



Australian Government
Department of Education



CIVICS AND
CITIZENSHIP
EDUCATION

Discovering Democracy unit:
Middle Secondary

Getting things done



Education
Services
Australia

Getting things done

Teacher notes

The Franklin Dam dispute of the late 1970s and early 1980s provides an excellent case study of 'getting things done' politically, both through established institutional frameworks and through direct citizen action.

Should the people of a small state in a federation have the right to make decisions about their economy and environment or should people beyond the state have that power in some circumstances? Where does sovereignty lie in an increasingly globalised world?

About the unit

- Processes of influencing the views and actions of others
- The evolution of a community political debate
- Party political policies and practices
- The role of the media
- Resolution of disputes between State and Federal governments

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- identify and evaluate strategies citizens' groups use to achieve political change
- identify the role of the media in a political dispute
- justify opinions about how a political dispute was resolved
- explain the forces that affect party policy or government action in relation to a particular issue.

Curriculum links

Year 10 History: The globalising world

AC9HH10K16	Changing social, political, economic, cultural, environmental and technological conditions, and the causes of a major global influence in Australia
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Year 10 Civics and Citizenship: Government and democracy

ACHCS084	The Australian Government's role and responsibilities at a regional and global level
AC9HC9K02	The legislative processes through which federal government policy is shaped, developed and implemented

Year 10 Civics and Citizenship: Law and citizens

AC9HC10K04	How Australia's international legal obligations shape Australian law and government policies, including those relating to First Nations Australians, and the issues related to the application of these obligations
AC9HC10K03	The role of the parliament and the High Court of Australia in protecting rights under the Constitution, common law, and through federal and state statute law

Year 9 and 10 Civics and Citizenship: Skills

AC9HC10S01	Develop and modify questions to investigate Australia's political and legal systems, and contemporary civic issues
AC9HC10S04	Evaluate the methods or strategies and outcomes related to making decisions about civic participation
AC9HC10S03	Analyse information, data and ideas about political, legal or civic issues to identify and evaluate differences in perspectives and interpretations
AC9HC10S05	Create descriptions, explanations and arguments using civics and citizenship knowledge, concepts and terms that incorporate evidence

Background notes

This unit examines the nature of Australia's political system by analysing the Tasmanian Franklin Dam dispute of the late 1970s and the early 1980s. This dispute is used to highlight the complex nature of government decision making. The key groups in this dispute are identified and their methods analysed to show how citizens can directly influence political processes in 'getting things done'.

The key political issue at the heart of the Franklin Dam dispute centred on the balance of power between the Commonwealth and state governments as prescribed in the Constitution. Was the Hawke Labor Government's decision to intervene in Tasmania's domestic affairs constitutional? The issue at the centre of the dispute was achieving balance between economic development and environmental conservation.

This unit focuses on efforts by various contesting groups to shape or seize the political agenda. It examines the role of pressure groups, political parties, significant individuals, the media and the judiciary in determining political outcomes. It illustrates political power being exercised in a contest that was played out in political party rooms, in the public arena of the media, on the ground in Tasmania and in the High Court.

Focus questions

Focusing on the debate about the will of Tasmanians as opposed to the will of people on the mainland and internationally should encourage students to understand that there are legitimate arguments on each side of the debate while being encouraged to clarify their own political values.

A topic such as citizen action provides great scope for independent investigation as well as for contact with local action groups and first-hand encounters with their concerns and methods.

It is sometimes hard for students to fully engage with the concept of the balance of power and how it might be relevant to their own lives. In more recent times, management of the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia has led to more united interactions between the Australian and state and territory governments, but also to tensions, with different states/territories making decisions for their own contexts.

A preliminary discussion of the topic of the Franklin Dam dispute might prepare students to be immersed in what is now a significant and historic controversy in Tasmania.

The other factor that may be worth exploring is the extent to which the media landscape has changed since the Franklin Dam case in the early 1980s.

There is a lot of content in this resource and the assessment tasks are quite demanding – you may not use all of them with students.

Focus area 1: How can Australian citizens influence government action?

Content	Activities/Assessment tasks
Introduction	Pair activity: ways in which we try to influence others
The south-west: portrait of a region	Comprehension and review: features of the Franklin River area
The south-west: not just an area of beauty	Perspectives: (a) officer of the Hydro-Electric Commission and (b) conservationist
Strategies of citizen action groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of video: aims, types of action proposed, and likely success or failure • Citizen action: sources discussing the Franklin Dam dispute • Video and source analysis: types of direct citizen action, purposes and relevance • Discussion: what would you have done? • Compare this environmental campaign with a recent environmental campaign.

Focus area 2: How do governments and political parties respond to emerging issues?

Content	Activities/Assessment tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions: political parties and public policy • Definition and comparison: party policy, public policy, political values and power • Description: the political values of the Labor and Liberal parties • Comparison of Labor and Liberal: states' rights and central power 	Comprehension
Making public policy: parliament, interest groups, the public service, and the media	Research: objectives and methods of interest groups
Economic development and the environment	Comprehension: hydro-electricity and unemployment
Timeline: development of the Franklin Dam issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary via table completion: pressure, actions, outcomes • Simulation: the Lowe Government Cabinet • Analysis: congruence of party beliefs and government action • Discussion: factors involved and evolving government responses • Discussion and summary: Tasmanian reactions and responses
National versus Tasmanian opinion	Analysis: opinion poll data, newspaper comment and party conference decisions
Assessment task	Create a speech for party colleagues arguing a specific perspective on the future of the dam.

Focus area 3: How can Australian citizens influence the media and how does the media influence governments and political parties?

Content	Activities/Assessment tasks
Interest groups, political parties and the media	Discussion and reporting: public issues that have recently attracted media attention
Tasmanian Wilderness Society and the media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehension: use made of the media • Discussion: media slants and perspectives
The effectiveness of the Wilderness Society's campaign	Analysis: the views of the Tasmanian premier and population and those in other states
Assessment task	In small groups, design a media campaign that addresses an issue that you collectively feel strongly about. It may be a local issue or one that is broader in scope.

Focus area 4: How are disputes between state and federal governments resolved?

Content	Activities/Assessment tasks
Two Tasmanian views: pro-states' rights	Simulation of television interviews: the views of Tasmanians, in differing contexts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasmania and the Commonwealth lock horns • Australia: a federation of states 	Summary and discussion: division of government powers
The role of the High Court in Constitutional disputes between state and federal governments	Comprehension and analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The High Court and the Franklin Dam case <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arguments against the High Court decision • Arguments in favour of the court decision • Comprehension: table completion, sources of arguments 	Summary and discussion: arguments in favour of the High Court decision

The student resource includes links to two quizzes about the Constitution. While they may not reflect the specific content of the module, they provide a quick way for students to check what they understand. The links are:

- Quiz: [The Constitution](#) (published by the Australia Electoral Commission)
- [Australian Constitution](#) (published by the Parliamentary Education Office)

Assessment task

Assessment task

Two options

Option 1

Write a report on how well democracy in Australia operated to resolve the dispute over the damming of the Franklin River.

Option 2

Describe and analyse a recent campaign with significant citizen involvement that may or may not have been successful in achieving a political/legislative outcome.

Other links

The '[Getting things done](#)' slideshow will provide a brief summary of some of the content of this unit. Use it to provide an overview to the whole class or with EAL/D students.

There is a good 30-minute video titled '[Tasmanian dam case](#)'.

[High Court Case Study: Nationhood: The Constitution saves the Franklin River](#)

Links to other units

- Discovering democracy 'Law' (lower-middle secondary) examines the basic principles underlying Australia's legal system, in particular the Constitution and the role of the High Court.
- Discovering democracy 'Men and women in political life' (lower secondary) examines contrasting forms of civic participation and different methods used by citizens and political institutions to influence government decisions.

Getting things done

Focus question 1: How can Australian citizens influence government action?



'Dr Brown and Green Old Time Waltz' 1983 by Harold Thornton. Collection: National Portrait Gallery, Australia. © Estate of Harold Thornton

Introduction

This unit examines how ordinary Australians can make a difference in a democracy.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, a dramatic political confrontation took place over whether a dam should be built on the Franklin River in Tasmania.

A group of people who wanted to save the proposed dam area as wilderness skilfully managed a campaign that resulted in a state premier being toppled, contributed to the Tasmanian and Federal Governments losing and gaining power, and brought the issue to the attention of the whole of Australia, the United Nations and countries around the world. International treaties were entered into and made into law.

Later the High Court of Australia was called on to decide if these laws were constitutional and if the Commonwealth could override a state on heritage law. It was one of the largest and most effective citizens' action movements Australia has ever seen.

Tasmanian governments on opposite sides, Labor and Liberal, wanted the dam built as did significant numbers of Tasmanians. So why was it not built?



Activity 1: How can people influence others?

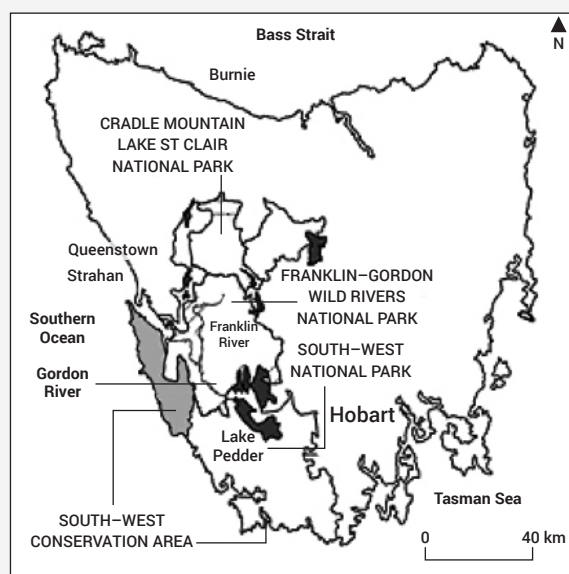
- In pairs, think of the tactics you use to get your family, parents or friends to do what you want them to do. (Clue: your answers might range from throwing a tantrum to presenting cast-iron logical arguments for doing things your way.)
- Collect as many ways of influencing people's actions as you can from other pairs of class members, and then grade them for effectiveness based on your own life experience.

There are occasions when ordinary people come to feel that direct involvement to influence government is necessary. They may be concerned about actions being taken by local, state or federal governments, or by private industries or organisations. They may feel that their needs and wishes are being ignored or not taken seriously. For example, your local government may decide to open a new garbage dump or close the local library. At any particular time, people all over Australia are taking action to encourage governments to do particular things.

The south-west of Tasmania: portrait of a region

- The region is remote in every sense of the word.
- The area lies between 42 degrees south and 44 degrees south – it is therefore often very cold.
- It is extremely wet, with approximately 2500 mm of rain per annum across the region.
- The area has a landscape for which the term 'rugged' is an understatement. During the last ice age the landscape was carved up into deep gorges with rapidly flowing rivers, including the Gordon and the Franklin, with many rapids and waterfalls.
- South-west Tasmania has areas of tranquil beauty such as the highland lakes, of which Lake Pedder (now flooded) was the most famous.
- The region is home to many rare and endangered plants and animals such as the Antarctic beech and the orange-bellied parrot.
- The Kutikina Cave contains important evidence of Aboriginal occupation as early as 15,000 years ago.

Tasmanian World Heritage Area



The south-west: not just an area of beauty

Despite its remoteness and difficulty of access, the region has attracted – and continues to attract – the attention of people keen to exploit its resources and physical beauty.

The first Europeans in the area were timber-cutters and miners. Tin, gold, silver, lead and zinc mines all operated at various times. Today Queenstown's devastated landscape is a grim testimony to how not to treat a fragile environment.



Credit: slovegrove/iStock.com

The most significant schemes to tap the resources of the region centred on the generation of hydro-electric power. By the 1960s, the free-flowing rivers of the Gordon and the Franklin were the only Tasmanian rivers that had not already been dammed for the generation of hydro-electric power. By 1970, the Tasmanian Hydro-Electric Commission had built forty dams across Tasmania, and was the state's largest employer.

All Tasmanian governments, whether Labor or Liberal, accepted unquestioningly the need for continued expansion of Tasmania's hydro-electric capacity. The provision of cheap electricity was seen as a way of attracting industrial development, creating jobs and winning elections.

An early dispute between conservationists and the Tasmanian government occurred over the proposal to flood Lake Pedder for the production of hydro-electricity. Conservationists lost this battle but learnt many lessons about how to rouse public opinion about an issue.

In 1979, the Tasmanian Hydro-Electric Commission proposed the construction of a new dam in the south-west, to be built on the Gordon River below its junction with the Franklin.

Perhaps because Lake Pedder had been flooded so recently, there was an immediate reaction on the part of conservationists to the proposal. This reaction spread rapidly to other parts of Australia, and drew international attention.

Today, although the number of Hydro-Electric Commission jobs has declined, carefully managed tourism in the south-west has created other skilled and unskilled jobs.

You will find a summary of what happened in the short video '[Franklin Dam and the Greens](#)'.

c. List the main features of the Franklin area that made it important to:

- the Hydro-Electric Commission
- conservationists.



Activity 2: Development and environment

- a. Using Sources 1, 2 and 3 below as a guide and drawing on the information you have already gained, write three sentences: one describing the Franklin River as an officer of the Hydro-Electric Commission might see it, one as a conservationist might see it, and one as a Tasmanian resident might see it. In each sentence, reference what the person might regard as the value of the area from their point of view.

Points of view

SOURCE 1

We're providing for ten years ahead and surely it's not the right thing to do to condemn people to having to live in a depressed manner ... through failing to build what looks to be necessary [for the future power needs of the state].

From an interview with Russ Ashton, Tasmanian Hydro-Electric Commissioner (1977–87) for a news report on ABC TV 1982.

SOURCE 2

It's a world matter. This is a World Heritage area. It is one of the most beautiful places left on the planet and it's here in our backyard. And if we, in this relatively wealthy, well-off place, can't save a little like that for future generations, we can't ask anybody else to be doing it.

From an interview with Bob Brown, Tasmanian Wilderness Society, *Serving the Franklin* video 1996, The Australian Experience series, Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

SOURCE 3

Explore the [point of view](#) of the Tasmanian government at the time via the letter that Premier Robin Gray wrote in 1982 to a federal Member of Parliament.



Activity 3: Citizen action

- a. Watch the video [Bob Brown: In defence of the 'leech-ridden' ditch](#). Make a list of all the different people involved in the Franklin Dam controversy – on both sides.
- b. Divide into groups to examine these further sources, 4 to 18, below. Make a list of all the citizen actions identified throughout the sources.

A table such as the following may be useful for each group, as well as for completion when reporting back. Against each source, list the individuals or groups involved (such as anti-dam group; pro-dam group; political party; government) in the second column, their aims in the third column, the actions they undertook in the fourth column, and their likely success in the last column.

Source	Individuals or groups involved	Aim	Type of action	Likely success/failure
Source 4				
Source 5				
Source 6				
Source 7				
Continue for each source				

Citizen action

SOURCE 4

In defence of the '[leech-ridden ditch](#)' – Bob Brown discusses the events that occurred during the Franklin River campaign as depicted in his portrait by Harold 'The Kangaroo' Thornton.

SOURCE 5

Goanna (Gordon Franklin Wilderness Ensemble) – '[Let the Franklin flow](#)' is a 3-minute song.

SOURCE 6

Anti-dam protesters are still being arrested in large numbers in the Franklin dam site in south-west Tasmania. A spokesperson for the Tasmanian Wilderness Society ... said 80 protesters were arrested for trespassing on Hydro-Electric Commission property in the past five days.

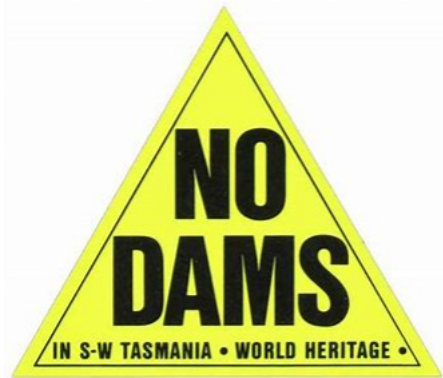
Australian, 9/2/1983, p 3 © The Australian.

SOURCE 7

The Federal Government has received 18,000 letters protesting at the State [Tasmania] Government's commitment to the Gordon-below-Franklin power scheme.

Hobart Mercury, 18/12/1982, p 2. Davies Brothers/The Mercury.

SOURCE 8



Source: [Wilderness Society Australia](#)

SOURCE 9

The director of the Tasmanian Wilderness Society, Dr Bob Brown, announced the [Tasmanian Wilderness Society's] new strategy at a news conference ... Dr Brown issued campaign pamphlets which carried the slogan 'Put the Liberals last'. He said the general theme of the campaign would be 'Save the Franklin: this time vote for Australia's heritage'.

Trounce, David 1983, 'Dam opponents throw in their lot with Labor', p 1 © *The Australian*.

SOURCE 10



Protesters demonstrating on the Franklin River

News Ltd/Newspix

SOURCE 11

The effort was set for ... two weeks before polling day. The strategy was simple. Every house in Tasmania would be visited by teams of volunteers. The message was: 'Hello. I am from the Wilderness Society. I hope you vote 'no dams' in the referendum. Here is a brochure outlining the reasons.' There were 125,000 homes to be reached.

Thompson, Peter 1984, *Bob Brown of the Franklin River*, George Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, p 142.
<http://www.allen-unwin.com.au>

SOURCE 12

Plans for the blockade were well advanced. A communications centre had been designed and built in Hobart. It would be transported to the Gordon River ... Non-violent action workshops were being conducted in all parts of Australia. They were an intense two-day familiarisation course in the techniques of peaceful resistance.

Thompson, 1984, p 60. <http://www.allen-unwin.com.au>

SOURCE 13

... the TWS [Tasmanian Wilderness Society] held a meeting in Melbourne in December 1982 to form an Australia-wide coalition of conservation groups and to co-ordinate strategy for the national election ...

Galligan, B, 'The dams case: A political analysis', in Sornarajah, M (ed) 1983, *The South-West Dam Dispute: The Legal and Political Issues*, Law School, University of Tasmania, p 111.

SOURCE 14

By 1982 when the heavy machines rolled south down the Franklin Valley and were barged up the Gordon to Warners Landing, the nation knew what was at stake. Thanks again to modern communications. Thanks to a warm-hearted group of wilderness workers: to the thousand arrested and jailed, to the donors, the letter-writers, the stall-holders, shop volunteers and voters ... Through television, books and newspapers the river had found a transformed Australian audience ... At the Franklin blockage we were bolstered to hear of spontaneous support on the streets of Dublin, London and Paris. Messages poured in from people in dozens of countries.

Bob Brown 1987, 'Greening the conservation movement', in Hutton, D (ed), *Green Politics in Australia*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde. Reprinted with permission of HarperCollins Publishers as publisher..

SOURCE 15

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre's campaign adopted a different focus from that of the Tasmanian Wilderness Society. Aboriginal people travelled to the area of the Kutikina Cave. They laid out the Aboriginal flag and claimed that the cave should not be flooded because it was needed to get the Dreaming back. *The Age* (23/12/1998) reported a spokesperson as saying, 'Kutikina is the greatest physical connection with our past of any site in the state'.

SOURCE 16

'The photo that saved the Franklin River' is an [article](#) about Peter Dombrovskis's famous 'Morning Mist, Rock Island Bend, Franklin River' photo, which was published with the caption: 'Could you vote for a party that will destroy this?'

SOURCE 17

'Premier Gray and supporters of the Franklin Dam scheme, 1982' (Scootle Guest log in required). This black-and-white photograph shows a group of supporters of the Tasmanian Government's decision to dam the Franklin River. The then premier of Tasmania, Robin Gray, is pictured at the left of the photograph in front of a large banner. Two placards held by members of the group are clearly visible in the background. One says 'GRAY HAS TAKEN TASMANIA OUT OF LOWE GEAR AND PUT IT INTO OVERDRIVE'. Another says 'It's Our State Mate'. An Australian flag is held by two other members of the group.

SOURCE 18

'Dark water' is a clip from a recently made feature-length documentary about the seven-year campaign to save Tasmania's World Heritage-listed Franklin River.

**Activity 4: Citizen action – Franklin and beyond**

Still in groups, discuss the following.

- a. Which actions described in sources 4–18 were so particular to the Franklin issue that they might not be generally relevant to other community action groups?
- b. Which of the actions might well apply to other examples of direct citizen action – for example, which ones might be employed by a neighbourhood action group as well as by a large community organisation such as the Wilderness Society?
- c. Which actions might be employed if citizens wanted to influence government action by expressing their opinions, but did not want to participate in direct action?

**Activity 5: Your view**

- a. If you were living in Tasmania at that time, which side would you have supported and why? What action would you have been prepared to take to influence government? What action would you not be prepared to take? Draw on the sources you have examined for actions and opinions about them. Contribute your view to a class discussion.
- b. This controversy took place several decades ago. Look at the table in Activity 3, which lists actions people took to raise awareness of the issue and to demonstrate opinions. How would people demonstrate their opinions and publicise an environmental issue now?
- c. Find an example in the media or on the internet of a recent environmental campaign that has successfully used a more contemporary strategy to those used with the Franklin River. Download the example and annotate it for similarities and differences. Changes in media modes and access to the internet might be a good starting point for thinking about differences.

Getting things done

Focus question 2: How do governments and political parties respond to emerging issues?

Introduction

What would you see as most important if you were part of a government – keeping people in jobs, or protecting the environment or gaining and keeping votes so you can stay in government? Some projects achieve all three aims. But sometimes, governments have to make hard choices. Explore the ways in which governments and policy changed as the Franklin Dam proposal was impacted by opinion polls, protesters, the media, by World Heritage listing, by changes of government in both Tasmania and the Australian government.



Activity 1: Definitions

Political power and values

Political power is having the ability to create change or prevent change in the way society is organised or governed.

Political values come from beliefs held by different groups of people about how power, wealth and other resources of the nation should be shared and used and about the sort of society they want to live in.

Political parties

A political party is a group of people with some common views about society and what governments should do, and who are organised to 'win' government through the electoral process.

Party policy and public policy

Party policy is what political parties intend to do, while public policy is what governments actually choose to do or not do to solve public problems.

The party policies promised during an election campaign are not always delivered when a party is elected to government. This may be because the party understands the situation differently when it is in government, because conditions have changed. Or because compromises might need to be made to intended policy to ensure that legislation passes successfully through Parliament. Public policy is the process by which governments translate their political vision into programs and actions to deliver outcomes – which are the changes you want in your society.

a. Explain:

- the difference between party policy and public policy
- why having power may cause party policy to change.

The Labor Party's fundamental beliefs

Labor wants greater equality in the distribution of income, wealth and opportunity through the provision of resources and services and other activities of the government. Labor believes strongly that private businesses produce injustices and inequalities and so need to be controlled for the benefit of workers and for the common good. Many party members are also trade union members. Federal Labor governments tend to favour federal government action that may override the states and territories.

The Liberal Party's fundamental beliefs

Liberals believe strongly in private business and individuals looking after themselves. They want more freedom, less government control, and encouragement of wealth making so that everyone can enjoy a good standard of living. Many Liberal Party members and supporters are drawn from the business sector. Federal Liberal governments tend to support the right of the states to control what happens within their borders.

b. Look at the homepage of at least two Australian political parties. What kind of values are being promoted by each organisation? (Consider the words, images and content that are foregrounded.) Take a screenshot of each page and annotate it to show how they are seeking to express their values.

Here are some URLs:

[Australian Labor Party](#)

[Liberal Party](#)

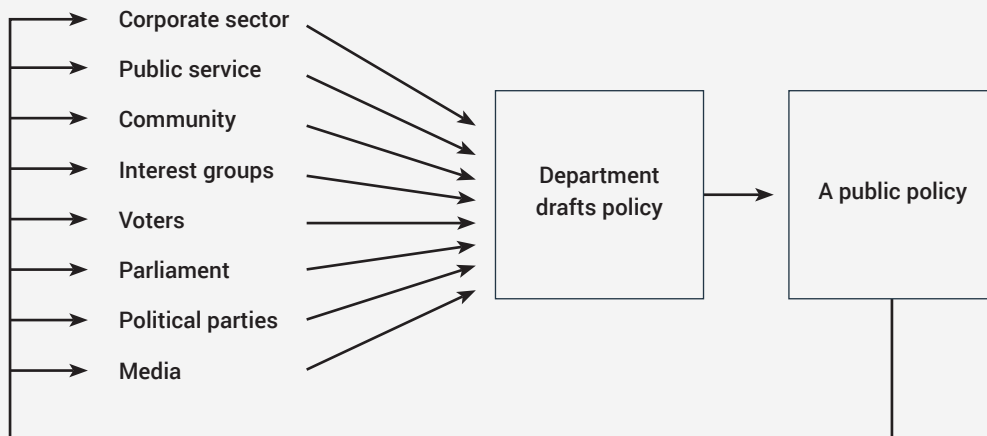
[The Nationals](#)

[Australian Greens](#)

- c. Which level of government do federal Labor and Liberal parties tend to favour having most power? Do you think state Labor and Liberal governments would think the same way as their parties in the federal sphere?

Decisions, decisions, decisions: public policy making

Parliament, interest groups, the public service and the media influence public policy. The key elements of the policy-making process are illustrated below.



Parliament

Parliament is a law-making body composed of government and opposition members of parliament elected at regularly held elections. Parliament serves four broad functions: to form government; to discuss, amend and pass legislation including the supply of money to deliver government policies; to investigate the actions of government; and to represent the needs of the community.

Commonwealth Parliament represents people in two places: in the House of Representatives where the states with the most people have the most representatives, and in the Senate where each state, no matter how big or small, has 12 senators and each of the two territories has two senators.

Interest groups

Interest groups, like political parties, represent particular sets of interests and hold certain political values. The role of an interest group is to influence government decisions, not to form a government.

The Tasmanian Wilderness Society was an interest group that said that they valued a balance between economic growth and conservation of the environment:

Wilderness is a living link between ourselves and all that has ever happened on the planet. It is an avenue to our origins. It gives us an anchor on the reasons for creation and life, on all unwritten history ... Wilderness has values for mankind that no scientist can synthesise, no economist can price and no technological distraction can replace ...

Bob Brown 1980, Foreword to *A Time to Care* by Bell & Sanders, cited in Somarajah, M (ed) 1983), *The South-West Dam Dispute: The Legal and Political Issues*, Law School, University of Tasmania, p 5.

Pro-dam interest groups such as the Organisation for Tasmanian Development and people who supported the dam thought differently:

'If people want to progress they have to sacrifice something.'

***The Mercury* 18/12/1982. Davies Brothers/*The Mercury*.**

The public service

The public service is a part of government responsible for putting decisions into practice.

The public service is also involved in policy development. For example, the proposals of the Hydro-Electric Commission, which is a semi-independent part of government, were developed outside parliament. Similarly, projects like the Snowy Mountains River Scheme and the Sydney Tunnel both had their origins within government departments rather than parliaments.

The media

The media – meaning newspapers, radio, television and internet-based mass media channels – provide their own views on what current political problems are confronting government.

The media make their own decisions about what is newsworthy and what is not.

In turn, the way the media treat an issue may influence governments. (The media and its role in the Franklin dispute are examined in Focus question 3 'How can Australian citizens influence the media and how does the media influence governments and political parties?').



Activity 2: Influencing and making policy

Look at some recent Australian news sites and select eight headlines similar to these:

- 'National Farmers' Federation organises march on Canberra'
- 'Unions reject unfair dismissal legislation'
- 'Gun lobby musters support in rural electorates'
- 'Greens launch High Court appeal'.

In making a selection, look for words such as 'lobby group', 'union', 'protest', 'advocate'/'advocacy', 'protest', 'activist', 'GetUp', 'think tank', 'mining groups', 'environmentalists' and 'anti'. Your teacher may suggest some more from recent news events.

Download or clip the articles associated with the headings.

- a. List the names of the interest groups you find.
- b. Who are they trying to influence?
- c. What are they trying to achieve, and how?
- d. Which of the other groups listed in 'Decisions, decisions, decisions: public policy making' will be necessary or helpful in achieving the aims of each interest group?

Economic development and the environment

In the 1960s and 1970s, Tasmania had the highest rate of unemployment in Australia, despite rich water, mineral and forestry resources. The Hydro-Electric Commission (HEC) was the largest employer in Tasmania at the time of the Franklin Dam dispute.

To help solve these economic problems, successive Tasmanian Labor and Liberal governments had supported economic development plans based on a policy of hydro-industrialisation. That is, government attempted to attract economic development by offering cheap electricity to large industries.

For a Labor government, hydro-electricity projects produced jobs, 'blue-collar' jobs, jobs for the 'worker', most of whom were union members and Labor voters. These developments provided financial stability and job security to the people of the area, and financially benefited local regional Tasmanian communities. By supporting developments such as these, Labor seemed pro-development and pro-job creation.

For a Liberal government, hydro-electricity projects produced cheap electricity to encourage large companies to invest and develop in Tasmania. Large companies would attract small businesses to invest in the state, creating greater economic prosperity, higher standards of living and more jobs, making Tasmania a more attractive place for people to live.

However, the struggle over the damming of Lake Pedder in 1972 caused a change in state thinking, from a narrow concern about resource development to long-term concerns about the future of Tasmania's environment. For Tasmania, this was the first step towards a recognition of both economic and environmental issues when making decisions about development.



Activity 3: Parties and the Franklin

- a. What fundamental beliefs, held by Liberal and Labor parties, caused Tasmanian governments to support hydro-electricity projects in Tasmania? (See Activity 2 for help with this question.)
- b. How would dams and hydro-electricity help to solve the problem of unemployment?

Tasmanian state governments

The first government that had to deal with the dam was the Lowe Labor Government (1977–81). The Gray Liberal Government (1982–89) saw the conflict through to its resolution in 1983. Both the Lowe Labor Government and the Gray Liberal Government supported hydro-electricity generation.

Tasmanian State Labor government: timeline of events

March 1979	In an attempt to reduce public concerns about dams and the environment, Labor Premier Lowe announces a moratorium – a stop on future dam proposals.
Later in 1979	<p>Lowe establishes the independent Energy Advisory Council to advise Cabinet on alternative policy options.</p> <p>The Department of Environment is instructed to advise the Hydro-Electric Commission regarding guidelines for assessing the environmental impact of proposed projects.</p>
October 1979	<p>The Hydro-Electric Commission's Report on the Gordon River Power Development is tabled in parliament. In spite of the moves by the Labor Government to respond to public concerns about the future of the Tasmanian wilderness region, the Hydro-Electric Commission's proposal involved the flooding of the Franklin below Gordon River and with it some of Tasmania's unique wilderness.</p> <p>Two alternative proposals are released, both with the purpose of environmental protection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service proposal recommends establishing a national park in the same area as the Hydro-Electric Commission dam. • The Tasmanian Conservation Trust questions the entire Hydro-Electric Commission proposal. Close to 500 public submissions are received by government, most of which are opposed to the Hydro-Electric Commission proposal. <p>A Tasmanian Opinion Polls Survey shows 53% in favour of saving the Franklin; and 28% against.</p>
Months later ... July 1980	<p>After months of argument, the Labor Government – faced with growing levels of unemployment, counter-proposals, internal argument and increasing citizen opposition to the dam – reaches a compromise: an Upper Gordon dam that would be less destructive than the Lower Gordon option.</p> <p>This is the first time a Hydro-Electric Commission proposal has been rejected. But the compromise pleases neither the Hydro-Electric Commission nor the Tasmanian Wilderness Society.</p>

<p>December 1980</p>	<p>Lowe writes to the Prime Minister suggesting that the National Park be proposed for World Heritage listing with UNESCO. Lowe was by now privately opposed to any dam construction in the area.</p> <p>Tasmania's Upper House of Parliament rejects the Government's legislation, approving instead the Lower Gordon dam. The parliament is stalled. The Lower House has rejected one dam, the Upper House has rejected the other.</p>	
<p>July 1981</p>	<p>During this period Lowe is under increasing pressure from within the party and outside. He survives a challenge to his leadership from within the parliamentary party and is being pressured by powerful unions who are in favour of the dam.</p> <p>Despite the deadlocked parliament, the area of the Franklin, Lower Gordon and Olga rivers is declared the Wild Rivers National Park.</p>	
<p>September 1981</p>	<p>To break the deadlock in the Tasmanian Parliament, the government proposes a state referendum. The decision is made after long and heated argument and is publicly announced before the final decisions on the questions are made. Lowe announces the decision to the media. When he is asked whether there will be a 'No dams' option, he says 'Yes'.</p> <p>The State President of the Labor Party writes to parliamentary members, virtually instructing them to withdraw the 'No dams' option. Lowe is publicly humiliated in having to withdraw the 'No dams' option. More than a hundred conservationists storm the public gallery in the parliament.</p> <p>The decision is made to restrict the choice in the referendum to two dam sites. However, the Tasmanian Wilderness Society encourages voters to hand-write 'No dams' on the ballot papers. While writing on the ballot paper made their vote informal, it provided a way for citizens to register a significant 'protest' vote against either dam proposal.</p>	

November 1981



Reproduced with permission of Mr DA Lowe, Former Tasmanian Premier, Courtesy Clerk of the House of Assembly, Tasmania.

Petition by Tasmanian Parliamentary Labor Party requesting their leader and Premier, Doug Lowe, to resign

This time Lowe does not survive a challenge to his leadership.

Doug Lowe, looking pale and a decade older than his age, entered the House of Assembly. All eyes were riveted on him as he moved to take his place on the back bench. With a simple dignity he took a few steps – not to the back bench – but to the cross bench, the traditional place for independents. The man who had woken that morning as Premier was severing his connection with the Government. He was turning away from the party in which he had been State secretary at 21, a minister by 30 and deputy-premier and premier for six years. The government of Tasmania was in a shambles. The fate of the Franklin River had put it there.

Thompson, Peter 1984, *Bob Brown of the Franklin River*, George Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, p 139. <https://www.allenandunwin.com>

Premier Holgate takes Lowe's place.

12 December 1981

The referendum is held. The results of the referendum are unclear.

- The Hydro-Electric Commission's preferred Lower Gordon: 53%
- The Government's Upper Gordon compromise: 9%
- Tasmanian Wilderness Society 'No dams' protest: 38%

The large informal vote proves the extent of the opposition to having any dams in wilderness areas.

May 1982

At the state election of May 1982, the pro-Franklin Dam Liberal Party wins office. Many people see Labor's loss as a result of the lack of unity within the party and changes over the Franklin proposal.



Activity 4: The State Labor Government and the Franklin

- a. Using the Tasmanian State Labor government: timeline of events, complete the table. Some of the outcomes have been completed for you. You may not always be able to complete the first column. Sometimes the pressure will be coming from conservationists, sometimes from public opinion and sometimes from the party's usual supporters.

<i>Influencing factor or pressure</i>	<i>Tasmanian Labor government action</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
	March 1979 moratorium on future dams proposals	HEC proposal for dam
	1979 Appoint new government departments to advise on environment and provide balance for Hydro-Electric Commission	
	Hydro-Electric Commission (HEC) proposal	
	Decide on compromise dam	
	Plan referendum including 'No dams' option	
	Hold referendum without 'No dams' option	

- b. As a class, be the Lowe Government Cabinet (the group of senior ministers who make most of the decisions about how the government should act) and have the discussion you think they should have had. What would be said in favour of, and against, putting the 'No dams' option that Premier Lowe wanted on the referendum ballot papers? Your teacher may assign you 'for' and 'against' roles.

Tasmanian State Liberal Government: Timeline of events

<p>December 1982</p>	<p>At the request of Australia, the World Heritage Committee meets to decide whether the Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers National Park will be given World Heritage status by the United Nations.</p> <p>The Liberal Tasmanian Government sends its Attorney-General to Paris to try to stop the nomination. He is not given a hearing because Tasmania is not a nation.</p> <p>The Wild Rivers National Park is accepted as a World Heritage site by the sixty signatory nations with its Committee expressing serious concern at the likely effect of the dam.</p> <p>As Australia is a signatory to this United Nations agreement, the Commonwealth Government is obliged to protect the site.</p> <p>Bulldozers begin work on the site.</p> <p>The Tasmanian Premier, Robin Gray, elected to construct the dam, chooses to ignore the World Heritage listing of the dam area.</p>
<p>December 1982 – February 1983</p>	<p>The Tasmanian Wilderness Society begins a range of tactics to gain support across the nation and internationally. One tactic is to form a human blockade of the dam site.</p> <p>The Gray Government responds by passing legislation so that trespassers on HEC land can be arrested.</p> <p>Gray declares that the Franklin River is grossly over-rated and that Tasmania might secede [break away from the Commonwealth and form a separate country] if the Commonwealth Government were to interfere.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The environmental significance of the area has been greatly overstated – for 11 months of the year it is nothing but a brown ditch, leech-ridden, unattractive to the majority of people.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Robin Gray, on <i>Saving the Franklin</i> (video) 1996, The Australian Experience series, Australian Broadcasting Corporation.</p> <p>People from all over Australia come to participate in the blockade. In a three-month period more than 1200 people are arrested and either fined or imprisoned. The blockade and the arrests receive enormous media coverage.</p> <p>In response to a new federal Labor government's legislation to stop the dam, the Tasmanian Liberal Government lodges a challenge in the High Court, claiming the proposed legislation is unconstitutional and erodes State rights.</p>



Activity 5: The State Liberal Government and the Franklin

- a. Using the information in the Tasmanian State Liberal Government: Timeline of events, complete the table below. Some of the outcomes have been completed for you. You may not always be able to complete the first column. Sometimes the pressure will be coming from conservationists, sometimes from public opinion and sometimes from the party’s usual supporters.

<i>Influencing factor or pressure</i>	<i>Tasmanian Labor government action</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
	Work begins on dam despite World Heritage listing	
	Legislation passed to make protesting an arrestable offence	
	Challenges national legislation to stop the dam in the High Court	

Australian governments (Liberal and Labor): timeline of events

At federal level, both the Fraser Liberal Government and the Hawke Labor Government that followed it, did not support the Franklin Dam proposal. However, the Fraser and Hawke governments differed as to how the dam should be stopped.

November 1981	The Fraser Liberal Government enters the dispute by lodging an application to the United Nations for the Franklin River to be granted World Heritage status. This was at the suggestion of Premier Lowe.
December 1982	The United Nations grants World Heritage status and the Federal Government is obliged to exert pressure on the Tasmanian Government to abandon the dam proposal. But as a pro-states'-rights Liberal Government, Fraser is unwilling to trample on the right of Tasmania to determine its own future and is not prepared to legislate to stop the dam.

January 1983

Prime Minister Fraser, as a compromise, offers \$500 million compensation to the newly elected Tasmanian Liberal Government to stop the dam. The offer is rejected.

Fraser's position on the dam is not simply a matter of trying to have things both ways. He believes, as do many Liberal Party members, that federal governments should not interfere in the business of the states. The Constitution had set out what powers states had and what powers the Commonwealth had. This is what he said about this issue in 1983:

Is the Constitution that Australians have put together something which is important in protecting the rights and liberties of Australians right throughout this continent, or is it a document to be torn up by a government in Canberra that signs some foreign treaty?

The Mercury, 8/2/1983.

Davies Brothers, *The Mercury*.

**December 1982 –
February 1983**

Eight hundred conservationists blockade the Franklin trying to attract media attention and stop work on the dam. Thousands of citizens demonstrate on the mainland and federal Labor and Liberal politicians are lobbied in the lead-up to the 1983 federal election.

During the election campaign the Labor Party's first promise is to save the Franklin River.

Bob Hawke, the leader of the federal parliamentary Labor Party, had none of Fraser's concerns about states' rights. In a 1979 lecture he had said:

I believe ... that Australia would be better served by the elimination of the second tier of government – that is the States – which no longer serve their original purpose and act as a positive impediment to achieving good government ...

Hawke, RJ 1979, *The Resolution of Conflict*, Boyer Lectures, Australian Broadcasting Commission, pp 18–19.

The Tasmanian Wilderness Society and the Australian Conservation Foundation respond by actively campaigning to tip the Liberals out of power. They spend about \$500,000 on establishing offices in 13 Tasmanian and mainland marginal electorates – electorates that could easily be won by either the Labor Party or the Liberal Party. Nationally the campaign is supported by 20 conservation groups around the country and major public rallies are held in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

March 1983

The Fraser Liberal Government is defeated in the federal election.

Tasmania votes against the Labor Party with a strong swing to the Liberals. Labor had consciously sacrificed the votes in Tasmania, gambling accurately on making up for the loss by gains from votes on the mainland.

Australian Public Opinion Polls, when surveying voters after the election, finds that for 3% of voters the dam has been the most important issue. Some say that was sufficient for Labor to win the election, while others disagree.

Doug Anthony, leader of the Country Party, said:

There is no doubt that the dam was the issue that lost the government the election.

Thompson, Peter 1984, *Bob Brown of the Franklin River*, George Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, p 178. <https://www.allenandunwin.com>

What is important is the fact that Labor believed that it needed the support of the conservationists and the votes of mainlanders opposed to the dam, and therefore took a strong stand against the dam. That was the real success of the conservationists.

April 1983

The newly elected Hawke Labor Government introduces legislation to protect the World Heritage site. The Government begins collecting evidence for the case and sends two F111 fighter bombers to fly over Tasmania's south-west to gather photographic evidence. There is an uproar over this provocative move. It is seen as sending the national armed forces against one of the nation's states. Hawke orders the flights to stop.

May–July 1983

The Tasmanian Government challenged the Federal Government's law in the High Court, saying that the Australian Constitution did not give the Federal Government the power to make such a law. In its decision of 1 July 1983, the High Court upholds the federal Labor Government's World Heritage Properties Conservation Act, and halts the Franklin Dam project. The Tasmanian Government reluctantly concedes defeat and receives \$277 million in compensation.

The High Court votes 4 to 3 in favour of the Commonwealth.

The Franklin River, now safe, is removed from the political stage.

If the High Court case had been lost, the Tasmanian Wilderness Society was ready to start a campaign for a national referendum.



Activity 6: National Liberal and Labor governments

- a. Complete the table using the Australian governments (Liberal and Labor): timeline of events. Some of the outcomes have been completed for you. You may not always be able to complete the first column. Sometimes the pressure will be coming from conservationists, sometimes from public opinion and sometimes from the party's usual supporters.

<i>Influencing factor or pressure</i>	<i>Tasmanian Labor government action</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
	Liberal: World Heritage listing application to United Nations	
	Liberal: \$500 million offer to Tasmania in compensation for stopping work on dam	
	Liberal: Does not legislate to stop dam	
	Liberal: Does not promise to stop the dam in 1983 election campaign	Labor promises to stop the dam in 1983 election campaign
	Labor: Legislates to stop the dam	
	Labor: Fights challenge from Tasmania in High Court	



Activity 7: Governments' actions, party beliefs and people represented

- a. Do the actions of each government fit with the fundamental beliefs of their party? Do the actions support the people each party claims to represent? Explain your answer. (See 'Party policy and public policy' in Activity 1 for help with this question.)
- b. In groups of four discuss the following questions:
- How did each of the two Federal governments react to the 'new' issue of the environment?
 - Why did Federal Labor and Liberal governments both oppose the dam but react differently as the dispute progressed?
 - Which of the following would be the most important factors in a government deciding on a policy or course of action in relation to an issue such as whether to have a dam or not:
 - concern for economic progress (and therefore prosperity and jobs)
 - concern for the environment
 - winning or keeping votes (and therefore gaining or losing the power to govern)?
 - Are the first two concerns always opposed to each other? (Here you can think more broadly about other sources of conflict such as whether Australia should develop more coal mines, or how people feel about wind farms, use of river water, fracking or many current examples from the media.)
 - What should be the main motivating force behind government action?
- c. Tasmania voted against Labor in the federal elections of 1983 while the rest of Australia swung towards Labor. One of the reasons for this difference in voting was support for, or opposition to, the Labor Party's promise to stop the dam.

What voice did Tasmanians have once the issue was taken up by the political parties at the national level?

Think about their representation in the Australian Parliament. Look at the [Parliament of Australia](#) website. How many House of Representatives members currently represent Tasmanian electorates of the 151 Members of Parliament in the lower house? How many members of the Senate currently represent Tasmania? Is it likely that they would ever vote as a state-based block? Why or why not?

- d. Write two paragraphs: the first giving reasons for Tasmanian state governments supporting the dam and federal governments opposing the dam, the second giving your view about whether Tasmanians had a strong-enough voice in deciding their future.



Activity 8: Popular opinion and government action

What does the public think?*

Statement	Total (2000) %	Men (989) %	Women (1011) %	Liberal Voters (668) %	Labor Voters (910) %	Australian Democrat Voters (166) %
The Federal Government should try to stop the Tasmanian Government from flooding the Lower Gordon and Franklin Rivers to generate electricity.	49	47	50	45	53	64
The Federal Government should not try to stop the Tasmanian Government from flooding the Lower Gordon and Franklin Rivers to generate electricity.	37	41	33	41	34	25
Don't know	14	12	17	13	14	11

*Second of two polls

Age Poll, *Age*, 4/10/1982. Reproduced with permission of Irving Saulwick and Associates/*The Age*.

- a. On the basis of the *Age* poll, what advice would you give the three Federal parties listed in the table about whether to pass a law to stop the building of the dam? (Note that the Australian Democrats party was formally deregistered in 2016 for not having the required 500 members.)

Opinion article about the Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser

There is no doubting the seriousness of Mr Fraser's offer to stop the dam. He put \$500 million of our money on the line to neutralise the dam as a political issue.

The offer although rejected is of political value both in Tasmania and on the mainland.

It shows that Mr Fraser cares about the wilderness, that he is still the 'greenie' he became when he stopped the Fraser Island sand mining.

That's for mainland no-dammers.

In Tasmania he has shown that he will not rise over State's rights – a 'dangerous course indeed', he said in yesterday's statement.

The offer and the way it was made was a piece of pure Malcolm Fraser politics ... as Mr Fraser knows well enough politics is 90 per cent timing an presentation. There was little point in announcing the offer and the rejection in one sterile press release in Canberra ...

It was important that it [the announcement] be done in Tasmania. Despite the nation-wide outcry against the dam, the Liberal Party's analysis indicates that it is by no means certain that sufficient mainlanders will ... vote ... on the dam issue. They may be satisfied with writing 'No dams' on their ballot paper.

But Tasmanian seats are much more volatile ... The Government cannot afford to throw away any seats in an election which hinges on only 11 seats.

Barton, Russell 1983, 'Well-staged gesture to greenies', *Age*, 20 January.

- b. Why was the Fraser Government reluctant to intervene to stop the building of the dam? Think also about the Liberal Party's fundamental beliefs outlined in Activity 1.
- c. How did the Liberal Government's judgement about the likely support to be gained from mainland voters and the importance of winning Tasmanian seats differ from the judgement of the Labor Party as outlined in 'Australian governments (Liberal and Labor): timeline of events' in Activity 5.

National Labor Party vs Tasmanian Labor delegates

The Australian Labor Party's National Conference adopted yesterday a policy of total opposition to a dam in ... Tasmania's south-west.

The new policy was greeted angrily by a number of Tasmanian delegates, who saw the move as politically disastrous at both Federal and State levels in their State.

'ALP National Conference – Labor policy opposes dam in Tasmania', *Canberra Times*, 9/7/1982.

- d. As a Tasmanian delegate at the Labor Party conference, what would you say to the conference?

Assessment task

It is 1982. The class is to play out the debates held at the national Labor Party conference and in the parliamentary Liberal Party room about whether each party will pass a law to stop the building of the dam in Tasmania.

Your teacher will allocate Liberal roles to half the class and Labor roles to the other half. In each party some people will be Tasmanians and some will be mainlanders.

There should be more mainlanders than Tasmanians.

Write the speech you will make to your party colleagues about whether the dam should be built. Remember to construct your argument according to the role you have been assigned. Support your argument with evidence drawn from what you have learnt within this section of the unit. The following are some of the issues you will need to consider:

- the views of the party about Australian governments interfering in issues over which states have powers
- what the public in Australia as a whole wants and what Tasmanians want
- whether the views of mainlanders or Tasmanians are more important on this issue and why
- what effect your recommendation is likely to have on gaining or losing votes in the mainland and Tasmania.

Hold the two meetings and present your speech.

Assessment criteria

Your work will be assessed on:

- accurately explaining the party's views of whether it should interfere in a Tasmanian issue
- providing a clear argument for or against a federal law to stop the dam
- supporting your argument with evidence from the information provided in this section of the unit
- covering the major issues that parties need to consider in forming policies (such as fundamental beliefs, winning votes)
- using evidence to support a Tasmanian or mainland perspective.

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Australian Government
Department of Education



Getting things done

Focus question 3: How can Australian citizens influence the media and how does the media influence governments and political parties?

Introduction

The concern of national politicians about the destruction of a wilderness area was not simply a result of principle or belief. They were responding to growing public pressure. For example, writing 'No dams' on ballot papers, first done in the Tasmanian referendum, spread to mainland elections. In the ACT election of 1982, 41% of voters wrote 'No dams' on their ballot papers. This groundswell of public opposition to the dam did not just happen; it was the result of a skilful campaign and one of the most influential elements of the campaign was the use of the media.



Activity 1: Recent issues in the media

In a small group discuss public issues that have recently attracted media attention. Record your answers to parts a to e below, for reporting back to the class (part f).

- Make a list of the issues your group identified. Choose one issue that your group knows most about for further discussion.
- Has the issue been brought to the attention of the media by an individual, a political party, memes or activism within social media or an interest group? What is their position on the issue?
- Are there any other individuals, groups or parties supporting or opposing the view you identified above? Have they received media attention?
- Which side is receiving most media attention? Why?
- What attracts media attention and coverage of an issue?
- Share your discussions with the class.



Activity 2: The Tasmanian Wilderness Society and the media

- Watch the video '[Franklin River campaign](#)'. Discuss:
 - What methods of protest does the Wilderness Society use to stop the building of the dam?
 - Who is the society targeting in its campaign, and what effect is it having? How can you tell?
 - The video talks about effective 'manipulation' of the media. In what ways does the Society use the media to its advantage?
 - If a similar campaign was needed today, how might it be different or similar?

b. Eleven perspectives on the tactics used in the campaign to save the Franklin have been collected below. Write two to three paragraphs explaining how these tactics worked. Use some of the following questions to focus your analysis.

- Which tactics might have influenced public opinion?
- Which tactics might have influenced government actions?
- What does the source itself say about the media?

For example:

The choice to have Bob Brown in a suit and popular TV star Lorraine Bayly as the leaders of the demonstration was a deliberate tactic to ...

The media needed access to stories – which may have been a problem because of the remoteness of ...

The government of the day may have been influenced by ...

TV news coverage of this event would have made people think ...

SOURCE 1

It is very important to appear conservative because that allows people to relate to our message rather than see us as different, strange or threatening ... The first thing we might need to do to save a mountain, is have a haircut – or grow it longer., Depending on which sex we are ... Appearance is never more important than when a TV camera is aimed at you.

Brown, 1984, pp 61–2.

Courtesy Habitat/Australian Conservation Foundation.

SOURCE 2



Bob Brown and Lorraine Bayly at a 'No Dams' rally, 1982

Credit: News Ltd / Newspix

SOURCE 3

[Talking about wording and sloganeering] ... Stridency goes down like a lead balloon. It turns people off in their thousands. Clenched fists, or even chanting, or strident sloganeering ... must be avoided at all costs because it frightens people.

Brown, 1984, pp 62.
Courtesy Habitat/Australian Conservation Foundation.

SOURCE 4

Film is a means of public and political education ... Film of beautiful places allows those places to speak for themselves ... Film is a weapon for conservation for which the destroyer has no answer ... We can debate economics and employment, and of course it's very important that the homework gets done there too, but – ultimately – we may arrive at a standoff, with the public confused. But as far as the natural beauty of the area is concerned ... there's nothing to counter that.

Brown, Bob 1984, 'Wilderness versus hydro-electricity in South West Tasmania' in *Fighting for Wilderness*, Fontana Books, pp 60–1. Courtesy Habitat/Australian Conservation Foundation.

SOURCE 5

(While you can get hundreds of people to an area if you've got time in a campaign, you can get the same area to millions of people through film.) The television stations begged for it – they loved it. If you can take some film, cut it into the best bits, and give them a 3 minute selected clip (well labelled), they'll use it time and time again. There is nothing more productive for any conservation campaign than to have film in the hands of the TV stations ... and that they get fresh film as the campaign proceeds.

Brown, 1984, p 60.
Courtesy Habitat/Australian Conservation Foundation.

SOURCE 6

It is very good to know how to write media releases. We had classes on that too. They're simple. You put the date at the top, a headline, and the main message is in the first line; a message which is positive .. When the time came for the Franklin Blockade in Tasmania, we had a dozen people on occasions making media releases, doing interviews and speaking before TV cameras. All those people had in one way or another been practised.

Brown, 1984, p 63.
Courtesy Habitat/Australian Conservation Foundation.

SOURCE 7

[We used] marketing methods which are the underpinnings of big business. For instance, we knew before the Franklin Blockade ... that most people in Australia thought it reasonable to try to stop bulldozers destroying the wilderness, provided we were not destructive ourselves. We took regular opinion polls. We even surveyed pro-dam people to gauge their perception of the campaign and to help us home-in on the most telling economic and employment arguments against the dam.

Brown, 1984, p 67.
Courtesy Habitat/Australian Conservation Foundation.

SOURCE 8

The blockade's aim was to draw national attention to the fate of the Franklin. Few illusions were held about its potential to stop the work ...

As 14 December dawned the action began ... Well before sunrise the Wilderness Society's high speed 'shark cat' had raced across Macquarie Harbour and onto the lower Gordon. It was packed with members of the print and electronic media. If all was to go according to plan, the blockaders would emerge from the forest by noon in order to allow the arrests to be made and the news film to be back at Strahan in time for the evening news bulletins all over Australia.

Thompson, Peter 1984, *Bob Brown of the Franklin River*, George Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, pp 161, 162. <https://www.allenandunwin.com>

SOURCE 9

Brown was arrested along with 48 others ... Before a television audience of millions Brown shook hands with the arresting officer. It was an odd sight. Brown wore a pullover and tie, much more suited to the city than the river.

Thompson, Peter 1984, *Bob Brown of the Franklin River*, George Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, pp 161, 162. <https://www.allenandunwin.com>

SOURCE 10

Professor David Bellamy was a British botanist and TV personality who, until this issue arose, had refused to get involved in political issues despite constant requests. He flew to Australia to take part in the blockade.

The operation was carried out with the precision of a military manoeuvre ... One film crew, complete with decoy 'David Bellamy', approached Warner's landing from one direction, and another, with the real me, came in from another. I was thus able to step off the front of the boat right in front of the bulldozer where I was arrested ... When a police officer arrested me I knew that my journey across the world had been worthwhile. All that the members of the Wilderness Society had worked so long to achieve was now ready to be flashed to news programmes the world over.

Bellamy, David 1983, from an interview in Queenstown gaol, David Rudder, *Blockader*, The Wilderness Society, Hobart.

SOURCE 11

The first aim of the blockade was to force a federal Government to intervene according to its responsibilities under the Australian Heritage commission Act of 1975 ... Tactically the action of the blockade was aimed at generating both short- and long-term publicity, which would act on politician directly, and through pressure from the electorate, indirectly.

McQueen, J 1983, *Franklin – Not Just a River*, Penguin Books Australian, p 30.



Activity 3: Media coverage of the blockade

In mid-December 1982 approximately 6,000 protesters travelled to the small Tasmanian town of Strahan, which became the launching pad of the blockade. Many formed a blockade at the dam site on 14 December 1982, the day the area was listed as a World Heritage site.

After the local council excluded protesters from Strahan's campsite, a farmer offered a paddock, which soon filled with tents and was dubbed 'Greenie Acres'. From Strahan and the 'Up River' base camp near the dam site, protesters set out to impede dam works. With their flotilla of 'duckies' they attempted to block the passage of earthmoving equipment.

A communications centre – put together in Hobart and transported to Strahan and then upriver – was essential to getting news of the blockade to the outside world. Telephones in Strahan were scarce, with journalists competing for access. During January 1983, around 50 people arrived at the blockade every day. Over 1,000 people were arrested.

- a. What does Source 11 say was the main aim of the blockade? How was it to be achieved?
- b. Why would the media have been so willing to cover the blockade?
- c. Why would the Tasmanian Wilderness Society have used celebrities and famous people to help their cause?
- d. Use the sources to work out how the Wilderness Society was able to afford to do things like own boats and property, bring David Bellamy to Australia, and undertake media courses.
- e. Why was there so much media attention for Bob Brown? Would that have helped the Tasmanian Wilderness Society? Why or why not?
- f. Is there any evidence of the media misrepresenting or putting a particular slant on events? If so, why did they do this?
- g. Do any of the sources provide a view that appears to be untrustworthy or biased? Which ones? Why?
- h. Was it a 'fair fight'? Was democracy well served? (The pro-dam demonstrators claimed that they had difficulty gaining media attention. Does this matter?)
- i. This series of events took place long before the phrase 'fake news' was invented. In what ways might media coverage be different now? In what additional ways do we need to be discriminating about where we source our news?



Activity 4: Effect of media campaign

- a. What conclusions can you draw from the opinion poll below about the effectiveness of the Wilderness Society's national campaign against the dam?

Opinion poll

Background: This opinion poll was conducted over the two weekends in December 1982 just before the beginning of the blockade. The question posed to 2061 people throughout Australia was: 'Do you approve or disapprove of the proposed dam for hydro-electricity to be built in the wilderness of south-west Tasmania?' The same question had been asked a year earlier. The second table shows a breakdown of responses to these questions by state.

The question: Do you approve or disapprove of the proposed dam for hydro-electricity to be built in the wilderness of south-west Tasmania?

	December 1982 %	November 1981 %
Approve dam	31	42
Disapprove dam	42	38
Don't know	27	20

'Poll shows majority oppose south-west dam', Hobart *Mercury* 18/12/1982, p 2.
Davies Brothers/*The Mercury*.

State breakdown of the above 1982 results

	All people %	NSW %	VIC %	QLD %	SA %	WA %	TAS %	Metro %	Country %
Approve dam	31	36	29	26	23	20	69	29	34
Disapprove dam	42	38	49	37	47	41	27	46	36
Don't know	27	26	22	37	30	39	4	25	30

'Poll shows majority oppose south-west dam', Hobart *Mercury* 18/12/1982, p 2.
Davies Brothers/*The Mercury*.



Activity 5: Tasmanians' opinion of the dam

- a. What are then Premier Robin Gray's main arguments in favour of the dam in the following two extracts?

EXTRACT 1

Anyone, be it the Federal Government, Tasmanian Wilderness Society leader Dr Brown and his cronies – will have a massive fight on their hands if they try to obstruct the will of the people in Tasmania ...

Conservationists training for the south-west blockade are like guerrilla forces in third-world countries.

The Tasmanian people have spoken [referring to the referendum and the vote for the Liberal Party which was more strongly pro-dam than was the Labor Party]. Only one isolated group, determined to get its way through misinformation, obstruction and, of need be, violence, has not come to terms with the reality of the situation in this state.

Press release of the Office of Premier Robin Gray, 14/10/1982, cited in Thompson, Peter 1984, *Bob Brown of the Franklin River*, George Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, p 159. <https://www.allenandunwin.com>

EXTRACT 2

The Premier of Tasmania, Mr Gray, addressed the meeting [a pro-dam rally]

I'm proud because I see before me Tasmanians standing up and saying 'This is our State ... we'll make the decisions' ...

We Tasmanians are determined that the power scheme will go ahead ...

My Government is not going to stand by and let a minority group dictate to us and stop what is an

important project for Tasmania's economic future and stop us creating thousands of jobs.

'3,000 attend pro-dam rally in Queenstown', *Canberra Times*, 13/12/1982.

- b. Look at the views of Tasmanians surveyed compared with those of Australians in other states (see the opinion poll in Activity 4).

Discuss these questions as a class:

- Why might Tasmanians have become such firm supporters of the dam? In 1979 a Tasmanian opinion poll showed 28% favoured and 53% opposed the building of the dam.
- Which Australians would be most affected by building (or not building) the dam?
- Were there more Australians opposed to building the dam or in favour of it?
- How should a decision be made? On the basis of numbers alone? Should the people who will be most affected by the dam have more say?
- Think back to the way people are represented in Australia's national parliament. In the House of Representatives, the states with the most people have more say, while in the Senate each state has an equal say. Does that give a small state like Tasmania a fair voice against a massive popular movement and media campaign designed to oppose something Tasmanians wanted? We will examine this issue more fully in Focus question 4 'How are disputes between state and federal governments resolved?'

Assessment task

This assessment task explores what you have learnt about influences on the media and ways to make an impact on decision-making.

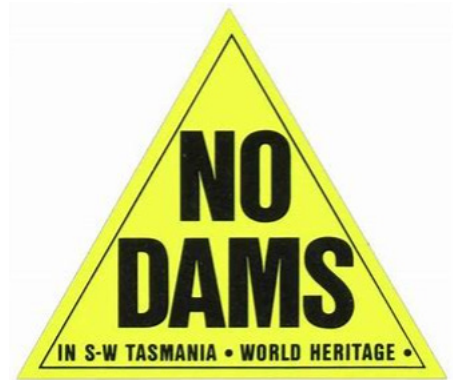
The 'No dams' image was a hugely popular symbol of the campaign to save the Franklin River.

In small groups design a media campaign that addresses an issue that your group feels strongly about. It may be a local issue or one that is broader in scope.

A media campaign looks very different now – the campaigners for the Franklin River had no access to digital or social media.

As a group, decide what artefacts should be created for each form of media (print, electronic, digital) and the types of activities that might create media attention. As a group, develop and document the following activities:

- Develop a plan of action for influencing public opinion, including:
 - deciding which groups in the school/community you should target
 - what methods you will use and what artefacts you will create to publicise your views
 - how you will fund your campaign
 - who you will use to 'front' or support your campaign.
- Develop a storyboard for television or digital footage that presents your point of view in one minute. Include:
 - visuals
 - an interview (state the position and the name of the person to be interviewed)
 - questions to be asked
 - main points to be made.



Source: [Wilderness Society Australia](#)

Assessment criteria

Individual work will be assessed on:

- using the artefacts to convey persuasive messages
- supporting your messages with accurate information.

Group work will be assessed on:

- artefacts completed by individuals in the group complementing each other
- all tasks outlined for the group being completed
- the campaign strategy using a range of strategies that are appropriate to the target groups
- the storyboard presenting a persuasive and convincing message through visuals and interviews.

Getting things done

Focus question 4: How are disputes between state and federal governments resolved?

Introduction

Australia has three levels of government – so what happens when there is a disagreement about an issue? How is power divided? Who makes the final decision when there is a clash of policies? The issue of the Franklin Dam pushed the Tasmanian government into conflict with the Australian government. Tasmanian governments on opposite sides, Labor and Liberal, wanted the dam built as did significant numbers of Tasmanians. So why was it not built?



Activity 1: Anti the anti-dammers

The following sources express some of the feelings of the people who are in favour of building the dam.

On the wall of the Hydro-Electric Commission's Franklin Dam checkpoint on the Kelly Basin Road is a notice calling for volunteers to join the 'Anti-Tasmania Society'. It reads: 'must be experienced in guitar, tin-whistle playing and protest songs. Commos, broken-down actors, mainlanders and homosexuals especially welcomed. Dole money guaranteed.'

Sydney Morning Herald 4/1/1983

- What picture does the writer paint about the anti-dam protesters? What methods is the writer using to achieve their purpose? How would you describe the feeling or mood of this piece of writing?
- The slogan mentions 'anti-Tasmania Society' and 'mainlanders'. Why is this distinction made?



Activity 2: Interview with pro-dammers

SOURCE 1

Mr L 'Undermined' – Letter to the editor

This is not a campaign to save a river; it is a campaign to undermine the economy and the law of an Australian state. Tasmania was easy for them because it is small and isolated. Mainlanders can look forward to seeing activists up there soon, the framework is being set up now.

Mr L, Letter to the editor, Tasmania © *The Australian* 29/10/1982

SOURCE 2

The bell tolls for stricken Queenstown

Queenstown is the home of most of the workers on the now silent Gordon-below-Franklin dam site...[Mr B's] reaction to the fact that a High Court decision had removed, at least temporarily, his livelihood, was one of anger. 'We will fight,' he said. 'We will keep on working and the greenies will have to send in an army to move us.'...

Early yesterday representatives of the Organisation for Tasmanian Development, a pro-dam lobby group, arrived in Queenstown to await the decision.

The chairman of the pro-dam lobby group [Mr McCoy], said the group would now fight for guarantees of work for 10 years for the hundreds employed on the dam.

Dwyer, Peter, The bell tolls for stricken Queenstown, © The Australian 2 July.

SITUATION

Mr L (Source 1), having written his letter to the paper, is contacted by two television stations – one in Hobart, the other on the mainland. He is given a golden opportunity to present his point of view to audiences in his home state and on the mainland.

Mr B's (Source 2) comments also interest the television stations and he is invited to be interviewed with Mr L.

- a. Divide the class in two. One half is to present interviews for the Hobart television station to be broadcast to Tasmanian viewers. The other half is to present interviews for a Melbourne television station to be broadcast nation-wide. The Melbourne journalist puts a national 'spin' on the interview, and takes a viewpoint that protection of the wilderness area will be good for the nation.
- b. In groups of three, one of you should take the role of the television journalist and the others take the roles of Mr L and Mr B. Write a script for a 1-minute interview. Before writing your script, work out the main message that Mr L and Mr B would want to give to Tasmanian audiences who would largely agree with their points of view and what main message they would want to give to mainland audiences who would largely not agree with their points of view.
- c. Present your 'live' broadcast to your class.
- d. As a class, discuss any conclusions you can draw from this role-play about the differences in how Tasmanians and mainlanders may have viewed the dispute.

Tasmania and the Commonwealth lock horns

The dams case was a dramatic and emotional one. On one side was the desire of many Australians to ensure the preservation of rivers and wilderness areas with rainforests, old Huon pines and an Aboriginal archaeological site. On the other was the right of a government to encourage industrial and business development, and the provision of new jobs for the people of that state.

As the dams case moved from being a Tasmanian dispute to a national and international issue, the arguments changed too. The issue became no longer just the environment versus development, but also whether a state had control over its own territory and the power to provide for the economic future of its citizens, or whether the Commonwealth did.

You have seen that when the Labor Government came to power in 1983, it acted on its election promise to stop the dam by passing a law through parliament – the *World Heritage Properties Conservation Act (1983)*.

This law gave the Federal Government control over all World Heritage-listed areas. The approval of a Commonwealth Minister would be necessary for work in a World Heritage area – and permission for a dam in south-west Tasmania would not be given.

You have also seen that the Tasmanian Liberal Government came to power firmly promising to proceed with the dam and that opinion polls taken in late 1982 showed that 69 per cent of Tasmanians approved the building of the dam.

With an elected Federal Government committed to stopping the building of the dam and an elected State Government committed to building it, what was to be done?

The Tasmanian Government continued work on the dam. At one point Premier Robin Gray threatened to secede from the Commonwealth – to make Tasmania a separate country.

The federal government took the Tasmanian Government to the High Court to have the Hydro-Electric Commission workers ordered from the site.

The Tasmanian Government challenged the Federal Government's *World Heritage Properties Conservation Act*, saying that it did not have the constitutional power to intervene in a state matter.

e. Think about what you have just read. Respond to the following questions in writing:

- What is the most important point?
- What are you finding challenging, puzzling or difficult to understand?
- What question would you most like to discuss?
- What is something you found interesting?

In a small group, discuss what you had in common as responses and what differed.

Australia: a federation of states

Australia is a federation of states. Before the states agreed to join together, or federate, and become one country in 1901, Australia consisted of six separate colonies, like six different countries, each with their own laws and parliaments.

A federation is a joining together of states that agree to retain the power to make local laws about some things, and to give power to a federal government to make laws about other things that affect the nation as a whole, like defence.

In some federations like Australia, the powers of the federal government are listed and all the rest remain with the states.

The Australian Constitution came into force at the time of Federation in 1901. It makes no mention, of course, of many of the aspects of Australian life that have become of great interest to both governments and citizens since then. An obvious example is the environment. Very few people in 1901 understood the idea that environments were fragile and finite, and may need protection through legislation. Since the environment was not listed as a commonwealth power, it was left as a state power.

However, one of the law-making powers given to the Commonwealth (Australian) Government at the time of Federation, was power over external affairs. This means the power to pass laws to implement international treaties entered into by the Government.

Want to test what you know about Federation and the Constitution? Here are two short online quizzes:

- [Quiz: The Constitution](#)
- [Australian Constitution](#)



Activity 3: The Constitution and state and federal governments

- a. Listed below are some areas of government. Can you sort them into areas for which states have responsibility, and those for which the Australian Government is responsible?
- Post, telephones and the internet
 - Money
 - Schools
 - Hospitals
 - Public housing
 - Immigration
 - Defence
 - Public transport
 - External affairs (Foreign affairs)
- b. Download [Sections 51 and 52](#) of the Constitution and check how accurate your sorting is.

- c. Why might the power of the Commonwealth to make laws about external affairs have been important in the Franklin Dam case?

Resolving disputes between state and federal governments

The makers of Australia's Constitution foresaw that there were likely to be disputes among the various governments over powers and areas of responsibility.

The High Court was established to resolve disputes that involve interpreting the Constitution.

When there is a dispute about which government has power in a particular situation, the Australian (Commonwealth) or state government can appeal to the High Court. The High Court decides what the words in the Constitution mean, and makes a final decision.

There are seven judges on the High Court, appointed by the Commonwealth Government. There is no requirement that there be a judge from each state.

The role of the High Court in Constitutional disputes

Here are what two of the founding fathers of the Constitution saw as one of the roles of the High Court:

[The High Court might have to decide] a question of validity of a law may affect ... the interests of a state and the Commonwealth, and may at any time become a matter of heated controversy between a state and the Commonwealth.

O'Connor, R 1898, *Federal Convention Debates*, vol 1, p 356.

[The role of the court is to] decide between the states and the federation and upon encroachments by the federation upon the states.

Higgins, E 1897, *Federal Convention Debates*, vol 1, p 953.



Activity 4: The High Court

The High Court and the Franklin dam case

- a. Watch this short video for a summary of what happened: '[VCE Legal Studies – Tasmanian Dam case](#)'.

In the Franklin Dam case, the Tasmanian Government asked the High Court if the Constitution gave the Federal Government the right to pass a law that would affect the way the state ran its affairs.

In other words, was the law passed by the Federal Government valid or legal according to the Constitution?

This is what Chief Justice Gibbs, one of the judges deciding on the case, said in his judgement:

No lawyer will need to be told that in these proceedings the court is not called upon to decide whether the Gordon below Franklin Scheme ought to proceed. It is not for the court to weigh the economic needs of Tasmania against the possible damage that will be caused to the archaeological sited and the wilderness area if the construction of the dam proceeds. The wisdom and expediency of the two competing courses are matters of policy for the Government to consider, and not for the court. We are concerned with a strictly legal question – whether the Commonwealth regulations and the Commonwealth statute [law passed by parliament] are within constitutional power.

46 Australian Law Reports, 633–78.

- b. Why does Chief Justice Gibbs say that it was not the job of the court to decide whether the environmental or economic arguments of the competing parties were the more important for Australia? Whose role was it?
- c. If that was not the role of the High Court in this case, what was its role?

Power of governments

The High Court decided that because this case involved an external agreement (World Heritage listing with UNESCO), the Commonwealth Government could indeed pass such laws. It was a narrow victory for the Federal Government with four judges deciding the Commonwealth Government did have the power and three judges deciding that they did not have the power to make that law.

This was the end of the matter, because the High Court has the final say in interpreting the meaning and intention of the Constitution.

But it was not the end of the debate about the role of the federal and state governments and, with this decision, a new argument arose about the role of the High Court.

The power of the Commonwealth Government following the Franklin Dam case had been shown to be greater than it had been thought by many experts, and the role of the state governments correspondingly less.

- d. What was the importance of World Heritage listing in the High Court's decision?

Arguments against the High Court decision**SOURCE 1**

By narrowest of margins, four judges from a bench of seven have wrought [made] the most fundamental change to the Australian Constitution since 1901 ... The delicate balance of powers between the Commonwealth and the states ... has been fundamentally changed for all time.

The Mercury, 4/7/1983.
Davies Brothers *The Mercury*.

SOURCE 2

Four judges out of seven have brought about a massive change to our constitution. A group of men – appointed, not elected – has radically changed the principles whereby our country is governed without the people as a whole being given any voice whatsoever.

'The Constitution belongs to the people!' © *The Australian*, 7/7/1983.

SOURCE 3

There is almost no area of life which under modern conditions may not be the subject of an international agreement, and therefore the possible subject of commonwealth legislative power ... The division of powers between the Commonwealth and the States which the constitution effects could be rendered quite meaningless ...

Chief Justice Gibbs, cited in Sornarajah, M (ed) 1983, *The South-West Dam Dispute: The Legal and Political Issues*, Law School, University of Tasmania, p 115.

SOURCE 4

'Liberals seek poll on powers'

Federal and State conservative leaders are to be asked to seek a referendum to restore the balance of power between the Commonwealth and the States to what it was before last Friday's High Court decision on the Gordon-below-Franklin dam ...

Mr Gray said ... 'That opens up the way for the Commonwealth to intervene right across the board, in areas like resources, education, health and agriculture ...'

[The Queensland Attorney-General said] ... he wanted the referendum to define the Federal Government's external powers, [and] to make High Court appointments subject to approval by the States ...

Canberra Times, 10/7/1983.

SOURCE 5

[Chief Justice] Gibbs ... took the narrow view that only a matter affecting a foreign nation could be considered an external affair. In relation to environmental concerns, he was of the view that only pollution which escapes from Australia and causes damage to a neighbouring state could be considered an external affair.

Sornarajah, M 1983, 'International law and the South-West dams case', in Sornarajah, M (ed) *The South-West Dam Dispute: The Legal and Political Issues*, Law Schools, Law School, University of Tasmania, p 29.



Activity 5: Understanding arguments for and against the High Court decision

- a. Match the arguments presented below with the source item that presents that view. The same argument may be presented in more than one source. Complete the argument in Source 5 yourself.

Source	Argument
	Only four out of seven judges agreed on such an important decision.
	Because there are international agreements about almost everything these days, the Commonwealth will be able to intervene in a state's affairs in almost every area of life.
	The judges who made such a fundamental change to the way we are governed are not elected.
	The powers that the states and the Commonwealth have had since 1901 have dramatically changed.
Source 5	

Arguments in favour of the High Court decision

There were no planes in 1901 when the Constitution was created. The world has become a global village with countries closely related though their economies, technology, trade and travel.

The Constitution must be applied to the times in which we live, not that of 1901. The areas covered by 'external affairs' have changed with the times; the High Court decision merely recognises a change in the real world.

It is the job of the High Court to interpret the Constitution. The decisions it makes will sometimes have a major effect on the way we are governed. More recent examples of such decisions are those made by the High Court in the Mabo and Wik cases, and in 2017 in relation to dual citizenship of members of the Australian Parliament.

- b. Discuss with the class whether you think an international treaty should have allowed the Commonwealth Government to intervene in a state matter that, it could be argued, was not going to affect any other countries.

Unit assessment task

Choose one of the two assessment tasks below.

Assessment task 1

You are responsible for writing a report on how well democracy in Australia operated to resolve the dispute over the damming of the Franklin River. Your question is:

Despite both the Labor and Liberal governments in Tasmania wanting to dam the Franklin, the river runs free today. How did this happen and was it in the best interests of the country?

Decide what is meant by 'best interests of the country'. You may wish to discuss this as a class first.

Your report should be 600 to 800 words long.

You should structure your report according to the four focus questions that head each section of this unit, with an additional section, a conclusion. The following structure and questions will help with your report.

Focus question 1: How can Australian citizens influence government action?

- Who were the key groups and individuals and what were their views?
- What were some of the actions that were taken by the interest groups in the dispute?

Focus question 2: How do governments and political parties respond to emerging issues?

- Why did Tasmanian state governments support the dam?
- How did the environmentalists and the parties' supporters affect the actions of the Liberal and Labor governments in Tasmania?
- Why did governments at the national level oppose the dam?
- What was the reason for the federal Labor Party deciding to oppose the building of the dam?

Focus question 3: How can Australian citizens influence the media and how does the media influence governments and political parties?

- How was the media used to influence public opinion and government action?
- Was the achievement of the will of the people helped by the media coverage of the event?

Focus question 4: How are disputes between the state and federal governments resolved?

- What role did the High Court play in the resolution of the conflict between a state and the Federal Government?
- What was the importance of World Heritage listing in the High Court's decision?
- What role did the High Court decision about the *World Heritage Properties Conservation Act (1983)* mean for the balance of power between federal and state governments?
- Was the decision of the High Court a fair and just decision?

Conclusion

Provide your judgement of how well the system of government worked to get things done fairly and democratically in the best interests of the country. Some questions you might consider are:

- Should an international treaty have allowed the Australian (Commonwealth) Government to intervene in a state matter?
- Was the possible damming of the Franklin River a matter of such significance to the whole world that it was more important than the views of the people in one state of a comparatively wealthy country?
- If democracy is the expression of the will of the people, whose will was expressed in the resolution of this dispute, and was this fair?

Assessment criteria

Your work will be assessed on:

- how well you have described the roles of political institutions and special interest groups in making and changing laws
- how well you have interpreted and explained the motives and actions of the various participants in the dispute
- showing an understanding of the way conflict over a public issue was resolved
- providing a reasoned and informed view of what is meant by the 'best interests of the country'
- providing a reasoned and informed opinion of whether the 'best interests of the country' were served in the way that the Franklin Dam dispute was resolved.

Assessment task 2

Reflecting twenty years later on the Franklin Dam campaign, Bob Brown said: 'That you must never, never, never, give up on something you feel strongly about, and where a great wrong is being done. That bulldozers aren't always the strongest form of power. The hearts of people are a mighty strong force, and it's infectious. (From 'Saved by those who gave a damn', *The Age*, 24 December 2002.)

The focus of this resource has been on how citizens can be active in public life. Think about a recent campaign that may or may not have been successful in achieving a political/legislative outcome. Examples might include the same-sex marriage campaign, the global campaign to achieve changed policy about climate change, the campaign for and against the proposed Adani (renamed to Bravus) Carmichael mine, or a cause of your choice where the debate is polarised.

Describe the campaign, including a focus on:

- the key groups and individuals on both sides of the debate
- the response(s) of government(s)
- the place of the media in the debate and the methods used to influence the media
- how the dispute was resolved, if at all.

Assessment criteria

Your work will be assessed on:

- how well you have described the roles of political institutions and special interest groups in making and changing laws
- how well you have interpreted and explained the motives and actions of the various participants in the dispute
- showing an understanding of the way conflict over a public issue was resolved
- providing a reasoned and informed view of what is meant by the 'best interests of the country'
- providing a reasoned and informed opinion of whether the 'best interests of the country' were served in the way that the issue was resolved.

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