



Australian Government
Department of Education, Employment
and Workplace Relations



Department of Education and
Early Childhood Development

2014 Schools' State Constitutional Convention

Student participant information resource pack

The topic for 2014 is:

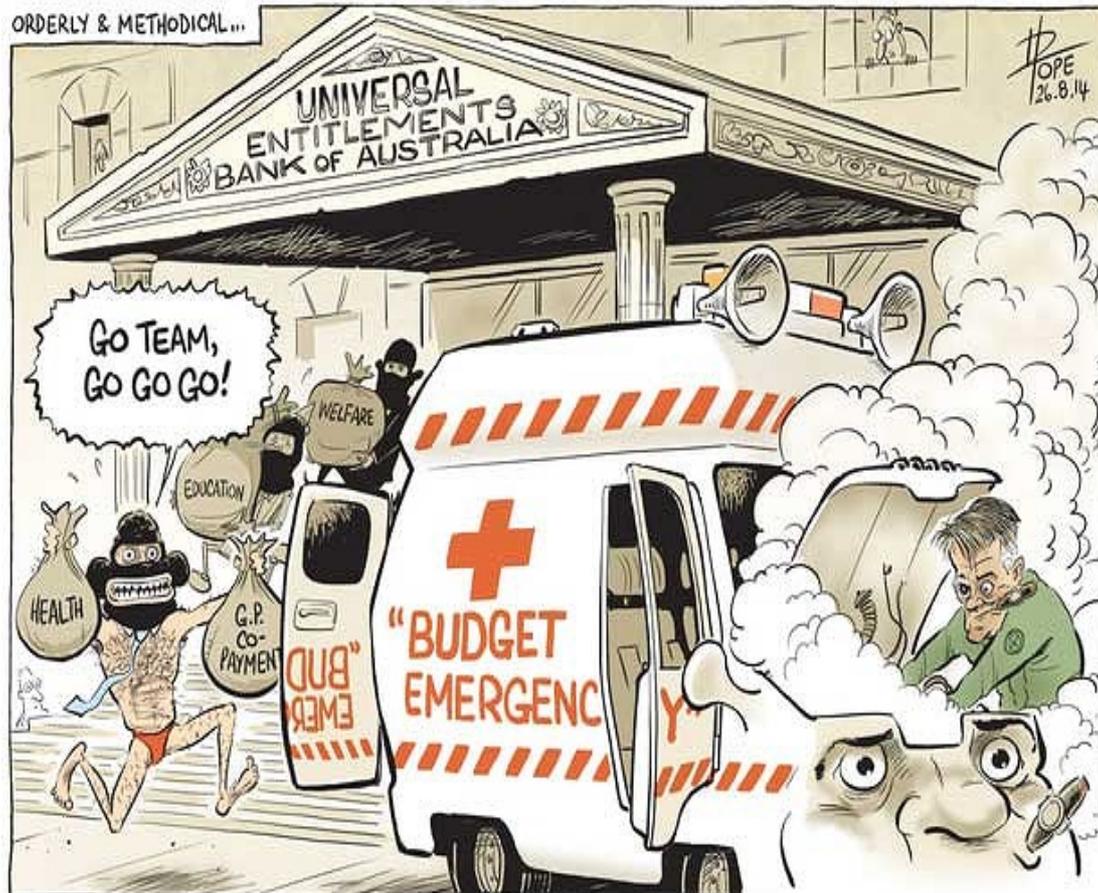
**“Australia is in a ‘budget crisis’ and all Australian’s
must share the burden – directly and indirectly”**

“The principles of solidarity and reciprocity that bind societies together are more likely to erode in excessively unequal societies. History also teaches us that democracy begins to fray at the edges once political battles separate the haves against the have-nots.”¹



This booklet is a student resource created by Social Education Victoria (www.sev.asn.au) to support the School's Constitutional Conventions program organised by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). This resource is for individual student use only and must not be transmitted or reproduced in any form.

¹ Christine Lagarde, managing director of the International Monetary Fund in a speech cited in an article at <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/abbott-and-hockey-why-poor-people-dont-matter-20140819-105nyx.html>



*cartoon by David Pope (available at <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/photogallery/federal-politics/cartoons/david-pope-20120214-1t3j0.html>)

For more interesting and engaging visuals related to this topic, visit:

<http://nicholsoncartoons.com.au/?s=budget>

The resources in this student pack consist of a variety of annotated links that include government departments, non-government organisations, media and other information sites. The material on offer is designed to give students a basic background to the topic and related issues and to help them to formulate their ideas and build a response to the Convention contention.

This student resource pack is designed to offer delegates to the State Convention a range of pre-event reading and contextual information related to the Convention focus and topics. The event organizers encourage students to explore these resources and begin to formulate their perspectives on the contention and the issues at hand.

This is by no means an exhaustive list and organizers in no way seek to pre-determine participants' views on any of the topics discussed here. The assembled resources should simply serve as a background and a prompt to further student inquiry.

Contention:

Australia is in a 'budget crisis' and all Australians must share the burden – directly and indirectly.

For the purposes of the 2014 State Convention, the event organisers have identified FIVE key areas of **Government expenditure** to be considered in background reading and potentially used as the basis for student responses to the contention. The areas are all possible sources of savings with which the Government could draw upon to address the 'budget emergency' and growing deficit. These areas are (in no particular order):

1. Health and Disability
2. Social Welfare
3. Education
4. Climate Change
5. Foreign Aid

Notes:

It is suggested that in addition to the topics and issues raised by the contention, students should also focus on the **wording** of the contention. For example - is the use of the term "**budget crisis**" debatable? To what extent do people feel/can it be proven that Australia is in a budget crisis? Which points of view does this contention represent? In addition, students should also consider the words "**all Australians**". Must everyone, even those less well off, and perhaps less able to contribute, be expected to share the burden? Finally, in terms of economics and fiscal management, what do the terms '**directly**' and '**indirectly**' mean? Students might consider aspects such as increased income taxation as 'direct' budget action (where working citizens personally pay a contribution), while a reduction of public services could be seen, for example, as 'indirect' budgetary action (where not all citizens might be affected).

Students can of course consider this topic from all perspectives and across all areas of society and the economy and are welcome to research, discuss and present on an area of interest to them. They are not obliged to limit their research or ideas to those offered in this resource pack.

A Budget Emergency?

Students should firstly consider whether there *is* a 'budget crisis/emergency' (such a situation has been labelled in various ways throughout the media and by politicians).

In recent years Australia has been hailed as one of the few countries to make it through the global financial crisis (GFC) mostly unscathed, in part due to rapid growth in China (instigating a resource 'boom' as the Australian mining sector met increased demand from China). Australia's successful navigation through the GFC might also, arguably, in some part be due to the fiscal management of the Australian Government. There is a lot of data available that suggests that the GFC did not affect Australia as much as other nations (at least in comparison to other similar developed nations in the OECD).

For more visit: <http://m.lowyinstitute.org/node/43135> and <http://www.independentaustralia.net/politics/politics-display/the-worlds-best-economy-part-two-winners-and-losers-through-the-gfc.6304>

It has been proclaimed by some that there is a budget emergency and Australians *all* must contribute in some way to bring the budget back into surplus. Certainly, that there *is* a budget deficit is a fact that can't be disputed. The ways and means of 'balancing the books', and how urgent and important this task is, however, is a widely debated point across Australian society. Some of these issues and concepts are quite challenging - below are several articles that might help to explore Australian government systems of revenue raising and expenditure.

What is 'The Budget'?

Budget fact sheets

<http://www.peo.gov.au/learning/fact-sheets/budget.html>

Federalism and budgets - taxation and spending

Renewing Australian Federalism

<https://theconversation.com/renewing-australian-federalism-31373>

State budgets, VFI and a 'hard budget' constraint

<http://theconversation.com/renewing-federalism-state-budgets-vfi-and-a-hard-budget-constraint-31359>

Budget emergency articles and links

Economist's cast doubt over 'budget emergency' claims

<http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2014/s4005966.htm>

How Joe Hockey concocted a Budget 'emergency'

<http://workinglife.org.au/2014/05/13/how-joe-hockey-concocted-a-budget-emergency/>

Joe Hockey MP address to the National Press Club

<https://www.liberal.org.au/latest-news/2013/05/22/joe-hockey-mp-address-national-press-club>

Joe Hockey hits right note on budget emergency

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/opinion/columnists/joe-hockey-hits-right-note-on-budget-emergency/story-fnbkvnk7-1226785317010?nk=6e1542fea90058e0fb7c821eb6c08677>

The facts on MYEFO (Australian Labor)

http://www.alp.org.au/myefo_release

Australia's economy is healthy so how can there be a budget crisis?

<http://theconversation.com/australias-economy-is-healthy-so-how-can-there-be-a-budget-crisis-26036>

Australia's economy remains the envy of the developed world

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/oct/04/australia-economy-labor>

Australia's three-speed economy in danger of stalling

<http://www.smh.com.au/business/the-economy/australias-three-speed-economy-in-danger-of-stalling-20140721-zv7hx.html>

Explained: How bad is Australia's economic position?

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-05-01/economics-explainer/5422776>

Joe Hockey: We are a nation of lifters, not leaners

http://www.afr.com/p/national/budget/joe_hockey_we_are_nation_of_lifters_e_mUX2Sg4Gm8S6T7L59KNvL

Budget 2014: Joe Hockey delivers deep pain for little gain

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/13/budget-2014-joe-hockey-delivers-deep-pain-for-little-gain>

Hockey tells Kiwis there is no economic crisis in Australia

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2014/07/26/hockey-tells-kiwis-there-no-economic-crisis-australia>

Tories are the better economic managers?

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-08-19/lewis-woods-tories-are-the-better-economic-mismanagers/5681088>

'Belt tightening'

National Commission of Audit Recommendations

<http://www.ncoa.gov.au/report/phase-one/recommendations.html>

Australian Identity

This debate about economics and politics of course has a human dimension. *Real* people are affected by fiscal policies and economic events. In terms of how we (and our elected governments) should act when seeking resolutions to issues or problems, we, as individuals and as a society, are guided by certain values and beliefs. We might not all share every one of these values and beliefs, but it is worth considering which ones we feel apply to Australian society and therefore should guide our decisions.

What defines an Australian identity? What are the values and ideals that we hold dear to us and feel are important to share with our children and new Australian residents and citizens?

There is of course the notion of the Australian value of the 'Fair Go'. People might have different ideas about what this might mean to them, but most Australians will be able to offer their idea of what it means. In essence, from one perspective, it is the idea that every person, regardless of circumstance or background, is entitled to expect equality of opportunity (and not be unduly disadvantaged due to circumstances over which they have no control). For the purposes of this discussion, this might include ideas such as rights to housing, education and medical support.

Life in Australia: Australian Values

<https://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/07values.htm>

Is Australia the land of the 'Fair Go' for me but not for all? (audio and video files)

http://www.wesleymission.org.au/get_involved/events/Advocacy_discussion.asp

Joe Hockey: We are a nation of lifters, not leaners

http://www.afr.com/p/national/budget/joe_hockey_we_are_nation_of_lifters_e_mUX2Sg4Gm8S6T7L59KNvL

Australians value a 'fair go' highest

<http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/australians-value-a-fair-go-highest/2006/11/11/1162661949374.html>

The Lucky Country

<http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/lucky-country>

Some thoughts about class in Australia

http://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2013/december/1385816400/tim-winton/c-word?utm_content=buffer23fd4&utm_medium=social&utm_source=Facebook&utm_campaign=Editorial+Teasers

Topic 1 - Health and Disability

Australia is a country widely admired for its universal health care (Medicare as we know it was established in 1984 - see http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/Publications_Archive/archive/medicare for more). The system provides for all persons to be medically treated regardless of whether they can pay directly. There are many other systems around the world that are comparable, and such schemes, particularly those in Scandinavia, provide equitable health care for all through bulk billing, public hospitals, and other schemes. Proposed changes to this system (and decreased government investment) could mean a fundamental change in the care and services provided to Australians. Should this area of expenditure be targeted to address any budget emergency and if so, how? Who should pay?

Australian health system: how it works

<http://www.mydr.com.au/first-aid-self-care/australian-health-system-how-it-works>

Tony Abbott may dump \$7 GP co-payment

<http://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/health/prime-minister-tony-abbott-may-dump-7-gp-copayment-fee/story-fneuz9ev-1226966459418>

GP co-payment: Doctors in talks with Government as speculation mounts over future of measure

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-07-16/co-payment-elements-could-bypass-senate/5602698>

Young families and elderly worse off under proposed \$7 GP co-payment: study

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-07-07/young-families-elderly-worse-off-under-gp-co-payment-study/5575642>

GP co-payment IT system 'a big ask'

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/technology/system-to-track-gp-visits-a-big-ask/story-e6frgax-1226964276889>

GP co-payment would increase emergency department wait times

<http://theconversation.com/gp-co-payment-would-increase-emergency-department-wait-times-28658>

Medical Research Future Fund

http://www.budget.gov.au/2014-15/content/overview/html/overview_12.htm

Leading scientists cautious about \$20bn medical research future fund

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/19/leading-scientists-cautious-about-20bn-medical-research-fund>

Labor fears NDIS cuts, delay to rollout

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/labor-fears-ndis-cuts-delay-to-rollout/story-fn59niix-1226757578125>

Disability support pension changes unlikely to feature in May budget: Kevin Andrews

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-03-11/disability-pension-escapes-budget-hit-list/5312994>

Changes to Disability Support Pension from 1 July 2014

<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/news/changes-to-disability-support-pension-from-1-July-2014>

Budget 2014: Disability support pension changes flagged, Kevin Andrews says no incentive for recipients to work

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-05-09/disability-pension-changes-flagged-for-budget/5441064>

Mentally ill may lose disability support pension, welfare head Patrick McClure suggests

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/mentally-ill-may-lose-disability-support-pension-welfare-head-patrick-mcclure-suggests/story-fn59niix-1226971977282>

Payment rates for Disability Support Pension

<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/enablers/centrelink/disability-support-pension/payment-rates>

Sonic Healthcare warns over GP co-payments

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/profit-loss/sonic-healthcare-warns-over-gp-copayments/story-fn91vch7-1227029121175>

SBS insight program – Jobs and Disability 19/08/14

<http://www.sbs.com.au/insight/episode/overview/638/Jobs-and-Disability#.ULqKUg4SM4>

Why exempt pensioners from co-payment? PM

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2014/08/20/why-exempt-pensioners-co-payment-pm>



*cartoon by Peter Nicholson (available at <http://nicholsoncartoons.com.au/medical-patients-out-of-pocket-budget-cartoon-2014-05-11.html>)

Topic 2 - Social Welfare

Australian society purports to value supporting those less fortunate, and Australia has a range of social welfare systems to help those members of society who are unemployed, young, unskilled, studying, the elderly and the sick.

Opinion piece from Anthony Albanese - Welfare recipients aren't bludgers, and they deserve respect from Joe Hockey

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/aug/01/welfare-recipients-arent-bludgers-and-they-deserve-respect-from-joe-hockey>

Joe Hockey wobbly on Budget details but apologises for insensitivity

<http://www.theage.com.au/comment/joe-hockey-wobbly-on-budget-details-but-apologises-for-insensitivity-20140818-1058yw.html#comments>

Payment rates for Youth Allowance

<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/enablers/centrelink/youth-allowance/payment-rates>

Payment rates for Age Pension

<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/enablers/centrelink/age-pension/payment-rates-for-age-pension>

Payment rates for Newstart Allowance

<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/enablers/centrelink/newstart-allowance/payment-rates-for-newstart-allowance>

CEOs take home 70 times average salary

<http://www.smh.com.au/business/ceos-take-home-70-times-average-salary-20130919-2u2kl.html>

Average weekly earnings – private and public sector

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/6302.0Main%20Features5Nov%202013?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=6302.0&issue=Nov%202013&num=&view=>

Why exempt pensioners from co-payment? PM

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2014/08/20/why-exempt-pensioners-co-payment-pm>

Reasserting the public interest from Australians' kitchen tables

<https://theconversation.com/reasserting-the-public-interest-from-australians-kitchen-tables-30755>

Abbott Government ready to negotiate on dole reforms but unemployed to be slotted into categories

<http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/abbott-government-ready-to-negotiate-on-dole-reforms-but-unemployed-to-be-slotted-into-categories/story-fnihsrk2-1227035215192?nk=0d46ed52eb251a040d3b4bd8762e3859>

Joe Hockey concedes \$7bn cut in pension budget under changes

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/27/joe-hockey-concedes-7bn-cut-in-pension-budget-under-changes>

Comment: Committee evidence shows the budget's fatal flaws

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2014/08/27/comment-committee-evidence-shows-budget-s-fatal-flaws>



*cartoon by Peter Nicholson (available at <http://nicholsoncartoons.com.au/structural-budget-deficit-one-day-this-will-be-your-julia-gillard-tony-abbott-wayne-swan-budget-cartoon-2013-04-24.html>)

While a little while ago, this cartoon looks at the issue of a budget emergency (in this case a black hole) and suggests that Tony Abbott (formerly Opposition Leader but now Prime Minister) will have to deal with a problem that evolved under the previous Labor administration. The characters represented are Wayne Swan (former Treasurer), Julia Gillard (former PM) and Tony Abbott (current PM).

Topic 3 - Education

Education funding is a hot topic of discussion and debate at both the Federal and State levels of government in Australia. In the lead up to most elections it is often a *major* issue, and recently there have been large changes (and further proposed changes) to university and TAFE funding. Historically, education funding in Australia has changed markedly over the last 40 years or so. Where once some people could attend university for free (or minimal cost) there is now a student loan system in place where students can repay the costs of their study over time as they begin to earn. As you can see, there are many issues wrapped up in this topic - from the question of the level of government funding of institutions right through to the impact government policies have on an individual's financial ability to study or train as part of an apprenticeship etc.

Christopher Pyne discusses proposed changes to education funding
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-05-20/students-should-contribute-to-own-education/5466486>

Federal budget 2014: education experts react
<http://theconversation.com/federal-budget-2014-education-experts-react-26649>

Budget 2014: Radical changes to education funding
<https://www.greenleft.org.au/node/56467>

University funding cuts cause severe indigestion for government
<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/university-funding-cuts-cause-severe-indigestion-for-government-20140713-zt63m.html>

David Gonski, Labor's school funding reforms architect, attacks Coalition decision to cut education spending
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-05-21/david-gonski-attacks-decision-to-cut-education-spending/5468892>

Audit recommends cutting back Gonski funding, increasing university fees
<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/audit-recommends-cutting-back-gonski-funding-increasing-university-fees-20140501-zr2lk.html>

Federal funding for schools
<https://education.gov.au/funding-schools>

Doubtful debt: the rising cost of student loans
<http://grattan.edu.au/publications/reports/post/doubtful-debt-the-rising-cost-of-student-loans/>

Universities Australia research predicts student debt levels will double
<http://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/parenting/universities-australia-research-predicts-student-debt-levels-will-double/story-fngqim8m-1226943417047>

Joe Hockey video from 1987 shows Treasurer protesting against university fees
<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/joe-hockey-video-from-1987-shows-treasurer-protesting-against-university-fees-20140528-394jn.html>

Topic 4 - Climate Change

There is still debate about whether, and to what extent, climate change is occurring. What is undeniable is that the overwhelming majority of scientists in the field agree that climate change is real and already underway. Despite this, there are a number of groups that disagree with this assessment, or, who believe that climate change is not substantially human driven. There are political and economic arguments used on both sides of the debate (to urge action on climate change or conversely warn of the high economic costs, and futility, of any climate change reduction schemes). The United Nations has urged global actors to implement strategies to help reduce the global impacts of climate change.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

<http://www.ipcc.ch/>

Litany of deep cuts for environmental programs

<http://theconversation.com/litany-of-deep-cuts-for-environmental-programs-26499>

Carbon tax repealed

<http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2014/s4048654.htm>

Carbon Tax Repeal Unlikely to Be a Winner for Coalition

<http://theconversation.com/carbon-tax-repeal-unlikely-to-be-a-winner-for-coalition-29444>

Carbon Tax scrapped: how the changes will affect Australian consumers

<http://www.news.com.au/finance/money/carbon-tax-scrapped-how-the-changes-will-affect-australian-consumers/story-fnagkbpv-1226991978689>

'Reckless' Abbott review chills \$20 billion clean-energy industry

<http://www.theage.com.au/business/carbon-economy/reckless-abbott-review-chills-20-billion-cleanenergy-industry-20140820-1065eq.html>

The U.N.'s latest report on climate change is terrifying

http://grist.org/news/the-u-n-s-latest-report-on-climate-change-is-terrifying/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_term=Daily%2520Aug%252027&utm_campaign=daily

Climate change will hit poor countries hardest, study shows

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/sep/27/climate-change-poor-countries-ipcc>

What is the economic cost of climate change? - 2011

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/feb/16/economic-impact-climate-change?guni=Article:in%20body%20link>

Barack Obama welcomes report saying fighting climate change can be low cost -2014

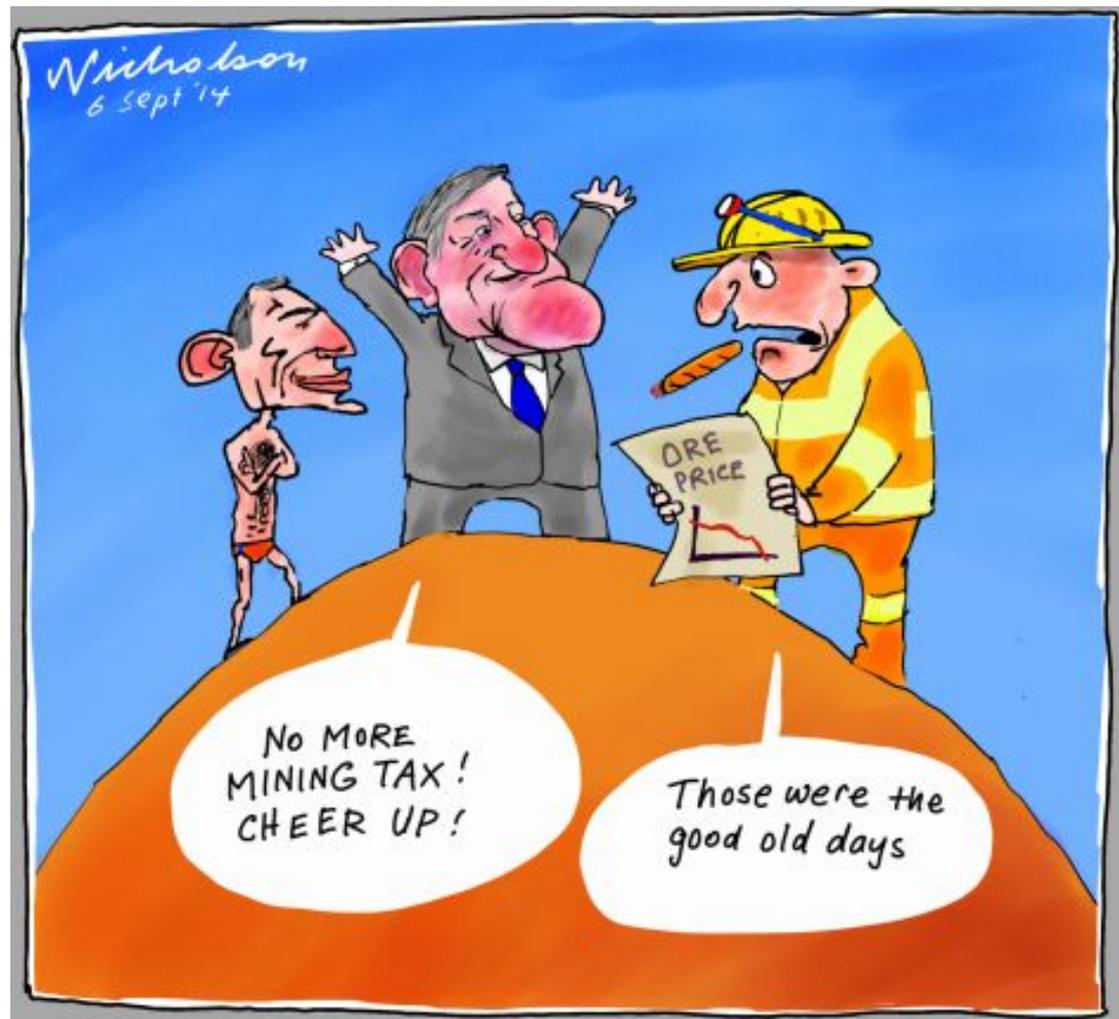
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/16/barack-obama-report-economy-grow-fight-climate-change-un-summit>

What is the 'polluter pays' principle?

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2012/jul/02/polluter-pays-climate-change>

Climate Summit: European Union surprised Tony Abbott will not attend high level climate talks

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-09-16/eu-climate-chief-surprised-by-australia27s-un-summit-snub/5745908>



*cartoon by Peter Nicholson (available at <http://nicholsoncartoons.com.au/mining-tax-repeal-good-old-days-of-big-profits-high-ore-prices-business-cartoon-2014-09-06.html>)

Topic 5 - Foreign Aid

Foreign aid is money that is distributed overseas to help other countries, sometimes with conditions on how recipients should spend it or how they should behave as a consequence of receiving aid. Australia provides foreign aid in a variety of forms and to many different countries. Sometimes, to some people, it seems like this is Australian money (money raised by taxes levied on Australian people) being spent on other people (who we may not know or see) at the expense of Australian needs back home. When Australia has expanding costs, and growing debt, it seems like a natural place to make cuts. Shouldn't our governments be looking after us first??

Of course this is but one side of the argument. What is rarely talked about in conversations about cuts to foreign aid is the benefit of such funding not only to those recipients but also to Australia and Australia's standing as a global citizen. When spent well, in places of great need, foreign aid can actually *reduce* Australia's long-term costs as well as improve the lives and well being of those abroad. When spending foreign aid Australia, of course, aims to assist the development of recipient countries and fellow human beings, however such aid also serves an important national interest by assisting long-term in areas such as the reduction of conflict and the prevention or redress of economic instability. This in turn arguably assists to reduce the number of refugees coming to Australia, reduce any future costs in military intervention, provides Australia with future economic trade partners and increases global stability.

The new aid paradigm (Speech) Oct 6, 2014

http://foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/Pages/2014/jb_sp_140618.aspx

Julie Bishop vows to fight possible cuts to the foreign aid budget

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-10-02/julie-bishop-vows-to-fight-cuts-to-foreign-aid/5786754>

Donor countries given performance benchmarks for Australian foreign aid under changes announced by Julie Bishop

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-06-18/countries-given-performance-benchmarks-for-foreign-aid/5531106>

Trade not aid key to Asian support

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/latest-news/trade-not-aid-key-to-asian-support-abbott/story-fn3dxiwe-1226776555963?nk=0646d503ae97eb19b562402814ef8d0d>

Stop Conflict, Reduce Fragility and End Poverty:

Doing Things Differently in Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations

http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/Feature%20Story/Stop_Conflict_Reduce_Fragility_End_Poverty.pdf

The guilty pleasure of living in the lucky country

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/the-guilty-pleasure-of-living-in-the-lucky-country-20140914-10gor4.html>

Personal costs/contributions to 'budget emergency'

Changes to freeze on the fuel excise

Reintroduction of fuel excise indexation

http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/BudgetReview201415/FuelExcise

Budget 2014: Fuel excise to increase twice a year in line with inflation

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-05-11/fuel-excise-to-increase-in-line-with-inflation/5445170>

Fact check: Will Abbott's fuel excise hike cost families 40c a week?

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-06-04/will-the-fuel-excise-change-cost-families-only-40c-a-week/5457202>

Treasurer Joe Hockey tells low income households they would not be bothered by petrol excise rises because rich will pay them

<http://www.news.com.au/finance/economy/treasurer-joe-hockey-tells-low-income-households-they-would-not-be-bothered-by-petrol-excise-rises-because-rich-will-pay-them/story-fn84fgcm-1227023274589>

Income Tax levy

Temporary budget repair levy

<https://www.ato.gov.au/general/new-legislation/in-detail/direct-taxes/income-tax-for-individuals/temporary-budget-repair-levy/>

Deficit levy to hit 400,000 high earners

http://www.afr.com/p/national/budget/deficit_levy_to_hit_high_earners_2qCRPFAsrRMrL5PfEJMuFL

Changes to compulsory superannuation amounts

Superannuation freeze deal short-changes future savings, say critics

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/business/superannuation-freeze-deal-shortchanges-future-savings-say-critics/story-fni0dcne-1227045578968?nk=fdf65c8a09acb80dc6a253ac668959fb>

Mining tax repeal: Superannuation changes to leave Australians 'demonstrably worse off', industry says

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-09-03/australians-worse-off-under-mining-tax-deal-super-industry/5714754>

*Congratulations on being selected to attend the 2014 State Constitutional Convention. We hope that your experience will be an interesting and exciting one and that it may serve to inspire you towards further involvement in student voice activities. Please read widely (using this booklet as a **starting point**) to inform your thinking towards the convention topic and help you build your contention, develop your line of argument and gather supporting evidence for your ideas!*