their side of the debate
- ✓ the attitudes of serving and returned soldiers towards the anti-conscription campaigns.

HISTORICAL SKILLS

Students will:

- ✓ analyse historical propaganda images
- ✓ evaluate historical texts
- ✓ annotate primary sources
- ✓ consider attitudes of the past
- ✓ compose creative responses to demonstrate their historical knowledge
- ✓ demonstrate their comprehension of primary sources through short-answer questions
- ✓ use digital tools to demonstrate their knowledge of the referendums
- ✓ summarise the attitudes of key social groups toward conscription during World War One
- ✓ work individually and in small groups.

USING THESE RESOURCES

It is recommended that these education resources be used in conjunction with the online exhibition of objects at the [Culture Victoria website](#).

Suggested uses:

1. Use a data projector to present a key image relating to one of the sections in the ***Against the Odds: Defeating Conscription in World War One*** exhibition (e.g. Anti-Conscription Songs). Use the object to introduce the concept to students and generate a class discussion. Then ask students to complete the accompanying resource in class or as homework.
2. The online exhibition and educational activities can be used as research materials for students beginning an assignment or project about the anti-conscription campaigns. If the Flipped Classroom learning model is in use, students can study the content of the exhibition at home and then complete the educational tasks as a class activity.



VOTE HONOR IT

VICTORIAN HISTORY CURRICULUM LINKS

YEARS 9/10

THE MODERN WORLD AND AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIANS AT WAR (1914–1945): WORLD WAR I

Causes of World War I, the reasons why men enlisted to go to war, and how women contributed in the war effort (VCHHK139)

Significant events, turning points of the war and the nature of warfare (VCHHK141)

Effects of World War I, with a particular emphasis on the changes and continuities brought to the Australian home front and society (VCHHK142)

Significance of World War I to Australia's international relationships in the twentieth century, with particular reference to Britain, the USA and Asia (VCHHK143)

Different historical interpretations and contested debates about World War I and the significance of Australian commemorations of the war (VCHHK144)

HISTORICAL CONCEPTS AND SKILLS

The full Victorian History Curriculum document can be accessed [here](#).

Chronology

Analyse and evaluate the broad patterns of change over the period 1750–present (VCHHC122)

Historical sources as evidence

Analyse and corroborate sources and evaluate their accuracy, usefulness and reliability (VCHHC123)

Analyse the different perspectives of people in the past and evaluate how these perspectives are influenced by significant events, ideas, location, beliefs and values (VCHHC124)

Evaluate different historical interpretations and contested debates (VCHHC125)

Continuity and change

Identify and evaluate patterns of continuity and change in the development of the modern world and Australia (VCHHC126)

Cause and Effect

Analyse the long term causes, short term triggers and the intended and unintended effects of significant events and developments (VCHHC127)

Historical Significance

Evaluate the historical significance of an event, idea, individual or place (VCHHC128)



ACTIVITY 1

Putting Yourself into the Frame: The Conscription Referendums

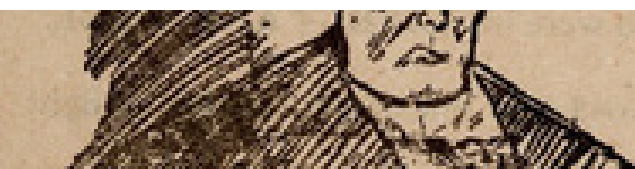
In October 1916 and December 1917, two contentious referendums were held in Australia, asking whether the Commonwealth government should be given the power to conscript young men into military service and send them to war overseas.

These campaigns were momentous and their legacy is long-lasting. Australia was the only country to put the conscription issue to a vote during World War One, and the decisive 'No' vote remains one of the greatest successes of the peace movement in Australia. Yet the campaigns split families, workplaces and organisations, and left an imprint on Australian politics that lasted for decades.

The 1917 referendum proposed that the following men would be eligible for conscription.

- **Single men between 20 and 44 years**
- **Widowers between 20 and 44 years**
- **Divorcees without dependents between 20 and 44 years**

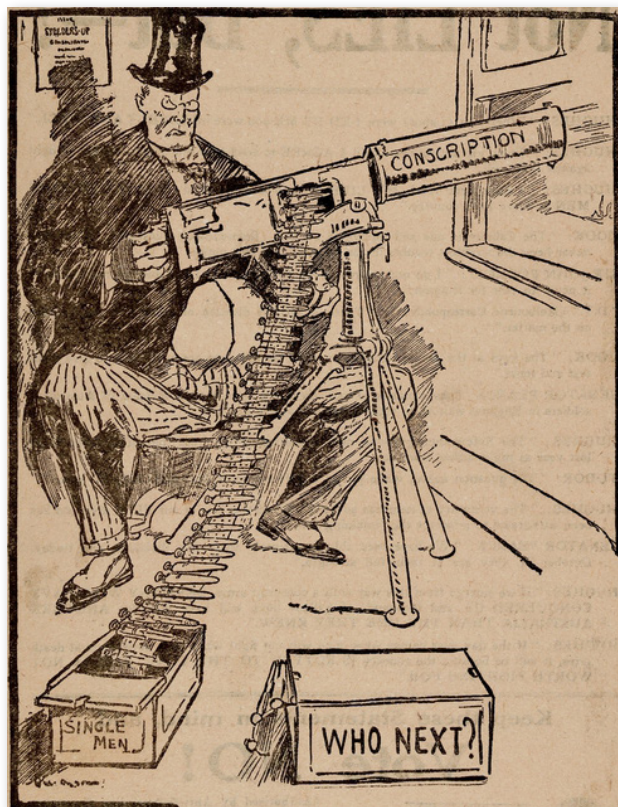
If the referendum had been successful, anybody who fitted into these categories could have been called up by ballot.



SCENARIO

A major conflict has broken out in Australia's neighbourhood and the government has made the decision to become strongly involved. The government believes Australia will need more soldiers than the initial volunteer intake produced and has begun thinking about conscription. Break up your class into six groups and allocate one of the following questions to each group. Spend 10 minutes brainstorming in groups and then each group report their thoughts back to the class.

GROUP 1	Should the Australian government have the power to introduce conscription? Should the decision be made by either a majority parliamentary vote or majority at a plebiscite or referendum?
GROUP 2	If conscription was introduced, who should be conscripted? Consider factors such as age, physical fitness, ethnicity, gender, citizenship and religion.
GROUP 3	If conscription was introduced, are there any members of society who should be exempted from conscription? What characteristics might these people have?
GROUP 4	If you were conscripted, what impact might it have on your family?
GROUP 5	What arguments would you give against conscription in modern-day Australia?
GROUP 6	What arguments would you give for conscription in modern-day Australia?



Source: 'Single Men. Conscription. Who Next?' c. 1914–18 (Australian War Memorial, RCO0339 <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C964521>)

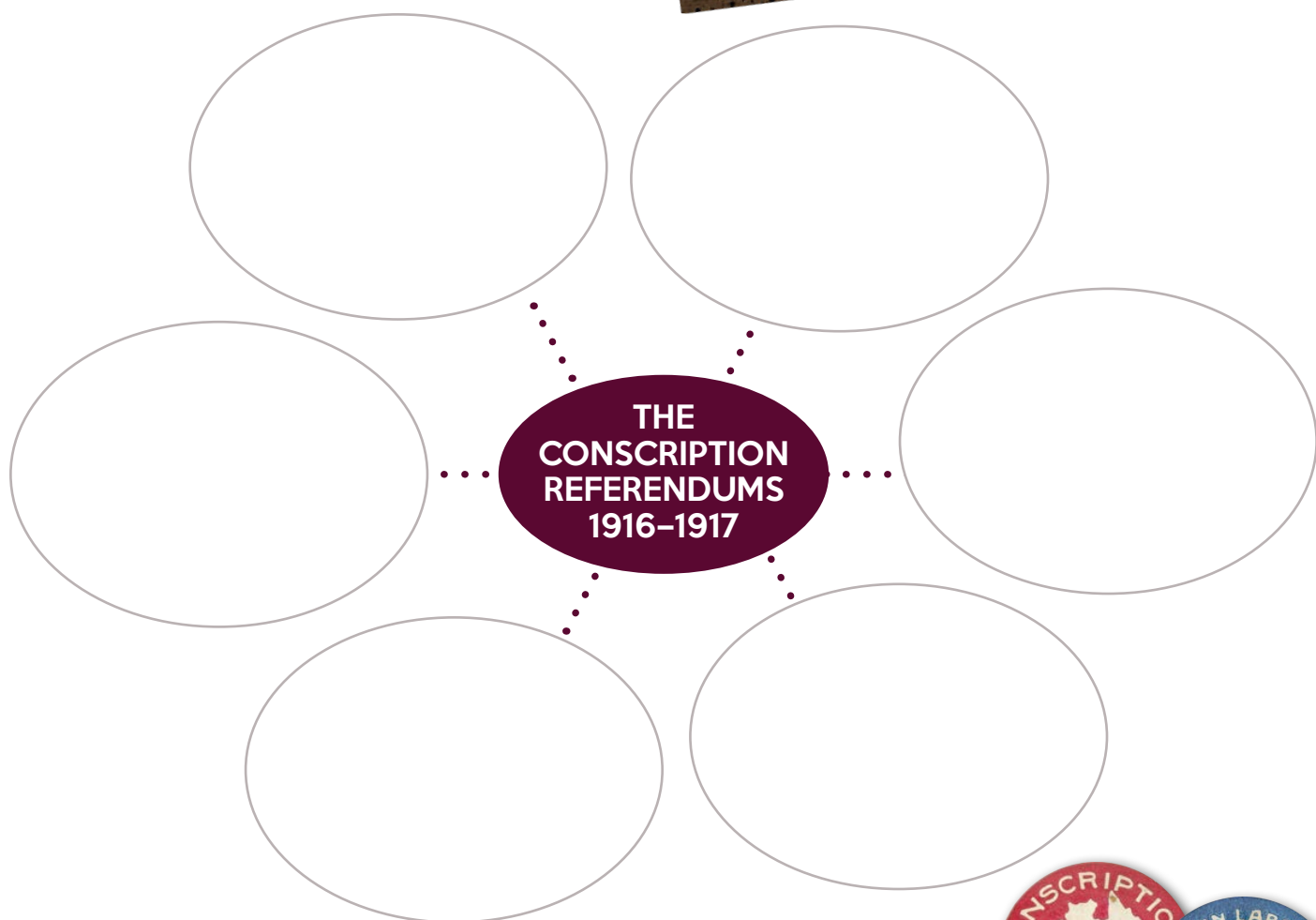


ACTIVITY 2

Documentary – *Against the Odds: Defeating Conscription in World War One*

Watch the documentary as an introduction to the conscription referendums.

Note down 6 pieces of information about the World War One conscription referendums that you discovered from watching the documentary. Pay particular attention to why these events were significant for world history, Australian history and/or local histories. Share your thoughts with the class.



TASK



The documentary has a specific focus on the way local communities engaged in action to prevent conscription being instituted during World War One. As a class, use Google Maps to look up some of the locations related to the anti-conscription campaign in the northern suburbs of Melbourne.



LOCATION	HOW IS THIS SITE RELATED TO THE EVENTS OF THE CONSCRIPTION REFERENDUMS?
Brunswick Town Hall	
Mechanics' Institute, Brunswick	
St Ambrose's School, Dawson Street	
Pentridge Prison	



ACTIVITY 3

Yes and No: Pro- and Anti-Conscription Sources

Visit the online **Against the Odds: Defeating Conscription in World War One** exhibition to help you with this section.

We can discover much about the conscription debate by analysing the propaganda images from the time. Each image was carefully crafted to sway the viewer's opinion to a particular side of the debate. Evaluate the following images to determine which techniques have been used to influence public opinion.

Source: 'Australia's Real Scab,' 1917 (State Library of Victoria, <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/221523>)



In which publication did the image above appear?

Who is the intended audience of this publication?

Who does the person in this image represent?

Unlike the 'scab labour' that some handbills warned against, who is accused of being the scab here?

What is the key message being depicted?

Is the image trying to secure a YES or NO vote?

The British conscription

NO CONSCRIPTION.



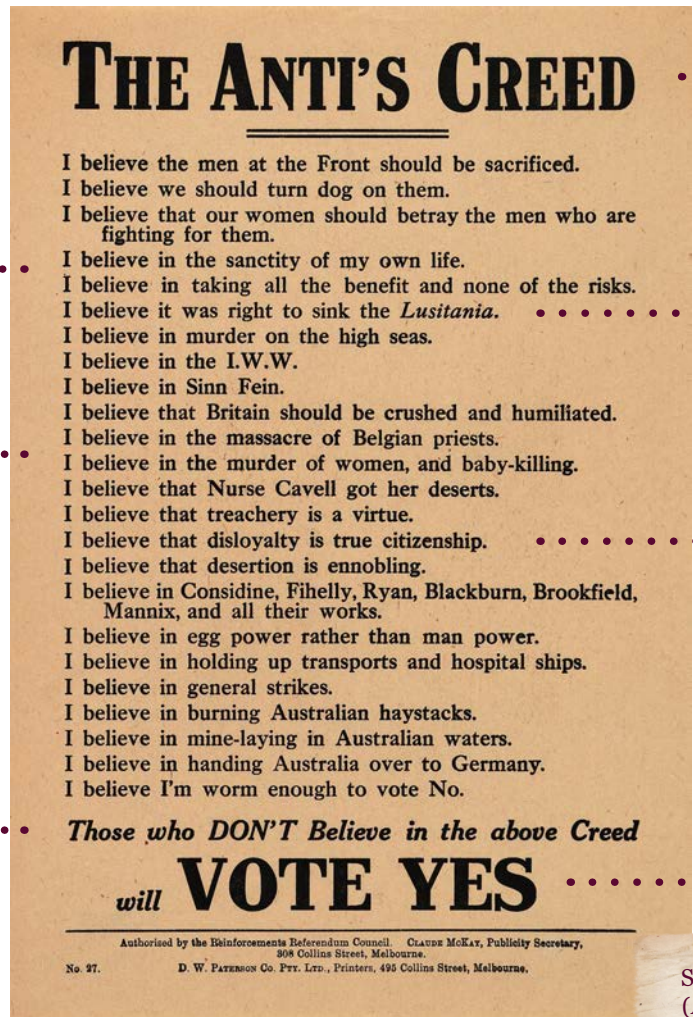
HANDBILLS

Propaganda posters were bright, colourful and designed to be affixed to a wall. They were highly visual and relied on accentuated characters and short, punchy catch phrases. The sources in the following activity are handbills that were given out in the street for people to take home and read. The objective of the author and designer was to fit as much information as possible onto each bill. For this reason, the bills were covered in text and made use of a variety of fonts. Each handbill focused on a specific argument or approach to make the strongest case for their opinion on conscription.

The handbill is structured and formatted like a prayer. The use of religious terms such as 'creed' and 'believe' gives it a moral tone.

Repetitive language to strengthen the sentiment.

Many handbills used reverse psychology as a persuasive technique



Bold heading to catch attention

References to tragedies that had already occurred during the war.

Repeated use of negative terms such as 'disloyalty', 'desertion' and 'treachery'.

Despite the use of reverse psychology, the voting action is clearly stated.

Source: 'The Anti's Creed,' 1917 (Australian War Memorial, RCO0317, <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C964491>)

'Sinn Fein' refers to the Irish Republican group which was trying to achieve Ireland's independence from Britain at this time. Many Australian Catholics were sympathetic to their position. During the second referendum campaign, the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, Daniel Mannix became one of the strongest public opponents to conscription. As a consequence, Mannix and Australian Catholics in general were repeatedly accused of being disloyal, or 'Sinn Feiners.'

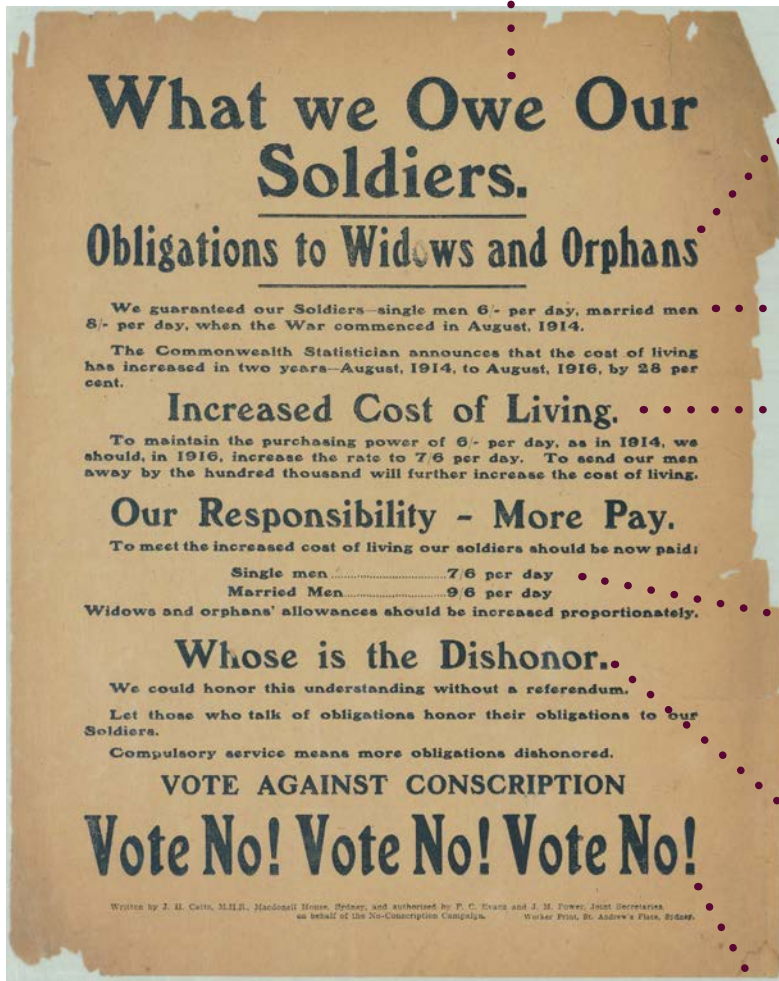
The British conscription

NO CONSCRIPTION





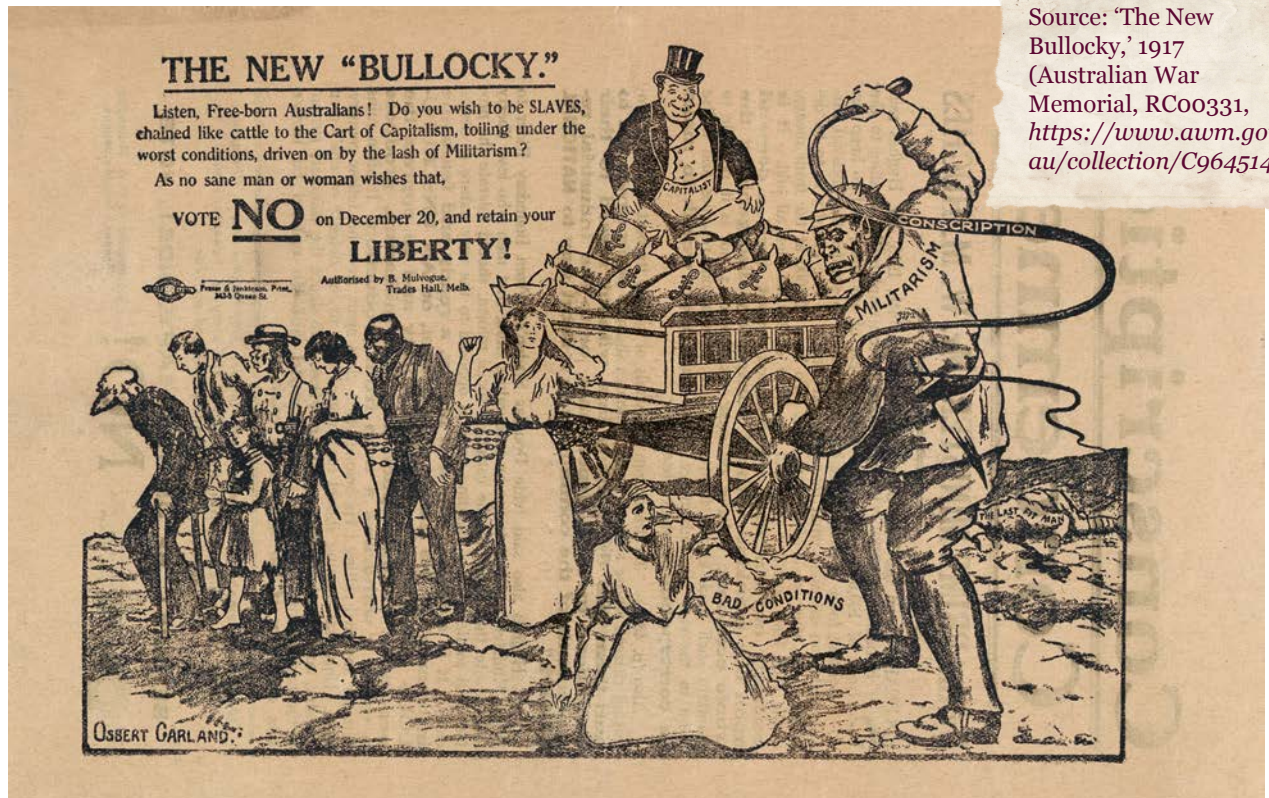
Annotate this handbill to show which persuasive techniques have been used to promote the No vote.



Source: 'What We Owe Our Soldiers,' 1916 (State Library of Victoria, <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/263114>)



PART 1: SOURCES FOR THE 'NO' VOTE



Who is the person sitting on the cart? What does he represent?

What is his relationship to the man with the whip?

What do the people harnessed to the front of the cart represent?

What is the significance of the man lying in the mud on the right side of the image?

What is the key message of this image?

What does the illustrator, Osbert Garland, seem to think of conscription?

The British conscription

"NO CONSCRIPTION"





Examine the following four anti-conscription images to uncover some of the reasons given for voting No.

Women of Australia, Beware!

Lest you make your Country a Land of Mourning

In a frenzied address to the Women of Australia, Mr. Hughes asks if you are going to "leave our men to die in the trenches." He wants you to believe that unless you vote "Yes" our gallant sons will be abandoned by the Allies (whom they have gone to help) and that certain death will overtake them.

This is a mean slander on Australia and Great Britain. Our men can never be deserted!

Britain alone has raised an army of FIVE MILLION MEN, and France, Russia, Italy, Canada, India, Roumania, and Australia will see that our sons are not left to bear more than their fair share of the burden. To suggest that our men will be ABANDONED and left to die IS UNTRUE. If it were true, it would be criminal to send any more men, because our resources in men must sooner or later be utterly exhausted. What is to happen to our men then?

The more men you send the more will be killed!!!

Do you want the furnace of war to consume all your fathers, husbands and brothers?

WOMEN—Remember this, if you vote "Yes" you may be sending some young Australian, WHOLLY UNSUITED FOR BATTLE, to his grave. But if you vote "No" you are leaving every man to choose his own course and DECIDE AS HIS CONSCIENCE DIRECTS. Your conscience can govern only your own actions. Don't use your vote to compel another to do something which his conscience tells him he should not do.

Therefore, Vote "NO"

And preserve your Home Land

Written by R. W. Crickbank, and authorized by P. C. Evans and J. M. Power, Joint Secretaries, for the No-Conscription Campaign, Macdonell House, Sydney. Worker Print, St. Andrew's Place, Sydney

Source: 'Women of Australia, Beware!' 1916 (State Library of Victoria <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/263134>)

Summarise the key points of this poster. What arguments are given for voting No?



The British conscription

"NO CONSCRIPTION"

1917

CONSCRIPTION REFERENDUM.

Questions for Voters.

- I. Do you think that the Government, in taking a referendum on the question of Conscription, is acting **honestly** in representing the question as one merely of reinforcements?
- II. Do you think that the Government is justified in using the military censorship to **prevent free discussion** of the subject which it is referring to the people?
- III. Do you think that a government which uses the postal and telegraph department to interfere with the private letters and telegrams of political opponents, should be entrusted with still further power?
- IV. Do you think, in the light of **pledges already broken** by Mr. Hughes, and of the assertion of Mr. Watt that "there might be times when pledges were secondary things" (*Argus*, Nov. 14), and, further, in view of the wholesale repudiation of a recent election pledge by members of the N.S.W. Nationalist Government, that it is wise or safe to trust Mr. Hughes's promises about limiting conscription to single men?
- V. Do you think it **just** that, whereas the referendum most vitally affects men of military age (20 to 44), some of these men (those under 21) have no vote, while on the other hand the right to vote belongs to men above military age, women, and exempted persons? Should the fate of the young be decided by the vote of the old?

If you answer NO to these Questions, **Vote NO!**



Fraser and Jenkinson, Print.
343-5 Queen St., Melb

Authorised by F. Sinclair, for the Anti-
Conscription Committee of the Free
Religious Fellowship, Guild Hall, Swan-
ston Street, Melbourne.

Source: 'Conscription Referendum: Questions for Voters, 1917 (State Library of Victoria <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/158344>)

Summarise the key points of this poster. What arguments are given for voting No?

The British conscription

"NO CONSCRIPTION"



14

To Win the War.

The Effect of Conscription.

Conscription in Australia cannot alter the result of the war.

If Conscription was necessary, Canada, whose population is 3,000,000 more than Australia and is within four days' sail of the frontier, would have adopted it.

If what Mr. Hughes says is correct, why has Russia twenty million men of military age who are not serving?

The enemy is in Russia!

Conscription in Australia will make it easy for other races to capture our industries, and the wives and daughters of the absent conscript will be forced to beg bread from an alien race.

Conscription will make it possible for the Military Authorities to pay the conscript what wages they think fit.

The British conscript gets one shilling (1s.) a day.

Vote "NO CONSCRIPTION."

Compiled and issued by Literature Committee of Queensland Anti-conscription Campaign Committee.
E. H. LANE, Chairman.
GUTHBERT BUTLER, Secretary.
Committee: J. A. Fihelly, J. McDonald, J. S. Collings, J. Hanlon, T. H. Sewell.

Authorised by Lewis McDonald, Hon. Sec. A.C.C. Committee, Elizabeth Street, Brisbane, and printed by W. McCosker for the Worker Newspaper Proprietary, Ltd., Elizabeth St., Brisbane.



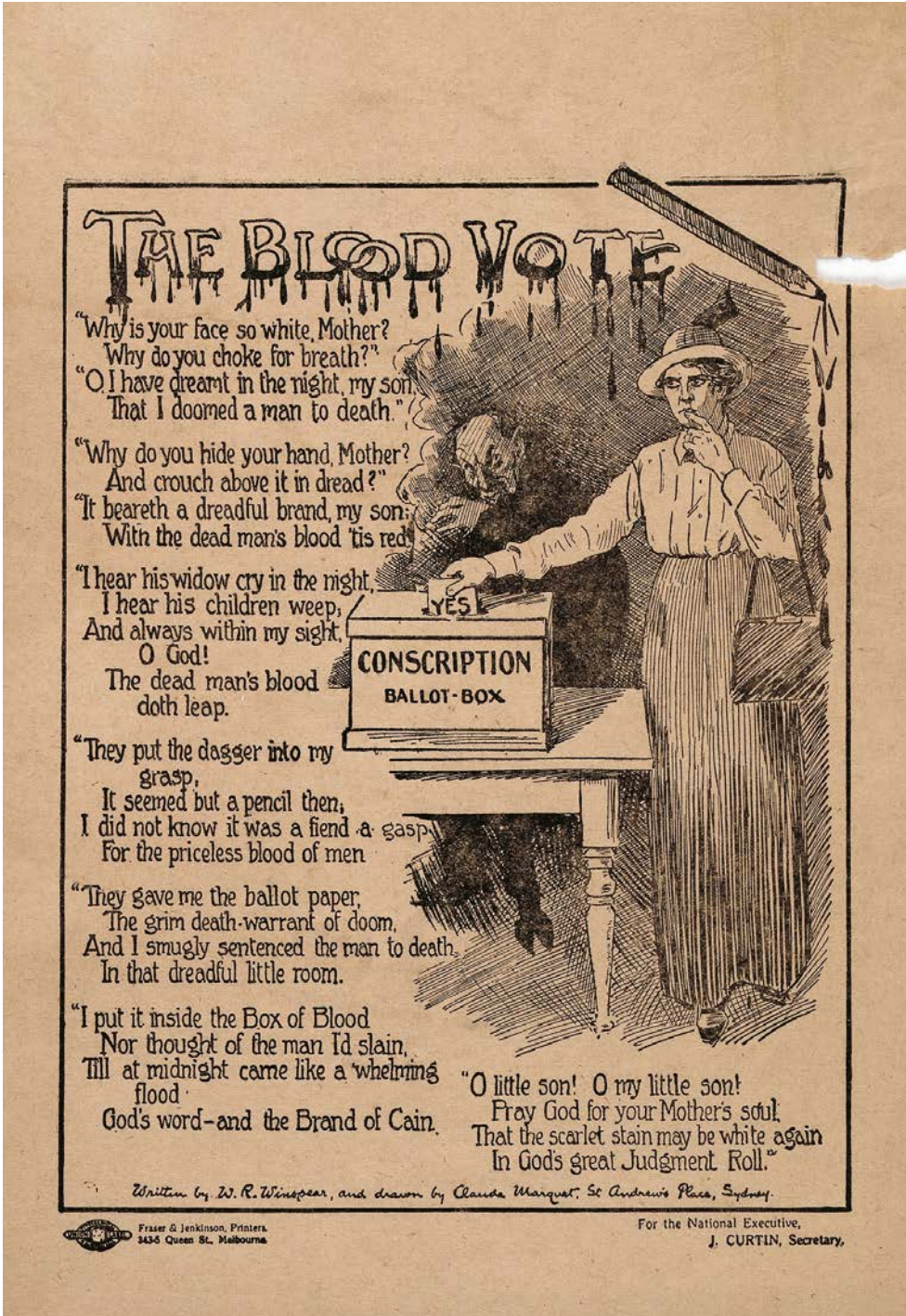
Source: "To Win the War," c. 1917 (Australian War Memorial, RC00328, <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C964507>)

Summarise the key points of this poster. What arguments are given for voting No?

The British conscript

Vote "NO CONSCRIPTION."





Source: 'The Blood Vote,'
c. 1916-17 (Australian War
Memorial, RC00337, [https://
www.awm.gov.au/collection/
C964519](https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C964519))

Summarise the key points of this poster. What arguments are given for voting No?

The British conscription

"NO CONSCRIPTION"



Some of these handbills use convincing arguments to oppose conscription. Some of the arguments they use would not be acceptable today. Use the arguments you think were good to draft a speech to present at an anti-conscription meeting explaining why you think it is the Australian duty to vote against conscription. Make up a character who you think would be likely to vote no.

Visit the online **Against the Odds: Defeating Conscription in World War One** exhibition to find more information to strengthen your argument.



**Speech for Anti-Conscription march on 21 October 1916,
Melbourne, in front of Parliament House**



Anti-Conscription meeting 1916, Melbourne

Source: Marchers in procession, 21 October 1916 (John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library, JCPML00687/15/2, http://espace.library.curtin.edu.au/R/?func=dbin-jump-full&object_id=95433&local_base=era01jcpml)



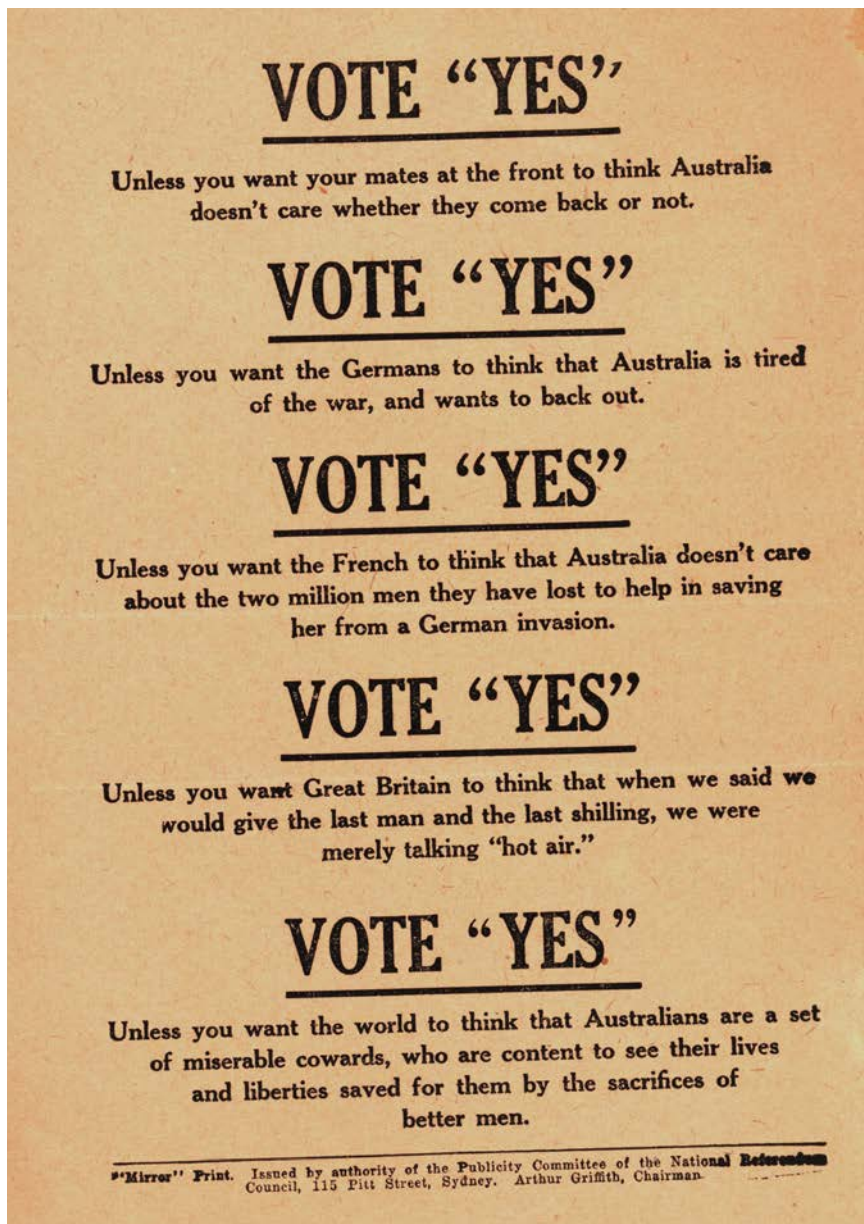
The British conscription...

NO CONSCRIPTION!

PART 2: SOURCES FOR THE 'YES' VOTE



Examine the following four pro-conscription images to uncover some of the reasons given for voting Yes.



Source: 'Vote Yes,' c. 1916
(Australian War Memorial, RCo0300, <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C964219>)

Summarise the key points of this poster. What arguments are given for voting Yes?

The British conscription

"NO CONSCRIPTION"



Can Australia Find the Men ?

The I.W.W., the GERMANS, and
the other ANTIS say "NO"

THE FACTS SAY "YES" !

1. The Commonwealth Statistician says that there are 45,000 Australian males yearly attaining the age of 21 years.
2. The Commonwealth Statistician says that the deaths from wounds and disease combined amount to about six per cent. of the total of Australians on active service.
3. The reinforcements required are at the rate of 16,500 a month (or two recruits a day from every State Electorate), making for the whole year 198,000 men. All except six in every hundred of these will return.

Thus another Year of War would mean for Australia a death loss of 11,880 men, while the gain would be 45,000 men.

Facts prove, therefore, that Australia can honour her promise to her soldiers without exhausting her man power.

ELECTORS, Remember that the quickest way to win the war, with least loss of men, and least dislocation of industry, is to give the Hun neither respite nor encouragement. Strike a blow for

Early Victory BY VOTING **YES.**

Authorised by Hector Lamond and F. J. Thomas, 113 Pitt St., Sydney

H. C. Martyn & Son, Printers, Sydney.

Source: 'Can Australia Find the Men?' 1916 (Australian War Memorial, RCO0303, <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C964223>)

Summarise the key points of this poster. What arguments are given for voting Yes?

The British conscription

Vote "NO CONSCRIPTION."



AUSTRALIA'S FIGHT!

There are many who say that this is not Australia's fight, that all that we are doing is to help the United Kingdom and the Allies, who are quite able to look after themselves.

THIS IS AUSTRALIA'S FIGHT, JUST AS MUCH AS IT IS ENGLAND'S FIGHT, OR FRANCE'S FIGHT, OR RUSSIA'S FIGHT, OR ITALY'S FIGHT.

When Germany declared war, she declared war against Australia as much as against any other country.

We are in this fight whether we like it or not, and all the theories in the world cannot alter that fact.

Was it Australia's fight when the "Scharnhorst" and the "Gneisenau" were cruising near German New Guinea ready to pounce on Australia as soon as war was declared?

Was it Australia's fight when the "Emden" prepared to send Australian transports to the bottom?

Isn't it Australia's fight when 100,000 Anzacs are facing German "Frightfulness" in France?

WE ARE IN THIS FIGHT NOW. LET US FIGHT WITH ALL OUR VIGOUR AND RESOURCES.

The only way to fight effectively is to fight to win. This is as true of war as it is of a boxing contest or a cricket match.

Surely it is better for Australia that she should fight away from her own territory, without all the horrors of warfare at her very doors, than that she should wait for the enemy to attack her in Australia.

AUSTRALIANS ARE FIGHTING IN FRANCE IN ORDER THAT THEY MAY NOT HAVE TO FIGHT IN AUSTRALIA.

VOTE "YES" ON OCTOBER 28th

"Mirror" Print. Issued by authority of the Publicity Committee of the National Referendum Council, 115 Pitt Street, Sydney. Arthur Griffith, Chairman.

Source: 'Australia's Fight!' 1916
(Australian War Memorial,
RC00301, <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C964221>)

Summarise the key points of this poster. What arguments are given for voting Yes?

The British conscription

Vote "NO CONSCRIPTION."



THE OTHER WOMAN'S BOY

The chief appeal of the Anti-crowd to the woman voter lies in that awful piece of sentimental clap-trap—"Would you vote to send another woman's son to his death?"

The first answer is quite simple—"If I don't vote 'YES' then I leave another woman's son who has gone away to fight in the defence of his country to run the risk of death through lack of reinforcements."

The second answer would run—"If I prevent our boys going to the front to fight for Australia then I am exposing their sisters to the same danger that innocent girls underwent in France and Belgium."

Every woman must understand that we cannot be defended in Australia by Australians alone. Our numbers are too few. It is only in France and Flanders, where we have the help of the Allies, that we can defend Australia.

The Mothers of England France, America and New Zealand are giving their boys to defend the mothers and girls of Australia. Surely the mothers and girls of Australia are brave enough and honest enough to send their boys to pay back the debt they owe to the women of other lands.

Another woman's boy is fighting for you. Surely you'll lend your boy to help the other boy who is fighting to save your boy's mother and your boy's sister.

Vote **YES**

W. S. MURPHY and P. AIREY, Isles Street, Brisbane.

OUTRIDGE PRINTING CO., LTD.

Source: 'Leaflets promoting a Yes vote in the Referendum over Conscription during First World War,' c. 1916-17 (State Library of Victoria, H82.274/4, <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/151504>)

Summarise the key points of this poster. What arguments are given for voting Yes?

The British conscription

Vote "NO CONSCRIPTION"



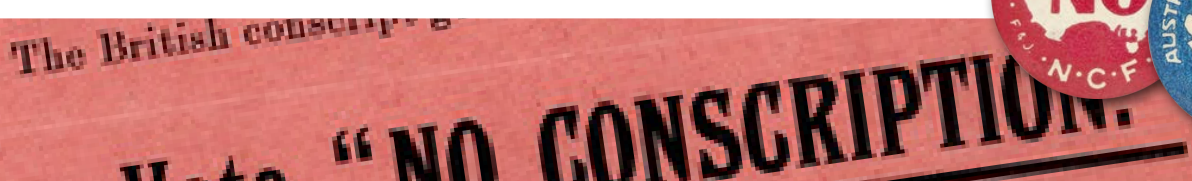
Use the arguments you have summarised to compose a letter to the editor of *The Argus* about why you think it is the Australian duty to vote for conscription. Make up a character who you think would be likely to vote Yes.

Visit the online **Against the Odds: Defeating Conscription in World War One** exhibition to find more information to strengthen your argument.



Dear Sir,

Yours sincerely,



IMPROVISATION ACTIVITY

1. Divide the class into groups A and B.
2. Group A students find and print a Vote No handbill from the referendum.
3. Group B students find and print a Vote Yes handbill from the referendum.
4. Students are given 30 minutes to familiarise themselves with the arguments listed on their handbill. They can do additional research by visiting the **Against the Odds: Defeating Conscription in World War One** online exhibition.
5. Group A students begin walking across the classroom or playground towards the voting booth. Each Group A student is intercepted by a Group B student who gives them a handbill and tries to convince them to vote Yes. They have 2 minutes to make their case. Swap over.
6. If possible, film your improvisation!



The British conscription

“NO CONSCRIPTION.”



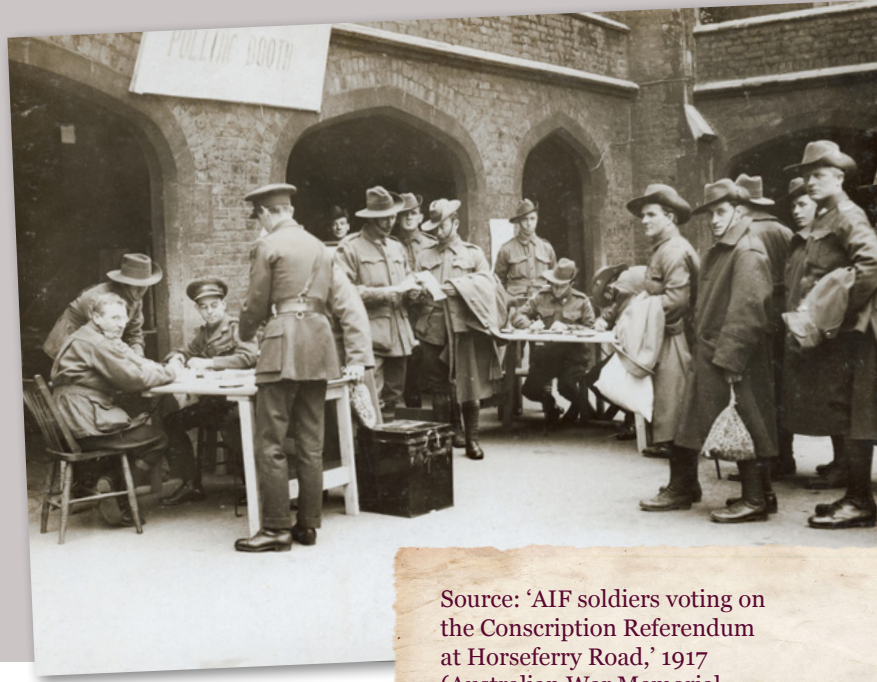
ACTIVITY 4

The Soldiers' Vow

Visit the **Against the Odds: Defeating Conscription in World War One** exhibition for additional information on this theme.

What reasons might soldiers have for voting for or against conscription?

Work with a partner for this activity. Each partner should spend 5 minutes filling in either the Yes or No bubble. When you've finished, present your ideas to your partner and see if they can contribute other ideas. Swap over. Share your thoughts with the class.



Source: 'AIF soldiers voting on the Conscription Referendum at Horseferry Road,' 1917 (Australian War Memorial, H16653, <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C382664>)



YES

NO

Source: 'Portrait of a World War One Soldier,' c. 1914-18 (State Library of Victoria, H82.288/32, <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/46373>)



SOLDIERS AGAINST CONSCRIPTION

FIGHT AS FREE MEN

Source: Handbill from
Trades Union Congress, 1915
(State Library of Victoria,
[http://handle.slv.vic.gov.
au/10381/166088](http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/166088))

Despite assumptions that returned and active duty soldiers would want others to share the load, many soldiers became strong and authentic voices in the campaigns against conscription. However, it is important to note that while these soldiers were anti-conscription, they were not necessarily anti-war.

*Everyman, as far as we are
concerned should be free.
If he can see his way to
volunteer, we honour him.*

(Returned Soldiers' No Conscription
League, 1917)

RETURNED SOLDIERS' NO CONSCRIPTION LEAGUE

The Returned Soldiers' No Conscription League was formed to provide a collective voice for servicemen who did not believe in conscription. They had all voluntarily enlisted in the armed forces during World War One but felt that all men should be given the choice. Their key objection to enforced military service was that they viewed it as a type of slavery and feared the creation of a military class.

The Victorian branch, based at Trades Hall, Melbourne, released a manifesto in 1917 prior to the second referendum to voice their objections to compulsory service and to support the No vote.

*As free Australians we fought on the battlefields
As free Australians we will still fight on the political field with the
same objective in view
To preserve our people's freedom and liberty
And maintain Australia's economic position.
We should be traitors to our comrades fighting in the trenches if we
failed in our duty to fight against conscription, knowing as we do that
when the last vote was taken a great majority of our comrades were
against it.*

(Source: Extract from the Returned Soldiers' No Conscription League manifesto)



SEDITION

SHIRKERS' NEW ALLY.

The shirker has joined forces with the seditionist and the convicted criminal. In Sydney, on November 13 last, T. W. McCrystal was sentenced to nine months imprisonment for sedition. He is a member of a committee of an organisation styling itself the "Returned Soldiers No-Conscription League of Australia."

BIRDS OF A FEATHER FLOCK TOGETHER.

This body is not part of, but is disowned by the Official League of Returned Soldiers. When McCrystal and his friends ask you to turn dog on their pals in the trenches, you know what manner of "men" they are.

ARE THEY DINKUMS?

They make it easy for you to do your duty. Give the men who are fighting for you and yours the help which McCrystal and his friends would deny them and

VOTE YES.

Authorised by the Reinforcements Referendum Council. Claude McKay, Publicity Secretary,
308 Collins Street, Melbourne.

No. 4.

Anti-Conscriptionists were often accused of 'sedition' by pro-conscriptionists. This term was used to describe conduct or speech inciting people to rebel against the authority of the state or monarch. This pro-conscription handbill details the arrest of a member of the Returned Soldiers' No Conscription League of Australia.

Source: 'Sedition,' 1917 (Australian War Memorial, RCo0307, <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C964241>)

Returned soldiers were often used as speakers at anti-conscription meetings where they discussed the issue of conscription through their experiences as servicemen.

In both referendums, a slight majority of soldiers voted in favour of conscription.

Source: 'A large crowd of spectators in Collins Street during the Conscription Referendum campaign listen to soldiers addressing the gathering from a dais,' December 1917 (Australian War Memorial, J00336, <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C286550>)



Statements by soldiers against conscription were also published in the press as a means of convincing readers to vote No.

I will be back in France in a month's time. It is so cold there that it makes me feel that I would just as soon be dead as put in another winter in those trenches. No one knows what it is like until he has been there. They want conscription, but I would not bring a dog of mine over here to go through what I have. I hope that they never get it in in Australia ... as long as the heads can make thousands of pounds out of the soldiers' blood the war will never end. Now is the time for the worker to uphold his rights. Don't think that I have gone mad and am standing on a box preaching.

'Soldiers' Opinion Strongly Against Conscription,' *Daily Herald* (Adelaide), 17 December 1917, page 6.

Captain Newlands said it was a matter of difficulty to understand why soldiers had voted against conscription. He had endeavoured to ascertain the reason for this course of action and found that those of the soldiers who had voted against conscription were of the opinion that as they themselves had volunteered for active service they did not wish to fight side by side with those who were conscripted.

'The Soldiers' Vote: Why Some Were Against Conscription,' *The Age*, 19 November 1917, page 8

WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Many of the handbills that you have studied focus on the role of women. Many women were also amongst the most active campaigners against conscription during the referendum. In the **Against the Odds: Defeating Conscription in World War One** documentary, Professor Joy Damousi suggested that these campaigns are the first time in Australian history that women as a group took a significant role in political debate. In the research activity on the next page, consider the debate over conscription from the point of view of either the returned soldiers or the women's movement.



RESEARCH TASK

Use the digital newspapers available through TROVE to complete the following table.

1. Access the TROVE website at <https://trove.nla.gov.au>
2. Type the most appropriate key words into the search bar
3. Access either 'Digitised Newspapers and More' or 'Pictures, Photos, Objects' to find relevant primary sources.

CITATION

Citing your sources is an essential part of historical research. It ensures that other researchers are able to check up on facts or learn more about the topic and allows the historian to revisit sources. To cite your sources, click on the i symbol (Details) at the top left of the Trove source. It will show you a range of citation options. Copy and paste the National Library of Australia (NLA) citation into your table.



SOURCE	SUMMARISE THE ITEM IN 50 WORDS OR PASTE IN YOUR IMAGE	CITATION
A pro-conscription handbill, cartoon or poster relating to the experiences of women or returned soldiers.		
An anti-conscription handbill, cartoon or poster relating to the experiences of women or returned soldiers.		



SOURCE	SUMMARISE THE ITEM IN 50 WORDS OR PASTE IN YOUR IMAGE	CITATION
<p>An example of a newspaper article about women or returned soldiers who were against conscription.</p>		
<p>An example of a newspaper article about women or returned soldiers who were in favour of conscription.</p>		
<p>An image of a crowd gathered at a conscription meeting or march.</p>		



ACTIVITY 5

Pro- and Anti-Conscription Songs

Music was used in all elements of conflict, from recruitment anthems and marching songs to keep up the spirits of the troops to comedic ditties criticising the enemy. During the lead-up to the conscription referendums, songs were often sung at the conclusion of political meetings to promote unity. The Australian national anthem was used by both sides of the debate.

After the usual votes of thanks three cheers were given for Anti-Conscription and a free Australia, and the meeting closed with the singing of the national anthem.

Anti-Conscription campaign,
Omeo Standard and Mining Gazette



Source: God Bless Our Splendid Men, 1915 (Green Brothers (photography)/ State Library of Victoria, H99.166/36, <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/16635>)

'God Bless Our Splendid Men,' sung to the tune of 'God Save The King' (Australia's national anthem), was a common choice for both anti-conscriptionists and pro-conscriptionists. 'God Bless Our Splendid Men' was officially sanctioned by the Education Department and schools were encouraged to have students sing it every morning after the national anthem. Several churches also followed suit and printed the lyrics into their hymn books.

*God bless our splendid men
Send them safe home again
God save our men
Keep them victorious
Patient and chivalrous
They are so dear to us
God save our men*

AUSTRALIA'S
BATTLE SONG.
The Accepted March



ANTI-CONSCRIPTION SONGS

The penalty for singing anti-conscription songs in public could be severe.

Two men were fined 40/- today for singing anti-conscription songs and declaring that they wouldn't enlist under any circumstances.

"ANTI-CONSCRIPTION SONGS." *Leader* (Orange, NSW : 1912 - 1922) 13 December 1916: 2. Web. 22 May 2018 <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article117819158>>.

I DIDN'T RAISE MY SON TO BE A SOLDIER

Ten million soldiers to the war have gone,
Who may never return again.
Ten million mothers' hearts must break
For the ones who died in vain.
Head bowed down in sorrow
In her lonely years,
I heard a mother murmur thru' her tears:

Chorus

*I didn't raise my boy to be a soldier,
I brought him up to be my pride and joy.
Who dares to place a musket on his shoulder,
To shoot some other mother's darling boy?
Let nations arbitrate their future troubles,
It's time to lay the sword and gun away.
There'd be no war today,
If mothers all would say,
'I didn't raise my boy to be a soldier.'*

What victory can cheer a mother's heart,
When she looks at her blighted home?
What victory can bring her back
All she cared to call her own?
Let each mother answer
In the years to be,
Remember that my boy belongs to me!
Chorus x2

Source: Alfred Bryan and
Al Piantadosi, 1915



PRO-CONSCRIPTION SONGS

Patriotic war songs were sung to promote the cause of conscription with the understanding that a Yes vote would provide reinforcements to men already serving overseas. On 20 October 1916, it was reported by *The Argus* newspaper that school children had broken up an anti-conscription meeting by singing 'Australia Will Be There.' The gathered crowd were being addressed by Miss Adela Pankhurst, a leading anti-conscriptionist, at the Recreation Hall in Box Hill.



Source: W.W. Francis, 'For Auld Lang Syne! Australia Will Be There,' c. 1916 (National Library of Australia, MUS N mba784.71994 F819, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-164855217/view?partID=nla.obj-164855225on>)

Source: World War One postcard (Private collection, courtesy of Rosalie Triolo)



AUSTRALIA WILL BE THERE

*There are lots and lots of arguments
 Going on today
 As to whether dear old England
 Should be brought into the fray
 But all right-thinking people
 Know well we had to fight
 For the Kaiser's funny business
 It wants some putting right.
 Rally 'round the banner of your country
 Take the field with brothers o'er the foam
 On land or sea
 Wherever you be
 Keep your eye on Germany
 But England, home and beauty
 Have no cause to fear
 Should auld acquaintance be forgot
 No, no, no, no, no!
 Australia will be there
 Australia will be there*

*You have heard about the Emden ship
 Cruising all around
 She was sinking British merchant men
 Where'er they could be found
 But one fine morning early
 The Sydney hove in sight
 She trained her guns upon them
 And the German said 'goodnight'
 Rally 'round the banner of your country
 Take the field with brothers o'er the foam
 On land or sea
 Wherever you be
 Keep your eye on Germany
 But England, home and beauty
 Have no cause to fear
 Should auld acquaintance be forgot
 No, no, no, no, no!
 Australia will be there
 Australia will be there*



MEDIA TASK

Work individually or in pairs to create a digital presentation on pro- or anti-conscription music and images. **All digital project should be accompanied by a 500 word statement explaining how your historical research on the conscription campaigns shaped your final media product.** You have a choice of the following tasks.

OPTION 1

‘God Bless Our Splendid Men’ was used by both the pro- and anti-conscriptionists. Match the music with historical images and text to create either a pro- or anti-conscription message. Make sure that you target a specific group of the Australian public and give compelling reasons why they should vote your way.

Use the recording of ‘God Bless our Splendid Men’ on YouTube to create a digital presentation. The music is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ltn56sI5WWI>
If you cannot access the link, find a recording of God Save The King and sing the lyrics (provided on page 30) to the same tune.

OPTION 2

Access the anti-war song ‘I Didn’t Raise My Son to Be a Soldier.’ Match the music with historical images and text to create an anti-conscription message. Make sure that you target a specific group of the Australian public and give compelling reasons why they should vote your way.

The song is available on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-C2qOAgMCl4>

OPTION 3

Access the song ‘Australia Will Be There’ that the school students sang to break up the Pankhurst anti-conscription meeting. Match the music with historical images and text to create a pro-conscription message. Make sure that you target a specific group of the Australian public and give compelling reasons as to why they should vote your way.

The song is available on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcaumJ6aNAo> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xDFzKZqCVg>

OPTION 4

Write and record your own song about the conscription debate, demonstrating your knowledge of the campaigns.



MEDIA TASK ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

	VERY HIGH (4)	HIGH (3)	MEDIUM (2)	LOW (1)	NOT SHOWN (0)
Understanding of the causes and effects of the World War I conscription campaigns	Positions the conscription campaigns within the greater context of the Australian home front during World War I.	Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the groups involved in the conscription campaigns, their key motivations and the eventual outcomes of each Referendum.	Summarises the key people, movements and ideologies relating to the conscription campaigns and the outcomes of each Referendum.	Summarises the motivations and outcomes of the conscription campaigns.	
Analyses the different perspectives of the people involved in either the pro or anti conscription debates	Critically evaluates the perspectives and persuasive techniques used by both sides of the conscription campaign.	Demonstrates an understanding of the historical events and forces that led people to form their different views on conscription.	Demonstrates an understanding of the different perspectives held by people and groups who were on the same side of the conscription debate.	Demonstrates a basic understanding of both sides of the conscription debate and key arguments used by each.	
Makes effective use of historical sources (music, images, phrases or newspapers)	Shows evidence of personal analysis of primary sources to enrich their historical understanding.	Incorporates primary source material beyond the materials available in the kit, as a result of additional research.	Incorporation of historical sources shows an understanding of how they were used in their original context.	Incorporates some primary sources (in addition to the songs listed in the question) in their media presentation.	
Selection and effective use of digital tools (this can include use of recording tools for original compositions)	Presentation is engaging and shows high level technological skills. The final product shows a clear progression in technological skills.	Demonstrates a clear rationale for selecting the most effective digital presentation method, produces an engaging presentation.	Selects digital tools that showcase their research in a clear and effective manner.	Uses a basic digital tool such as PowerPoint to present their project.	

**AUSTRALIA'S
BATTLE SONG.**
The Accepted March



	VERY HIGH (4)	HIGH (3)	MEDIUM (2)	LOW (1)	NOT SHOWN (0)
Originality and creativity of approach	Shows consistent originality and creativity across historical analysis, design, presentation and ideas.	Shows creativity and originality in ways that make the historical content more engaging and accessible for others.	Introduces some original elements of historical analysis, design and presentation of information and ideas.	Clear attempts at devising an original approach to the task.	

COMMENTS	FINAL MARK
	/20



ACTIVITY 6

Summary Task

Read the following sections in the Culture Victoria online exhibition and the relevant sections of this education resource. Use the information to fill out the chart showing why the following sections of the Australian community might have had grounds to vote either for or against conscription in both the 1916 and 1917 referendums. If there is no reason why they would have voted in a certain way, leave the square blank.



GROUP	YES (WHY?)	NO (WHY?)
Labour Activists Read: 'Labour Activists of Brunswick and Coburg'		
Unionists Read 'The Trades Unions' Anti-Conscription Campaign'		
Women Read 'The Women's Movement During the War' and 'Bella Lavender – Brunswick Campaigner'		



GROUP	YES (WHY?)	NO (WHY?)
<p>Religious Groups Read 'Religious Perspectives on Conscription' and 'The Catholic Church and Conscription'</p>		
<p>Soldiers Read 'The Soldiers' Votes'</p>		

