

C Grade: Round 3*Advised Topic – Voting and Government*

Round 3 potentially marks the first time you'll enter a debate without being able to prepare and research the substantive portion of your team's case beforehand. There's a handy guide to approaching secret topics which we recommend reading before the debate: You can find it at http://dav.com.au/resources/documents/SecretTopicDosandDonts_000.docx

Additionally, you know that your topic will be related to Voting and Government. You will probably find it useful to keep up to date with any news in this area in the weeks leading up to your debate. Additionally, have a think about the following subject areas.

Knowledge Area – Voting in Australia:

In Australia, all citizens over the age of eighteen are not only able to vote, but are also required to do so. This applies to federal, state and most council elections. The only citizens not able to vote are those who are of 'unsound mind', have previously been convicted of treason or are currently serving a prison sentence of 3 years or longer. Most states (including Victoria) have fixed election dates, but federal elections can be called at any time by the Prime Minister.

Some questions to consider:

- Why do we set the age for voting at 18? Should it be lowered?
- Why do we exclude prisoners from voting? Is it fair that they regain the right to vote after completing their sentence?
- Should there be more restrictions on voting? Should there be more requirements before you can vote?
- Should non-citizens be allowed to vote? Why do other countries (e.g. the UK and New Zealand) allow some non-citizens to vote?
- What information do citizens need to be able to vote?
- Most countries make voting optional – why do we make it mandatory?
- What are the advantages of fixed election dates?

Knowledge Area – Levels of Government:

In Australia there are three levels of Government: Federal, State and Local Councils. The Federal Government's responsibilities generally include nation-wide issues, most taxes, defence and foreign policy. State Governments are usually responsible for areas like healthcare, education and policing. Local councils often provide basic services like garbage collection as well as managing planning and minor roads in their area. However, there is a large amount of overlap between the various tiers of government in Australia and the areas in which they operate.

Some questions to consider:

- What are the advantages of three tiers of government? What are some of the disadvantages?
- Could we remove State Governments? Could we remove local councils?

Knowledge Area – Head of State:

Australia's Head of State is Queen Elizabeth II, who is represented by the Governor-General. While all laws need to be approved by the Governor-General, it is extremely unlikely that Governor-General would ever refuse to approve them.

Some questions to consider:

- Is it still appropriate that the Queen is our Head of State?
- If the Queen isn't our Head of State, who should be?

Knowledge Area – Federal Government:

The Federal Parliament consists of two houses: a lower house (called the House of Representatives) and an upper house (called the Senate). Each state has twelve senators, while seats in the House of Representatives are allocated to districts based on population. For new laws to be made they must pass both Houses of Parliament. Additionally, the party who controls the House of Representatives forms the government (and the leader of that party becomes the Prime Minister). This means that if a party changes leaders between elections the Prime Minister also changes.

Some questions to consider:

- Is it fair that all states are entitled to twelve senators? Why/why not?
- Should parties be allowed to change leaders between elections?
- Should we leave deciding who our Prime Minister is up to political parties?
- Should Australians have a greater say in how laws are made, or should we leave making laws up to our representatives? How could we have a greater say?
- Should seats in Parliament ever be reserved for certain groups?