

C Grade Round 2

That we support a mandatory national service

Background:

Countries with mandatory national service programs require all young people (often immediately after graduating high school) to engage in some form of service to the country. This can involve enlisting in the military, although in some countries it can involve other forms of community service. The length of this service varies between countries, but it is generally no less than three months and no more than two years.

Australia has not had any form of compulsory national service or conscription since 1972, and it was only ever used to bolster the number of troops in times of military conflict. While some have questioned the constitutionality of a civilian national service program, for debating purposes, you can assume that the affirmative team will be able to implement the policy. Therefore, both teams should focus their arguments on whether it is a good idea or not rather than discussing whether Australia could introduce the scheme in the first place.

Supporters of national service schemes generally argue that it is good for social cohesion and teaches young people useful life skills. Opponents have raised concerns about these policies glorifying the military and taking away young people's freedom of choice.

Some questions to consider:

- What kinds of service would you allow? Is it just military or are there some civilian options as well? How long would this service go for?
- What problems would mandatory national service try to address?
 - Is it the best way to solve these problems? Why/ why not?
- What impact would this policy have on the military and other organisations involved in these programs?
- How well have these programs worked in other countries? Can the lessons from other countries be applied to an Australian context?
- Should the government prioritise maximising public benefits even if it might hurt individuals?

Resources to help guide your research:

- Australia needs a compulsory national service:
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jan/23/australians-need-a-new-common-ground-compulsory-national-service>

- Criticisms of reintroduction of French national service:
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/19/rollout-of-compulsory-civic-service-for-young-people-in-france-sparks-criticisms>
- Pros and Cons of reintroducing national service in the UK:
<https://www.theweek.co.uk/94653/should-the-uk-bring-back-national-service>
- 28 Countries that have compulsory military service: <https://best-citizenships.com/2019/04/30/these-28-countries-have-compulsory-military-service/>
- Australia Defence Association discussion paper on national service (a more complex resource): <https://www.ada.asn.au/commentary/ada-publications/discussion-papers/national-service.html>