

GENERAL COMMENTS

The majority of student responses to the 2014 Australian History examination were accurate, informed and demonstrated knowledge, indicating that students had completed a great deal of hard work. Successful students were selective in their use of evidence and were therefore able to give relevant answers.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding errors resulting in a total less than 100 per cent.

Section A

Question chosen	none	1	2
%	0	33	67

Students were required to select only Document A or Document B in this section. However, a very small number of students wrote answers to both Document A and Document B, which was incorrect.

Most students understood the questions and answered them in a disciplined and informed manner, substantiating their responses with sound knowledge and evidence.

Document A

Question 1a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	3	8	89	1.9

Students received two marks for identifying two cultural groups depicted by Samuel Charles Brees in his watercolour view of Flemington, c. 1856.

Correct responses included the following:

- British
- Europeans
- Indigenous
- Chinese
- Irish.

Question 1b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	0	1	14	33	51	3.4

Using their own knowledge and examples from the document, students needed to explain two factors motivating those who came to the Port Phillip District/colony of Victoria. Two marks were awarded for each explanation.

Responses included:

- gold and the hope of instant wealth
- business opportunities, which were the key to self-improvement
- more opportunities for success in the Port Phillip District/colony of Victoria than in Britain
- land was available in large amounts, as shown in the image
- land was seen as the key to wealth and a position of respectability in society.

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Question 1c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	13	13	18	17	18	11	9	2.9

Students needed to explain the political consequences of the diverse backgrounds and aspirations of immigrants to the Port Phillip District/colony of Victoria up to 1860. Students needed to address political consequences, diverse backgrounds and aspirations and use evidence to support their response to achieve full marks.

High-scoring responses included evidence that consisted of the following points:

- Most immigrants were of British background but had various aspirations. Some – mostly small landowners from Britain, younger sons of land-owning families – sought land, through greater land ownership, to have more political influence than they had in Britain, and to transfer traditional British political attitudes to their new situation.
- There was the push for political separation from New South Wales that resulted in the colony of Victoria being established.
- Many tradespeople and labourers came seeking to improve their position in society. They were among those who promoted the development of democratic ideas based on equality and fairness influenced by the Chartist movement. This led to conflict on the goldfields about licences and culminated in the Eureka rebellion. The political consequences were a fairer system for licences and the right to vote.
- The immigration of Chinese people to the goldfields led to anti-Chinese racism on the goldfields and resentment about funds being taken back to China. This caused exclusion and discrimination.

Question 1d.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	7	4	9	15	15	16	18	11	7	4.4

This question asked students to evaluate the extent to which prosperity transformed the Port Phillip District/colony of Victoria up to 1860. Prosperity was brought about by farming the land – sheep and wheat. Gold also brought prosperity to the colony. The transformation of society came with the rise in population, increase in infrastructure, funds to construct great civic buildings, interest in education and ideas of self-improvement. Most students argued that this transformation was positive, but some pointed to some negatives: environmental consequences of gold mining, the deterioration of Aboriginal society and overcrowding in Melbourne.

Document B

Question 2a.

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	1	5	94	2

Students received full marks for this question by identifying from the document two examples of Aborigines adopting European customs or habits.

Correct responses included the following:

- paid employment
- use of money
- European clothing
- European habits of living.

Question 2b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	0	2	14	25	59	3.4

Students needed to explain why Edward Bell considered that the ‘usefulness’ of Aborigines had increased.

Responses included the following. Aboriginal workers:

- were now the best available source of labour due to the rush to the goldfields by other workers
- were useful in terms of their knowledge of the land
- showed an ability to track sheep.

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Question 2c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	1	2	7	17	33	26	15	4.2

Students needed to explain the impact of the land-use practices of European settlers on the Aboriginal way of life in the Port Phillip District/colony of Victoria up to 1860. The more successful students demonstrated an understanding of traditional Aboriginal land-use, of the changes brought by the Europeans and of the resulting impact.

These high-scoring responses included evidence that consisted of the following: Aboriginal land-use revolved around a nomadic lifestyle and a hunter–gatherer economy. European settlers brought the concept of land ownership, which excluded the Aboriginal people. European practices included clearing land, constructing roads, fencing off land, sowing crops, introducing different farm animals (especially sheep) and constructing permanent buildings.

The impact on the Aboriginal way of life included loss of traditional connections with the land, the trauma of being excluded from this land, loss of food sources due to land clearing and fencing, polluted waterways, environmental impact due to mining and introduced fauna, inter-tribal disputes due to the need to move into further areas, disputes and violence with Europeans regarding these changes and decisions to assimilate into European ways undermining the traditional Aboriginal way of life.

Question 2d.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	1	2	6	9	13	18	21	18	11	5.3

Students considered several responses to this question.

Generally, the attitude of European settlers towards Aboriginal people was negative and often hostile. The more successful students wrote about a diversity of attitudes and included examples such as McCrae, who had a positive viewpoint towards Aboriginal people.

Edward Bell’s report is reasonably sympathetic to the work practices of Aborigines. He praises their ‘usefulness’ at this time and so is at odds with the often-reported European attitudes of hostility. However, his general tone is paternalistic, which was often the attitude shown, even by those Europeans who took a sympathetic view of the Aboriginal situation.

Bell believed that the European lifestyle was superior to that of the Aborigines. Most Europeans supported this view.

Bell is grateful for the labour input of Aborigines and supports the wages paid to them, but acknowledges that this is due to there being no great alternative due to gold rushes. This would have been the common view.

High-scoring responses included detailed information, were relevant to the question and supplied varied and sophisticated evidence to support the response.

The historian Richard Broome has written extensively on many different aspects of this important period.

Section B

Generally responses in this section were well organised. Students showed that they understood the question, and were able to answer in precise, concise terms, substantiating answers with well-chosen evidence.

Question 3a.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	5	4	12	10	69	3.4

This question was completed well by most students. Students needed to identify and explain two pieces of legislation that excluded specific groups from citizenship in the new nation. Two marks were awarded for each of the two pieces of legislation identified and explained by students. Possible responses included:

- *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*
- *Pacific Islanders Act 1901*
- *Franchise Act 1902.*

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Question 3b.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	5	5	12	18	27	20	13	3.7

This question required students to discuss the extent to which women shared in the benefits and responsibilities acquired after Federation up to 1914. High-scoring responses referred separately to the benefits and responsibilities available to citizens and the extent to which these were available to women. The main view was that white/European women had a reasonable share of these benefits. The *Franchise Act 1902* gave such women the right to vote and so established them as entitled to the fundamental benefits of citizenship. The *Maternity Allowance Act 1912* provided for a financial benefit to be paid directly to these women. The responsibility to build the population was based on British and increasingly Australian values. Women had the responsibility of raising the next healthy generation. Future defence needs were seen as part of this responsibility. Women were seen as responsible for the home and children and so were excluded from the benefits of wage determinations; for example, the Harvester Judgment of 1907.

Question 3c.

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	6	3	6	9	10	12	13	15	13	9	5	5.6

Students needed to evaluate to what extent hopes and fears helped to create a sense of national identity from 1888 to 1900. It was important that responses referred to the pre-Federation period.

A sense of national identity was one of the key aspects in answering this question. The more successful students separated hopes and fears and considered the extent to which they helped create national identity. Generally, there was a strong correlation between fears and hopes, but some argued that fears had a stronger impact on national identity than hopes.

The colonists' hope at this time was that it would be possible to maintain a British-based society but one that was fairer than Britain. This was expressed in the art and literature of the time. The increasing number of Australian-born people promoted the idea of national identity. There was also the hope of a fairer, kinder society with better working conditions. The hope of a white society was very clearly part of national identity and was widely expressed in art and literature.

The fears of society were seen as possible invasion by Russia, China and Japan. Defending against this threat led to an increased sense of national identity and unity. There was also the fear of non-British migration. Guarding against this led to a sense of national identity and of uniting against those who were excluded.

Section C

Question chosen	none	4	5	6
%	2	46	24	28

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	3	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	3	4	5	7	9	11	10	9	8	8	3	2	12.6

Students used evidence and a depth of knowledge to support their contentions relating to the essay topics. The very best responses often challenged the question's assertions and argued that the issue was a complex one requiring a thorough examination of the evidence.

As in previous years, the discriminating factors for the essays included knowledge of the area of the study, a relevant response to the essay question and use of a range of evidence, including those of historians as well as primary sources.

Question 4

Most students agreed with the statement, 'Australians responded with enthusiasm to the outbreak of World War I, but this enthusiasm was not maintained'. Students observed that early enthusiasm diminished in varying degrees over time as the reality of war casualties became apparent. Some challenged the extent to which all Australians were enthusiastic at the start and pointed to the attitudes of many Irish Catholics.

Evidence of enthusiasm could be shown by recruitment numbers, farewell parades, women's efforts to help the cause and belief in Britain needing support. The reason why such enthusiasm was not maintained centred on the conscription debates. However, men were still enlisting in 1918 and there were still auxiliary groups keen to contribute.

Some useful sources for World War I include CEW Bean, Michael McKernan, Joan Beaumont, Bill Gammage and Joy Damousi. See also Stephen Garton and Peter Stanley, 'The Great War and its aftermath, 1914–22', *The Cambridge History of Australia*, Alison Bashford and Stuart Macintyre (eds), Cambridge University Press, New York, vol. 2, 2013, pp. 39–63.

Question 5

Most students agreed that 'The Depression caused deep social and economic wounds'; however, most students disagreed with the 'all or nothing' stance of the statement, with the key words being 'deep' and 'all levels'. The best responses argued for a variation in these terms, and separated the social and economic aspects. The more successful responses pointed out that the wounds were deep for some, but not all levels of society suffered these wounds.

Some useful sources for The Depression include Geoffrey Spenceley, Wendy Lowenstein, Michael Cannon and David Potts. See also Frank Bongiorno, 'Search for a solution, 1923–39', *The Cambridge History of Australia*, Alison Bashford and Stuart Macintyre (eds), Cambridge University Press, New York, vol. 2, 2013, pp. 64–87.

Question 6

Most students generally agreed with the statement, 'The threat to Australia during World War II resulted in a unified mobilisation of the nation' but wrote of the changes from late 1941 onwards when Australia was seen to be directly threatened by Japanese invasion. There is much evidence of the nation mobilising more strongly in 1941 than in 1939. Some better responses questioned the degree of unity in this mobilisation and pointed to black market activities and resentment towards US military personnel. The more successful responses also referred to Curtin's leadership.

Some useful sources for World War II include Joan Beaumont and David Lowe. See also Kate Darian-Smith, 'World War 2 and post-war construction, 1939–49', *The Cambridge History of Australia*, Alison Bashford and Stuart Macintyre (eds), Cambridge University Press, New York, vol. 2, 2013, pp. 88–111.

Section D

Representation chosen	none	A.	B.	C.	D.
%	2	11	77	2	8

Identification

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	4	3	23	27	44	3.1

Evaluation

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	6	4	8	11	13	17	17	14	10	4.7

Analysis

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Average
%	10	4	7	8	11	14	19	16	12	4.7

On the whole, students addressed the criteria, demonstrated a sound knowledge of the significant points in time and utilised historians' views to substantiate their arguments. The more successful students also concentrated on the changing 'attitudes' that were apparent between the two points in time.

Some students presented their answers in essay form, while others framed their answer using the dot points included in the question, writing their response as three short answers. However, many students neglected to address all three dot points in their responses. It is important to read each dot point with great care before responding as the skills of identification, evaluation and analysis are highlighted by the three dot points. The use of evidence to support points made about **both** 'points in time' is also emphasised.

Although each document or image on the examination paper was taken from one 'point in time', the other point in time relevant to that issue also needed to be studied and then made use of in responses. Each issue, and the two major points in time that show the change in attitudes with regard to that issue, are set out very clearly on page 90 of the *VCE Australian History Study Design*. Hence, with regard to 'Attitudes to Indigenous rights' both points in time – the 1967

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Referendum and the 1972 Tent Embassy in Canberra – have been identified. In the same way, the issue ‘Attitudes to the Vietnam War’ highlights the points in time, 1965 and 1970. The 1972 Flooding of Lake Pedder and the 1983 Franklin Dam decision are the ‘points in time’ identified for the issue, ‘Attitudes to the environment’, while ‘Attitudes to immigration’ highlights the phasing out of the White Australia Policy, 1964 to 1966, and the Vietnamese ‘Boat people’ in the 1970s.

Students cannot respond well to the third dot point unless they are conversant with **both** points in time and can discuss the degree of change in attitudes between one point of time and the other, as well as the reasons for any change.

Responses to Section D were marked in the following manner.

- Students were awarded two marks for the identification of attitudes reflected in the representation and two marks for the evidence/explanation.
- Students were awarded up to eight marks depending on how successfully they were able to evaluate the degree to which the representation reflects attitudes about the issues at that particular ‘point in time’. Discriminating factors were the quality of the response in relation to knowledge, relevance and evidence.
- Students were awarded up to four marks depending on how successfully they were able to analyse changing attitudes in relation to the issue and up to four marks for evidence from the other ‘point in time’ studied.

A. Attitudes to Indigenous rights

The source showed the impetus for the Tent Embassy protest and the reasons why this protest was not widely supported by mainstream Australia. The threat to land ownership was implied and the militant attitude shown was intimidating to many Australians. The 1967 Referendum was the other point in time. This was overwhelmingly supported and there was no presentation of a case for a ‘No’ vote. Most Australians saw no threat from the changes in this referendum and so supported it, as did major political parties. By 1972, Aboriginal activists demanded land rights and added a flag to symbolise their separate identity. To white Australians there was a perceived threat of loss of land.

B. Attitudes to the Vietnam War

The source showed an anti-war attitude from 1965. The focus of the source was on women protesting. As it was part of a May Day parade it could be argued that this was quite a radical protest. Emphasis was on the welfare of children but this was a minority view at this time. Although the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and many student groups were opposed, most Australians had accepted the domino theory and supported the decision of the government to become involved in the Vietnam War. The other point in time that needed to be discussed was 1970. Support for Australian involvement in the War had decreased due to the longevity of the war, casualties, atrocities and widespread media coverage.

C. Attitudes to the environment

The source showed the views of an environmental group that was opposed to this action. This was a minority view in 1972. No government was willing to oppose the flooding, and economic considerations were deemed more important than environmental concerns. The Franklin Dam issue of the early 1980s was the other point in time. The Franklin Dam was successfully opposed due to increased awareness of environmental issues, more sophisticated methods of protest and use of the media, and the decision of the ALP that it was a federal government issue.

D. Attitudes to immigration

The source concerned a government announcement of changes that were part of the retreat from the White Australia policy. It related to reducing time restrictions on non-Europeans becoming Australian citizens and allowing entry to some ‘selected’ non-Europeans. Most Australians accepted these changes, although many were still fearful of where this would lead. The government was still emphasising a homogenous society to allay these fears. The White Australia policy was being increasingly criticised globally. The arrival of refugees from Indochina from the mid 1970s onwards was the other point in time that students needed to refer to in their response. This was perhaps reluctantly supported by many Australians but was agreed to on humanitarian grounds.