2024 VCE Australian History external assessment report

General comments

The 2024 VCE Australian History examination consisted of two sections, with questions based on each of the four investigations in the *VCE History Study Design 2022–2026: Australian History*. Students were required to respond to two out of four questions in Section A and select one out of four essay questions in Section B.

**General advice:**

* Higher-scoring responses were often distinguished by their use of accurate and specific knowledge, including dates or places to establish context, or references to specific individuals, groups or artefacts from the period to establish different perspectives (e.g., Vida Goldstein, Daniel Mannix, union representatives, Women’s Suffrage groups or specific propaganda such as the Blood Vote anti-conscription poster).
* Higher-scoring responses often used quotes from the period or from historians to add to the sources provided for short-answer source analysis questions. Using evidence from the period or from historians was required for the eight-mark responses and for high-scoring essay responses in Section B. Paraphrasing arguments or perspectives is an acceptable form of using evidence. However, placing a historian’s name in brackets following a common phrase, such as ‘working man’s paradise’, is not considered a useful form of evidence, and students need to ensure that they only reference a historian in relation to that historian’s area of expertise. For example, Richard Broome was often cited in answers about war and upheaval, despite his area of specialisation lying elsewhere.
* Particularly for extended responses and the essay, higher-scoring responses provided a sense of nuance in their argument, or exceptions to the dominant line of argument.
* Students should carefully read and interpret the wording of questions. For example, many students focused on immigration broadly when responding to Question 2e., rather than on the concept of immigrants that appeared in the question. Furthermore, essay Question 1 asked about where European colonisation caused more change to the Australian landscape than to Aboriginal custodianship and culture, but some students instead compared the impacts of the two different approaches to land use and management.
* A minority of students attempted to answer more than two questions in Section A and this diminished the depth and quality of their answers. It also often meant that the student was unable to attempt, or fully construct, an essay response for Section B. Some students spent too much time on and wrote too many words in Section A, often using extra space, but then wrote a comparatively less well-constructed essay in Section B. Students are reminded to distribute their time appropriately across both sections of the examination.
* Handwriting also remains an area of concern. While every effort is made by assessors to read every word, there are instances when this is not possible. Illegible handwriting can upset the flow and coherence of an answer, and marks cannot be awarded for words or sentences that cannot be read.

Specific information

Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual 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 resulting in a total more or less than 100 per cent.

Section A

Section A of the examination included short-answer questions worth two, four, five or six marks and an extended response worth eight marks. Command terms used included identify, describe, explain and analyse.

For ‘identify’ questions worth two marks, students needed to select two relevant and appropriate quotes from the written source provided. These questions were well-handled by the cohort, with most students successfully selecting two appropriate quotes from the written sources provided that addressed the question. Students may add their own words to label or categorise, for example, labelling complaints or reasons, and this can help to convey the meaning of their answer, but it was not necessary to score full marks.

‘Describe’ questions were worth four marks and required students to provide detailed characteristics or features of two events or perspectives. Students were required to use the visual source provided to support their answer. Students are encouraged to read and draw on information that is provided with the source. Each visual source was accompanied by an introductory comment and attribution, and this extra information often provided important clues to help students interpret the source appropriately. Full sentences should be used for four-mark questions, rather than providing two events or perspectives as dot points.

‘Explain’ questions were worth five or six marks and required students to make connections between causes and consequences. This required identifying the causes (e.g., British attitudes about the land, the *Aboriginal Protection Act 1869* or the increase of government activity during World War II), identifying the consequences and providing reasons why the cause led to these consequences (e.g., the colonisation of Australia, the impacts of the *Aboriginal Protection Act 1869* or the economic and social life of Australia during World War II).

For questions worth four to six marks that required the use of the source, it is important for students to ensure they meet the specific requirements of the question. Students should address the question term and subject and *use* the source provided as evidence. The source itself is not the answer and simply summarising the source was not enough to achieve full marks. Students were required to quote key phrases or words from the source, and higher-scoring responses placed such quotes into an argument and explained their relevance to the question.

When questions asked for two components (e.g., perspectives and events), using the source and the student’s own knowledge, both components did not need to be drawn from the source, although in many cases the source could be used as a starting point for two perspectives. Higher-scoring responses often clearly signposted an answer by identifying when the second event or perspective was being discussed and naming the event or perspective when appropriate. Such structure helped keep responses relevant and concise. Descriptions and explanations of perspectives often identified the idea or argument that underpinned the perspective along with examples or evidence of such perspectives.

‘Analyse’ was the command term used for the eight-mark extended response questions. These questions required students to establish relationships between components (e.g., protest and changes to government policy relating to the environment) and the significance of these relationships. Although examples of the relationship between components were required (e.g., of the impact of the Save Our Sons campaign and the Moratorium Movement on attitudes towards participation in the Vietnam War), it was appropriate to argue that such relationships were limited and to provide reasons for this argument, which many students did.

While demonstrating knowledge from across the full time period stipulated was not required for shorter questions worth four to six marks, it was important for responses to the extended response question to demonstrate a broader range of knowledge across the time period, which often allowed students to establish degrees of continuity or change.

Question 1a.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 4 | 17 | 79 | 1.8 |

Question 1a. required students to identify two features listed in the source that would make the suggested location suitable for the establishment of a national park. Possible answers included:

* The land is available – ‘so large an area of Crown land’.
* Proximity to the city – ‘within 14 miles of a populous city’.
* Beautiful features – ‘between the creek and the sea is a coast range of the usual sandstone foundation … the park therefore will contain a great variety of grand and beautiful features’.
* Rare example of Australian timber – ‘it has in the valleys one attraction, no longer to be found in the well-known gulleys of the Blue Mountains, namely, splendid specimens of Australian timber’.

Question 1b.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Average |
| % | 18 | 14 | 32 | 17 | 20 | 2.0 |

Question 1b. asked students to describe how two significant events contributed to environmental change in Australia, using source 2. The source advertised the irrigation of the Murray River, which meant that this event needed to be selected as one of the two events considered. Higher-scoring responses added specific knowledge of the irrigation of the Murray River to the source; for example, that the Chaffey brothers were granted 50,000 acres at Mildura in 1886, with the option to buy a further 200,000 acres; or that by 1893, 8000 fruit trees were being irrigated and the population had climbed to 3500.

Other events described may have included:

* Aboriginal management of land using fire, hydraulic engineering, stone quarrying
* European colonisation of Australia and the spread of pastoralism
* the gold rushes
* the Black Thursday bushfire 1851
* Federation drought
* the creation of national parks.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

Perhaps the most significant event to change the Australian landscape was colonisation in 1788. After colonisation, pastoralism was introduced to the Australian environment with sheep compacting the solid and changing ‘the very nature of the country’ (Lines). Additionally, a century later Australians wished to utilise the land to its utmost capabilities and so in 1890 sought to irrigate the Murray River in order to occupy the unused land along its banks. In 1890 the Chaffey family brought the areas around the Murray from ‘desert wild to fruitful pains’ (s2) with their irrigation.

Question 1c.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Average |
| % | 3 | 8 | 25 | 31 | 23 | 10 | 2.8 |

Question 1c. required students to explain how British attitudes about the land contributed to colonisation, using source 3. Source 3 suggests that such attitudes stemmed from the Bible command ‘to go forth and multiply and subdue the earth’and the belief that Aboriginal peoples were not using the land, which left it open and available to those willing to use it (according to European understandings of land use). Furthermore, the source describes Europeans’ feelings of superiority over Aboriginal peoples during this period through the quote ‘He allows the superiority of civilisation over barbarism, of intellect over instinct or brutish reason’ and that this, too, was used as justification for colonisation.

High-scoring responses often provided corroborating evidence from the student’s own knowledge of the ideas listed above or elaborated on the Doctrine of Land Improvement and the idea that Europeans ‘constructed’ their rights to the land by building upon it. These responses sometimes also discussed how Europeans’ understanding of land ownership was linked to the idea that land was to be exploited and profited from, as justification for colonisation of the land.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

British attitudes surrounding the land largely centred on its utilisation for commercial opportunities. They believed that the Indigenous people had ‘wasted’ its potential as a highly profitable location for resource exploitation. Colonisers’ bemusement at the Indigenous’ lack of exploitation of the land is epitomised by James Cook’s 1770 quote, ‘we saw not one inch of cultivated land in the whole country’. The British’s capitalistic mindset that land was not created by ‘God’ ‘as a beautiful spectacle … but as a field to be improved upon’ exemplifies not only their reasons for settlement, but the reasoning behind the way in which they settled. Instantly pursuing the profitability of the Australian landscape, colonisers grazed the land and grazed sheep, fuelled by this notion of ‘improvement’. Ultimately, British attitudes in the form of religion and the Doctrine of Land Improvement were integral to their colonisation of Australia.

Question 1d.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Average |
| % | 14 | 9 | 23 | 21 | 15 | 11 | 9 | 2.7 |

Question 1d. required students to explain two perspectives that influenced Australians’ views of the environment from 1950 to 2010, using source 4. Source 4 argued that population size is interconnected with other aspects of Australian life, and that population growth will increase resource use, waste and the need for infrastructure. The source concluded that if these issues are not addressed, there will be degradation of the land.

Most students described the perspective that the environment needs protection, using the source provided, in addition to the perspective that the environment should be considered an economic resource to be developed in pursuit of growth and economic progress. Higher-scoring responses provided two clearly sign-posted, distinct and detailed perspectives from the prescribed period, reasons for the existence of each perspective and how these perspectives shaped Australians’ views of the environment.

Other perspectives discussed may include:

* concerns about the impacts of the mining and export industries
* advocates for conservation and the protection of endangered habitats
* Indigenous perspectives, for example, in relation to mining on Indigenous land.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

Australians’ views of the environment were influenced by perspectives of conservation and ideas of economic growth. Perspectives prioritising conservation of the environment were influential by warning of the ‘further degradation of land and water resources’ (s4), if the pathway of disregarding the damage to the environment continued. The views centred around protecting the natural landscape and stopping its manipulation as it ‘compromise[s] its quality of life’ (s4) sparked a shift in Australian views to push for conservation. Writings like Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring (1962) and Barry Commoner’s ‘Four Laws of Ecology’ (1971) were influential in changing views of the environment as they showed that ‘every gain is won at some cost’. Additionally, perspectives focused on the nation’s economic growth also influenced views. The belief of mining industries and CEOs like Hugh Morgan that mining is the ‘dynamo of the economy’ (Blainey) influenced support of mining and views disregarding environmental damage. The perspective that economic growth was more important than conservation was echoed with views that ‘mining bans would constitute a negligent disregard to vast mineral wealth’ (Lines), influencing views of using the land as a commodity.

Question 1e.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | Average |
| % | 29 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 14 | 9 | 11 | 13 | 4 | 3.1 |

Question 1e. required students to analyse the impact of protest on changes to government policy concerning the Australian environment between 1950 and 2010, using evidence from their own knowledge to support their answer. Higher-scoring responses often differentiated between changes to government policy at the state or federal levels or argued that although some protests led to changes to government policy such as the introduction of the *World Heritage Properties Conservation Act 1983*, many protests were unsuccessful or had limited impacts on government policy. Many responses also described the formation of the United Tasmania Group, which was the first established green party in the world and the influence in politics that Bob Brown and the Australian Greens went on to have.

Protests that were most commonly considered included:

* the Franklin River Campaign and/or Lake Pedder protest
* the Little Desert Campaign
* the Green Bans
* the Jabiluka mining protest.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

Protests did operate to change government policy concerning the Australian environment and were often successful.

The impact of protests was highlighted through the Green Bans across major cities, in which unions and residents demanded less urbanisation. Hutton and Canners note the Bans ‘ignited enthusiasm’ for environmental issues ‘across the nation’, with the first Green Ban in 1970 saving Kelly’s Bush from development. Yet beyond this, the protests influenced policy, with Australia ratifying the World Heritage Convention in 1949, now having enlisted over 20 sites. Further, the bans saw an agreement with the government for 90 per cent of historic homes to be renovated, rather than completely knocked down, pointing to how government policy was changed by 2010.

Such a phenomenon was also highlighted in the Little Desert Campaign of the 1960s, yet on more of a state level. With two public meetings with 1000 attendees, as well as a petition with 4000 signatures, the Save our Bushland Action Committee was ‘one of the first wilderness battles’ to ‘raise the consciousness of the general public’ (Robin). Additionally, their forms of protested effect the Victorian Government, forced to shelve the plans for the Little Desert to be developed into 100,000 ha of farming space, demonstrating how protest also impacted state government policy.

Therefore, between 1950 and 2010, protest had an important role in changing government policy relating to the environment.

Question 2a.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 3 | 12 | 85 | 1.8 |

Question 2a. required students to identify two reasons why migration to the colonies was considered desirable, using source 5. Possible answers included:

* ‘The Australian colonies present an almost boundless field for the industry of man.’
* Job opportunities – ‘All who are willing and able to work may live, and live well, there.’
* Fertile land – ‘The country is in most places in a state of natural pasture, growing food sufficient for flocks and herds without limit.’
* Abundance of food – ‘Starvation is unknown in Australia.’

Question 2b.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Average |
| % | 3 | 11 | 41 | 31 | 14 | 2.4 |

Question 2b. required students to describe two aspects of life in Great Britain that contributed to increased immigration to the colonies of Australia after 1834, using source 6. Source 6 was a cartoon by John Leech printed in 1843 that depicted the discrepancy in lifestyle between the affluent capitalist class and the working class providing the labour. Referencing the source, many students commented on:

* the disparities in wealth evident in the image
* the starvation of the thin and frail figures depicted
* the challenging working conditions of the people mining in the background
* the state of poverty of the people shown in the bottom, right-hand section.

Higher-scoring responses added their own corroborating knowledge and evidence of the two aspects of life drawn from the image or provided additional aspects of life such as overpopulation in England and Scotland. Given that the question asked about Great Britain rather than the United Kingdom, reference to conditions in Ireland, including the potato famine, was not appropriate. Furthermore, responses that focused on the ‘pull’ factors of migration, such as the gold rushes in Victoria, were also unlikely to score highly.

The following high-scoring response draws two aspects of life from the source and adds to each with the student’s own knowledge:

One aspect of life in Great Britain was overpopulation, as illustrated by the crowded group of people at the bottom of source 6. This contributed to increased migration as the British Government realised they could benefit ‘from the wholesale export of men, women and children’, as said by Richards and Oxley. Another aspect of life in Great Britain was starvation, as illustrated by the skinny, unhealthy child to the left of the basket at the bottom of source 6. This is mirrored by William Corbett, who at the time mentioned ‘they never had anything but bread to eat’. This increased migration to the colonies as they reportedly had less starvation.

Question 2c.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Average |
| % | 8 | 12 | 23 | 28 | 17 | 12 | 2.7 |

Question 2c. required students to explain the consequences of the *Aboriginal Protection Act 1869* up to 1913, using source 7. The source provided referred to the prevalent belief during the closing decades of the 19th century that Aboriginal peoples were a primitive race who were ‘doomed to disappear’. Furthermore, the source noted that legislation modelled on the Victorian *Aboriginal Protection Act 1869* was passed in all major colonies or states. High-scoring responses identified how the law functioned through the establishment of a Central Board that had total control over the lives of Aboriginal peoples in Victoria. The Board determined where Aboriginal peoples could live, how they were employed, how their earnings were spent and how their children were cared for and educated. Additional consequences of the law described by students often included that Aboriginal peoples frequently lost access to hunting and culturally significant lands and that the Act undermined Aboriginal traditions and rituals. Some responses described how the Act normalised racist attitudes towards Aboriginal peoples, became a precedent for other laws around Australia and contributed to the passing of the *Half-Caste Act of 1886*, which split families living on the reserves. Some responses also noted that the inspector and manager of the Kulin people at Coranderrk, John Green, often acted with more humanity than other managers and allowed the people there to rule themselves as much as possible. Some lower-scoring responses interpreted the title of the Act literally and argued that the law had a positive impact on Aboriginal culture.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

Firstly, the Act ‘cast Aborigines as a primitive, childlike race that was doomed to disappear’ (s7). This increased dispossession of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as this gave legitimacy to them being regarded as ‘uncivilised … less than human’, according to historian David Day. Secondly, the Act established ‘greater regulatory powers’ of the government of Indigenous people (s7). This gave the government significantly greater powers over where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people lived and worked, acting as a form of discrimination. Lastly, the Act normalised racism in the colonies, as demonstrated by William Hull, a member of the Victorian Parliament at the time, who stated, ‘the inferior races should pass away before the superior races’, demonstrating bigotry.

Question 2d.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Average |
| % | 10 | 12 | 20 | 21 | 20 | 16 | 2 | 2.8 |

Question 2d. required students to explain two key events that contributed to changes in immigration and citizenship in Australia from 1973, using source 8. The source is taken from *The Canberra Times* in June 1975 and suggests that more Vietnamese refugees would be arriving in Australia from refugee camps in Hong Kong. Most students appropriately referred to the fall of Saigon as one of the key events, which led to a mass exodus by Vietnamese people who were unwilling or unable to live under communist control. High-scoring responses often noted how Australian participation in the conflict influenced attitudes towards those fleeing communism and distinguished between the approaches of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam and his successor Malcolm Fraser, who spearheaded two refugee conferences in 1978–1979, creating an international agreement for refugee resettlement. Higher-scoring responses also connected the two key events described to changes to both immigration and citizenship; either both events could be linked to both concepts or one event could be linked to each. Many students referred to the granting of permanent visas to over 40,000 Chinese students in Australia following the Tiananmen Square protest in 1989 as an example of a step towards citizenship for those Chinese nationals.

Other key events may have included:

* the appointment of Al Grassby as Minister for Immigration and the policy of multiculturalism
* the amendment and passing of migration and citizenship Acts in the 1980s and 1990s
* the Tampa crisis in August 2001, which resulted in changed immigration policy after the creation of the ‘Pacific Solution’
* the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre in New York on 11 September 2001, which resulted in a further tightening of immigration policy to increase control over border protection and counter-terrorism security.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

Firstly, the end of the Vietnam War significantly influenced the migration and citizenship of migrants. The Whitlam government initially refused to take many refugees; however, the fall of Saigon in 1975 led to considerable humanitarian indignation, and particularly after the election of Fraser in 1975, more refugees from Vietnam were accepted. As shown in source 8, the ‘further 170 Vietnamese refugees [expected to arrive] showcases the initially small amounts of migration. However, the Fraser government’s acceptance of thousands of refugees showcased the change occurred by the fall of Saigon.

Secondly, the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre was a key event influencing immigration and citizenship. Hawke’s decision to allow 42,000 Chinese students visas to Australia was an example of growing acceptance to migration among the government. Additionally, this was received by many as ‘absolutely right’ (John Farmer). This influx of migrants was a considerable change to the migration of the time. Additionally, the visas being permanent significantly influenced ideas of citizenship at the time.

Question 2e.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | Average |
| % | 13 | 7 | 13 | 14 | 16 | 16 | 11 | 7 | 2 | 3.4 |

Question 2e. required students to analyse the significant ideas that influenced attitudes towards immigrants in Australia after 1945. Many responses started by describing Arthur Calwell’s idea that Australia needed to ‘populate or perish’, but that the preference for white British immigrants remained. Higher-scoring responses often compared ideas of assimilationism with a growing embrace of multiculturalism from 1973 onwards but contrasted these ideas with the persistent opposition to immigration evidenced by the arguments of historian Geoffrey Blainey and politician Pauline Hanson. It was important for students to make connections between these ideas and attitudes towards different immigrant groups, including, for example:

* the ‘beautiful Balts’ from Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia
* Jewish refugees
* migrants from Eastern and Southern Europe
* Asian migrants.

The following high-scoring response establishes ideas that shaped attitudes towards immigrants in the post-war period. This response also makes excellent use of perspectives from the period and specific knowledge, including dates for context and migration statistics for scope:

After 1945, there was continuity in the belief in White Australia, as Minister for Immigration Arthur Calwell declared in 1947, ‘the flag of White Australia will not be lowered’ and subsequently Harold Holt in 1950 stated, ‘this is a British community. It will continue to be a British community.’ Yet, following the threats of invasion from Japan and the unprepared response, a change occurred where immigrants were viewed as a necessity for ‘Australia to hold our island continent for ourselves’ (Calwell). This resulted in the Chifley government introducing the ‘populate or perish’ slogan, where assisted migration saw two million migrants between 1945 and 1965, many of whom were British as part of the ‘10-pound pom scheme’. This shift in attitudes towards necessity saw more lenient immigration, with 120,000 displaced Europeans beyond the British Isles coming to Australia by 1951, and received bipartisan support with opposition leader Robert Menzies stating, ‘we must view migrants primarily as assets’. This culminated in a growing acceptance of immigration, reinforced by Al Grassby’s declaration of multiculturalism in 1973.

However, following almost two decades of bipartisan support, historian Geoffrey Blainey, in the now ‘Blainey controversy’, expressed concerns regarding an acceptance of diverse immigration, stating, ‘it is as if we have turned the White Australia policy inside out’ and a ‘minister of immigration is a minister of discrimination’, an idea that brought back the parliamentary debate regarding immigration and ultimately saw restrictions imposed by the Howard government from 1996. This attitude is reflected in Pauline Hanson’s maiden speech, where she stated, ‘I believe we are in danger of being swamped by Asians’. Ultimately, the support of the accepting, tolerant attitudes of immigration continue, yet a minority shares the views of Blainey and Hanson.

Question 3a.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 1 | 15 | 84 | 1.8 |

Question 3a. required students to identify two complaints that contributed to the Eureka Stockade from source 9. Possible answers included:

* universal male suffrage – ‘the universal right of every citizen to have a voice in making the laws’
* removal of property qualifications for MPs – ‘to place the power in the hands of responsible representatives of the people’ instead of ‘paid Officials’
* ‘taxation without representation is tyranny’
* ‘the people have been unrepresented by the Legislative Council’
* the laws are unjust – ‘they are made by them and their friends, to suit their selfish ends and narrow-minded views’.

One reason why students may not have scored full marks for this question is if they included only part of a quote that did not reveal the full grievance. For example, ‘paid Officials’ by itself was not the complaint, but that these paid officials used the law and their power to benefit themselves and their friends.

Question 3b.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Average |
| % | 5 | 11 | 32 | 40 | 13 | 2.4 |

Question 3b. required students to describe two perspectives on female suffrage up to 1908, using source 10. Source 10 was taken from *The Australian Women’s Sphere*, which many students noted (from their own knowledge) was published by leading suffragist, Vida Goldstein. The source was published in 1903, after the passing of the *Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902* but prior to suffrage being won by Victorian women in 1908. The source depicted disenfranchisement as unjust, as women were shown to be placed in the same category as ‘madness’ and ‘criminality’, whereas women’s suffrage is shown as the ‘rising sun’, symbolising hope and optimism for the future of women’s rights. Furthermore, many ‘undesirable’ men were shown to have the vote. This perspective in the source draws on racial stereotypes from the period, placing Chinese and Aboriginal men among such groups. Many responses provided an additional argument for women’s suffrage, including that Australia was considered a ‘social laboratory’ and that enfranchising women was a step towards a more developed country.

Suffragists such as Vida Goldstein and Rose Scott, or artefacts such as the Monster Petition that was presented to Victorian Parliament in 1891, were often used as examples of these perspectives.

High-scoring responses often also contrasted arguments for women’s suffrage with arguments against it, including that:

* having the vote would ‘unsex’ women and make them unfeminine and unable to carry out expected gender roles such as mothering and domestic duties
* women were too emotional to be trusted with the vote
* if women were given the vote, they would simply follow the advice of their husband, father or brother, which raised concerns about doubling the voting power of each man.

The words of Queen Victoria and the arguments of male politicians or cartoons during this period, for example, from *Punch* magazine, were often used as examples of these perspectives.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

One perspective on female suffrage was support of the expansion of voting rights to women. As revealed by source 10, publications like the Women’s Sphere ridiculed the ‘madness’ and ‘criminality’ to which female suffragists were being compared, satirising the unruliness of the manhood suffrage movement compared to the composed picture of a woman suffragist. Other publications such as The Dawn, managed by feminist Louisa Lawson, argued that parliament could not make effective laws for women while women were excluded from voting.

On the other hand, some conservative politicians championed the perspective that womanhood suffrage was ‘madness’, as ironicised by the source. For instance, free trader William Knox argued in 1902 that the ‘duty’ of a woman was ‘attending the family’ while a man’s was ‘here’ in parliament. Publications like The Bulletin also depicted suffragists negatively. Views like this meant that Victoria didn’t grant female suffrage until 1908.

Question 3c.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Average |
| % | 8 | 6 | 20 | 31 | 24 | 12 | 2.9 |

Question 3c. required students to explain the ideas that influenced attitudes about workers’ rights up to 1913, using source 11. The source was introduced as a historical interpretation of the expansion of new unionism, which it described as a ‘substantial expansion to trade unionism’, arguing that ‘whereas trade unionism had been considered primarily the preserve of skilled tradesmen, it spread in the 1880s amongst previously unorganised semiskilled and unskilled workers, notably the shearers, metal miners and railwaymen’. High-scoring responses used the source to define the idea of new unionism and the associated rise of class consciousness. Furthermore, high-scoring responses also described the role played by the idea of Chartism in the pursuit of greater rights for the working classes, most notably the right to vote and influence the laws that affected them. Additionally, the source notes the establishment of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) in the 1890s and higher-scoring responses commented on the role of the political participation of the working class in influencing government policy and achieving government in the colonies and federally. These ideas were connected to improved rights and conditions for workers, such as the achievement of the 8-hour day for stonemasons in 1856; the introduction of legislation that was favourable towards the working class, including the *Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904*; and the introduction of a basic wage through the Harvester Judgement of 1907.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

There were extensive ideologies amongst workers that contributed to enhanced desire for rights and increased striking. One idea was ‘new unionism’ (source 11), which involved ‘previously unorganised semi and unskilled workers’ (source 11) uniting in unions and was ‘Australia’s defining characteristic’ (Pratt et al.) that enhanced support for workers’ rights. Moreover, the ‘major phenomenon of the labour movement’ (source 11) allowed for increased heightening of ‘class consciousness’ (source 11) for both the working class and capital. Poor working conditions were exposed, including dangerous material such as lead, and employee exploitation, raising national awareness through the Maritime Strike of 1890 where W.G. Spence exposed that the employers ‘have failed us’. These attitudes enhanced political awareness, leading to a ‘new phase of civilisation’ (Deakin), with legislation improving workers’ rights such as the Harvester Judgement 1907 and the Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904.

Question 3d.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Average |
| % | 6 | 3 | 13 | 20 | 23 | 22 | 13 | 3.7 |

Question 3d. required students to explain two key events that contributed to changes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, using source 12. Source 12 was an excerpt from a petition to Governor-General Lord Casey from four Gurindji leaders in 1967, which highlighted that the Gurindji people were working on land from which they had been ‘dispossessed’ with ‘no recompense’. The petition demanded the return of their land which was ‘morally’ theirs as their people ‘lived [there] from time immemorial’. To use this source effectively in their response, students needed to examine the Gurindji Wave Hill walk-off as one key event, noting that this protest symbolised a shift from complaints about working conditions and economic injustice to demands for recognition of traditional ownership and rights to the land. Students often connected this protest, sometimes in combination with the 1972 Aboriginal Tent Embassy, with the passing of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act* (NT) in 1976. Other events that may have been considered include:

* the colonisation of Australia
* the 1967 Referendum
* the Mabo Decision and *Native Title Act (1993)*
* The Wik Decision.

As well as describing an additional event, higher-scoring responses identified the changes that occurred using specific knowledge and/or evidence.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

One key event leading to changes to First Nations’ rights was the Wave Hill walk-off of the Gurindji people. As demonstrated in source 12, the striking Gurindji people who had worked at Wave Hill Station presented a number of petitions to ‘regain tenure’ over their ‘dispossessed’ land at Daguragu, to the Australian executive. This was the first well-known attempt to claim land title over non-reserve land, advocating ‘morally the land’ was theirs and ‘should be returned’ to them. Ultimately, a lease of 33,000 km squared was granted to the Gurindji in 1972, with a symbolic hand back in 1975. But the strike was also highly significant in ‘capturing the imagination of the land rights movement (Attwood and Markus) and inspiring similar fights for land.

One of these events was the 1972 Tent Embassy. In response to the failure of the Yolngu people to claim their reserve land, as well as movements like that of the Gurindji, the Tent Embassy protest was enacted on the steps of parliament. As Mirams suggests, this protest stressed the ‘unique identity’ of ‘Aboriginality’ and marked an impactful moment on the public consciousness. While radical demands like sovereignty were not achieved, Tent Embassy protester Gary Foley explained that this protest ‘changed the course of history’ by bringing an ‘end to the era of assimilation’ in Australian politics by championing sovereignty over land and Aboriginal nationalism.

Question 3e.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | Average |
| % | 11 | 5 | 8 | 12 | 14 | 15 | 17 | 11 | 6 | 4.1 |

Question 3e. required students to analyse how ideas about feminism and sexuality challenged the exercise of power from 1957 to 1998. This was a question that many students handled well by establishing the ideas of feminism and sexuality and then connecting these ideas to changes and progress that took place for women and members of the LGBTQIA+ community (although it was possible to construct a high-scoring response that focused on how ideas of feminism and sexuality changed women’s rights only). The idea of feminism was often defined by students as the pursuit of equality, particularly in economic and social experiences during the 20th century. Such responses described how groups such as the Women’s Liberation movements challenged the notion that women should primarily occupy the domestic sphere as mothers and wives. Ideas around sexuality were often defined by students as a growing sense of pride in and celebration of one’s sexual identity and a belief that such aspects of one’s identity should not be hidden from society. Furthermore, some responses noted that the HIV/AIDS epidemic elicited sympathy, albeit often intertwined with fear, towards the LGBTQIA+ community.

Higher-scoring responses connected these ideas to the actions and protests taken in pursuit of them, such as the Bar Room Suffragettes, protests for equal pay (e.g., by Zelda D’Aprano) and the 1978 Mardi Gras, and subsequently identified changes to the exercise of power, including the passing of legislation such as the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* and the decriminalisation of homosexuality across the Australian states, concluding with Tasmania in 1997.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response. This response provides clear definitions of the ideas, uses dates to establish chronological context and makes regular use of historians’ interpretations as evidence:

The 1960s witnessed a transformation in conservative Australian society, as progressive sentiment helped establish a more inclusive society.

The female movement underwent second-wave feminism which strove for greater equality for women. By 1961, the contraceptive pill was introduced which ‘became a symbol of the sexual revolution’ (Bongiorno) as it enabled sexual liberation for women. Therefore, women ‘delayed childbearing’ (Bongiorno) and became more involved in the workforce. In addition, the ‘Bar room Suffragettes’ (1965) challenged the idea that only men belonged in social spheres. This protest marked a feminine desire for equality which was considered a ‘threat to sanctity and virtuous form of womanhood’ (Dever) that was endorsed through ‘domesticity and sobriety’ (Dever). Moreover, the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 was a legislative reform that suppressed the marginalisation imposed upon women. According to historian Grimshaw, this Act transformed how ‘Australians viewed women’s roles in society’, instead, striving towards ‘fairness’ and ‘inclusivity’. Therefore, women could no longer be discriminated against based on their gender.

Moreover, the LGBTQIA+ community also challenged the exercise of power by advocating for their rights and existence. The 1950s recognised the marginalisation of the homosexual community subjected to both ‘increased persecution’ and ‘sharpened surveillance’ (Holmes and Pinto). However, the Mardi Gras (1978) brought media attention to the gay rights movement. Indeed, this event was considered the ‘most dramatic moment of backlash’ (Willett), although it evolved into one of the world’s largest LGBTQIA+ parades (Pride History group). Hence gay rights became more embraced by a society that previously suppressed their existence. In addition, the HIV/AIDS pandemic prompted further recognition of the homosexual community. According to historian Bongiorno, this pandemic brought ‘increased visibility and cohesion’ to the gay community, allowing for more of an embracement by society.

Altogether, both women and the homosexual community challenged the exercise of power, prompting both legislative reform and recognition by society.

Question 4a.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 1 | 5 | 94 | 2.0 |

Question 4a. required students to identify two examples of how Australians responded to news of the outbreak of war in 1914, using source 2. This answer was handled very well by students as most were able to clearly identify two distinct responses from the source. Responses may have referred to the following:

* ‘enthusiastic’
* ‘gratified’ (pleased, satisfied)
* ‘overweighted by the import’ – sombre, serious, aware of the implications
* ‘pessimistic’
* ‘relief … that the uncertainty was over’
* pride in Great Britain/Empire.

Question 4b.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Average |
| % | 3 | 4 | 32 | 39 | 23 | 2.8 |

Question 4b. required students to describe two perspectives on the issue of conscription during World War I, using source 14. The image in source 14 was typically used by students as evidence of the perspective that voting against conscription was disloyal, a blot or stain on the honour of the nation and a betrayal of Australia and perhaps even Empire. As such, a vote for ‘yes’ would be considered a demonstration of loyalty and commitment. The second perspective described by students could have included an argument against conscription, or an additional argument for the ‘yes’ vote. Although the perspectives of sectarian groups, unions or soldiers could be used as evidence, it was possible to earn marks for each perspective without mentioning specific individuals or groups, but source 14 needed to be used as evidence for at least one perspective.

Other perspectives that students may have described included:

* Appeals to women as mothers were used by both the ‘yes’ and the ‘no’ campaigns.
* ‘No’ voters were often portrayed as ‘the enemy within’ and included trade union members, the Catholic Church, feminists and pacifists.
* Some individuals and groups such as unions or pacifist Vida Goldstein, who wrote the Manifesto of the Australian Women’s Peace Army, argued that the war was a capitalists’ war.
* Others, such as members of the ALP or Archbishop Daniel Mannix, argued that conscription was going to damage Australia’s democratic traditions or was a threat to the White Australia policy.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

During World War I (WW1), conscription was a highly divisive issue. Source 14 represents the view in favour of conscription. It is a propaganda cartoon displaying a woman trying to rub out ‘NO’ on Australia. The text states, ‘By voting “yes” Australia will rub out this blot’. Many also felt that voting no to the 1916 and 1917 referendums would be betraying the Australian troops as seen in a poster staying ‘the crime of those who vote no’, showing people stabbing Australian soldiers. Yet, many held the perspective against conscription. Pacifist Vida Goldstein stated that women should ‘refuse to give their sons as material for slaughter’, demonstrating the view that conscription would kill many innocent people.

Question 4c.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Average |
| % | 5 | 5 | 25 | 37 | 20 | 9 | 2.9 |

Question 4c. required students to explain how increased government activity changed the economic and social life of Australia during World War II, using source 15. Source 15, from the writing of historian Michael McKernan, provided evidence of the large number of regulations that affected ‘almost every area of homefront life’. The main areas of increased government activity alluded to in the source (particularly during the years of the Curtin government) included rationing (which began with petrol in 1940 but extended to many other goods through to 1944), austerity (where the government asked Australians to go without unnecessary goods and encouraged Australians to grow their own vegetables and manage their own waste) and controls over the labour force, which included both industrial and military conscription. High-scoring responses identified such increases in government activity, often naming specific laws such as the *National Security Act 1939,* and identified the impacts of such laws and regulations on the Australian economy and social life during the war. Students often focused on the experience of specific groups, including women, Aboriginal Australians or enemy aliens, to demonstrate these impacts.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

As seen in source 15, one way that the government changed the economic and social life of Australia was through the policy of austerity. Source 15 outlines the government policies to ‘save resources and equalise hardship’, with this system of ‘rationing and austerity’ made ‘almost every area of homefront life [suffer]’ (source 15). However, another government Act that affected social and economic life during World War II was the implementation and work of the Manpower Directorate. Historian Kate Darian-Smith details that ‘Manpower officials raided hotels and racecourses, seeking out the idle’ as well as prohibited workers from leaving ‘essential industries’. Thus, the work of the Manpower Directorate heavily impacted the economic and social life of Australians by prohibiting where they could work and what they could do.

Question 4d.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Average |
| % | 3 | 3 | 13 | 26 | 25 | 23 | 8 | 3.7 |

Question 4d. required students to explain two key ideas that influenced the Australian Government’s decision to participate in the Vietnam War, using source 16, which was a speech provided by Prime Minister Robert Menzies at a press conference in 1965. Ideas that influenced the government’s decision to participate that were present in the source include that:

* China and North Vietnam were part of one unified ideology – communism.
* Communism sought to overthrow the Government of South Vietnam and convert it into a communist state.
* This was part of a broader plan to extend ‘communist influence’ further in South-East Asia, threatening Australia.

Many students connected this fear of communism to a widely held belief in the ‘Domino Theory’, that if one country fell to communism, then its neighbours would also be more likely to fall to communism and that this would, in turn, bring communism closer to Australian borders. Furthermore, many students saw this involvement in the Vietnam War as part of our broader foreign policy principle of ‘forward defence’, an idea that Australia should confront a known enemy as far away from its shores as possible.

The other idea that most students referred to was Australia’s alliance with the United States (US), which was reaffirmed by President Lyndon B. Johnson’s visit to Australia. These responses described how Australia was committed to supporting the US in the Vietnam War and was ‘All the way with LBJ’, particularly as it perceived its own regional insecurity and relied upon the commitment of a strong protector ally for its security. As such, the government saw participation in the Vietnam War as one way to increase the likelihood of American support for Australia in the future, should it be needed.

This question was very well handled by students in general as most responses demonstrated the breadth and interconnection of ideas relevant to this question.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

The threat posed by communist expansionism prompted Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam War. The ‘domino theory’ inspired a wave of fear that communist ‘military operations’ would translate into a takeover. Therefore, Prime Minister Menzies considered the spread of communism as a threat to regional security, where its existence could come ‘hundreds of miles nearer to us’. According to historian Edwards, the Australian Government magnified a ‘climate of fear’ to ‘justify restrictive measures’ and military involvement. Moreover, Australia participated in the Vietnam War to uphold its alliance with the United States. Indeed, the ANZUS Treaty functioned to justify military action, and provided security in a region paralysed by ‘fear and uncertainty’. Thus, Australia fought to strengthen its ‘relationship with the United States’ (Edwards) by being actively involved in the Vietnam [War] to suppress ‘communist influence’ and to ensure American support if required in the future.

Question 4e.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Marks | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | Average |
| % | 13 | 6 | 14 | 15 | 19 | 11 | 11 | 7 | 4 | 3.5 |

Question 4e. required students to analyse the influence of the Save Our Sons (SOS) campaign and the Moratorium Movement on attitudes towards participation in the Vietnam War. Many students argued that the SOS campaign and the Moratorium Movement had some impact in changing attitudes towards the use of conscripted soldiers in Vietnam and Australian military participation in the conflict more broadly. The SOS campaign stimulated strong reactions from the public, both positive and negative, using strategies such as sit-ins, vigils and education campaigns, which raised awareness, highlighted the human cost of the war and played some part in shifting attitudes. Similarly, the Moratorium Movement brought together a broad cross-section of the Australian public, highlighting how widespread the opposition movement was and creating a sense of solidarity. By contrast, some students argued that these movements were more a reflection of attitudes that already existed, placing them in the context of broader anti-conscription or anti-war movements, or that the impact of these movements was actually quite limited. Students who pursued this line of argument explained an alternative factor (e.g., the impact of the Tet Offensive or media coverage prior to 1970) that demonstrates why the impact of these movements was limited, and this argument was considered acceptable for this question.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

The Save Our Sons (SOS) and Moratorium Movements were not entirely influential to the perspectives on participation in the Vietnam War but rather [were] key moments and movements showcasing opposition to war. The Save Our Sons movement, established in 1965, showcased anti-conscription sentiment of the time. However, Michael Caulfield states that SOS women were ‘called communists [and] bad mothers’ and, as such, were not entirely influential to those already for the war. Rather, significant events within the war shaped changing perspectives. The 1968 Tet Offensive was considered that ‘catalyst for the media’s shift’ on war (Ashley Ekins). Further, the My Lai crisis of 1968 was considered by many as ‘brutal and indiscriminate’ (Cairns), leading to increased opposition to war. Such events in turn led to the Moratorium Movements of 1970, led by Jim Cairns. The hundreds of thousands of people protesting was a clear display of anti-war sentiment resulting from such crises. This movement did bolster the arguments by the SOS that the war was ‘inhumane’ (Jean McLean) and wrong, by uniting those against the war as a group. However, it did not singularly change perspectives towards the war involvement. Further, pro-war perspectives still remained to an extent, with the government not entirely withdrawing until 1972. While the SOS and Moratorium Movement had some impact on perspectives towards war, it was events within the war that largely shifted perspectives. Additionally, pro-war perspectives still continued.

Section B

Section B required students to construct an essay response to one of the four questions provided. The first three statements invited comparative arguments about significance, asking students about whether European colonisation caused *more* change to the Australian landscape than to Aboriginal custodianship or culture, or asking for an evaluation of what was the *most* impactful or influential among a number of phenomena (e.g., that imperialism was the *most* influential idea in developing attitudes to migration or that the broadening of rights for all Australians was the *most* significant change to the exercise of power). The fourth question asked for an evaluation of the degree to which loyalty to Britain and a commitment to maintaining the security of the Empire changed or stayed the same throughout, and as a result of, the two world wars. More than half of the cohort chose to respond to Question 4.

The question prompt – ‘to what extent do you agree with this statement?’ – required students to weigh up arguments for and against the statement. Higher-scoring essays offered a clear line of argument in the student’s own voice, using topic sentences and concluding sentences to support the argument consistently and cohesively through their response.

All essay questions in 2024 focused on the first Area of Study for each investigation. In Section A, the source analysis section, the first three sources for each question also related to Area of Study 1. Many students drew on the sources provided in Section A, given their relevance to the essay questions, but higher-scoring essays were able to add to the use of these provided sources with their own knowledge of historians’ interpretations or perspectives from the period.

Question 1

Question 1 required students to evaluate whether European colonisation caused more change to the Australian landscape than to Aboriginal custodianship and culture. Many students wrote at length about the impacts of European colonisation on the Australian landscape, including:

* the introduction of non-native species of plants and animals (especially sheep and rabbits) and the associated decline of native plants and animals
* land degradation, for example, through the gold rushes and deforestation and through the introduction of hooved animals
* the increased growth in population and urbanisation
* the decline in the use of fire to manage the land, which led to an increased likelihood of bushfires such as Black Thursday in 1851.

These impacts were compared to the significant impacts of European colonisation on Aboriginal custodianship and culture, which included:

* the decline of Aboriginal populations due to causes such as introduced diseases and violence
* the replacement of Aboriginal land management and spiritual connection with the land with European pastoralism and gold mining
* the disruption of culture due to dispossession and loss of spiritual connection with the land, declining population and lack of access to sacred sites and food sources.

Some students misinterpreted the question and argued about the impacts of the land use and management strategies of each group (Europeans and Aboriginal Australians), rather than the impacts of European colonisation on the landscape or on Aboriginal custodianship and culture.

Many students concluded that European colonisation caused more change to the Australian landscape than to Aboriginal custodianship and culture, in part because of the breadth of knowledge of the impacts on the Australian landscape that students were able to include in their responses, while also noting that the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal peoples was highly damaging. Other students argued that there was a significant interconnection between European occupation of the land and the disruption to Aboriginal cultures and traditions.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

Whilst European colonisation did ultimately cause more change to the Australian landscape than to Aboriginal custodianship and culture, it must be noted that the effects on Aboriginal society and traditions were highly severe.

Arguably one of the most destructive acts implemented by Europeans in colonisation was pastoralism. Based upon the premise of the Doctrine of Land Improvement, Europeans believed that Australian land must be utilised for its profitability and commercial opportunities. Thus, in 1797, Merino sheep were introduced to Australia, whose land John Batman described as ‘the most beautiful sheep pasturage I ever saw’. The introduction of sheep grazing saw ‘squatters’, those who illegally claimed land, venture across Eastern Australia in pursuit of a location to raise sheep. Thus, by 1850, there were over six million sheep in Australia, producing around 1 million pounds worth of wool per year. The extensive grazing of sheep saw many native species decline in population with ‘the nutritious root [murrnong root] greatly diminishing due to the grazing of sheep and cattle’ (Reynolds). Furthermore, the grazing of sheep on ‘soil which had never felt hooved feet caused great erosion and created dust’. Ultimately, pastoralism and the introduction of sheep in Australia caused permanent damage to the Australian landscape, inhibiting the longevity of native plants as well as destroying the fertile soil on which they grazed.

The gold rush proved to be another example of the highly destructive nature of European colonisation. Discovered in 1851, the obvious resource exploitation by the Europeans permanently the landscape of the mining fields. One of its main, obvious physical alterations was the ‘creation of great and vast holes’ around mining areas such as Ballarat and Bendigo. Potentially the more influential impact of the gold rush was the unprecedented influx of foreigners into Australia, all in pursuit of gold. In 1851, the year gold was first discovered in Victoria, its population was 77,000, but in 1861, Victoria’s population had multiplied nearly seven times, reaching 540,000. With the mass influx of foreigners came an increase in demand, requiring a major increase in resource extraction. Following the gold rush, Melbourne was logging over four million trees per year for solely firewood, outlining the profound environmental effects of the gold rush on the environment. The extensive damage attributed to the mining of gold, as well as the exponential increase in resource exploitation as a result of the gold rush, exemplifies the extensive change made to the land by European colonists.

Although European colonists’ capitalistic endeavours caused more change to the environment than overall alterations to the Indigenous culture, it must be noted that the Frontier Wars and general displacement of Indigenous people had significant effects. Labelled the ‘most intense frontier conflict in Australian history’ (Clements), the ‘Black War’ in Van Diemen’s Land spanned from 1824 to 1831. Epitomising the major destruction of Indigenous culture and custodianship, the conflict killed over 1000 people. In an attempt to eliminate the Palawa people, colonists implemented a manoeuvre labelled ‘the Black Line’, but were outsmarted due to the Palawa people’s deep-rooted knowledge of the local bushland. Subsequently, the ‘Black War’ had the lowest black to white death ratio of four to one in all frontier conflicts, reflecting the tenacity of the Palawa resistance. Despite their best efforts, the Palawa people suffered more than 800 casualties, reducing their culture and preservation of traditions to a small number of people. Unfortunately, the occurrence of loss of culture was common as a result of the Frontier Wars, with an estimated 20,000–30,000 Indigenous men, women and children killed across Australia. Ultimately, the high casualty rate and overall denouncement of Indigenous people from colonisers caused profound reductions in the preservation of culture and custodianship. Thus, whilst its effects may not have caused as much change as physical landscape alterations by the colonisers, the loss of life and tradition must be recognised.

Though there were extensive losses in Indigenous culture and custodianship at the hands of European colonisers, the colonists’ permanent alterations to the Australian landscape ultimately propagated more change.

Question 2

Question 2 required students to evaluate whether imperialism was the most influential idea in shaping attitudes to migration between 1834 and 1913. While a large number of students completed Question 2, fewer than 10 per cent of students chose to respond to this essay topic.

The expansion of the British Empire into Australia was identified by students as a key idea in developing attitudes to migration, as its British systems of government, values and culture helped attract migrants, particularly from the United Kingdom. Much of this migration was encouraged by assisted migration schemes.

In contrast to the influence of imperialism, many students argued that race, and the desire for a White Australia, was the most significant influence on attitudes towards migration, as reflected by attitudes towards Chinese migration, particularly during the gold rushes, and discriminatory immigration legislation passed after Federation including the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* and the *Pacific Island Labourers Act 1901*. Furthermore, some students discussed the role of an emerging national identity, along with Australia’s perceived insecurity as a British outpost in the Pacific and the associated need for defence as additional ideas that influenced attitudes to migration.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

Between 1834 and 1914, although imperialism played a key role in debates and attitudes towards migration, it was not the main factor influencing such ideas, and extents to which it was an influence varied.

Imperialism was a significant idea in influencing more prejudiced attitudes towards immigration; however, the idea of racial purity was the most influential. Australia’s connection to Britain did contribute towards unjust attitudes of immigration. However, as did Australia’s national identity and fear of invasion. Further to this, Australia’s fixation on race was the catalyst for developing discriminatory attitudes on immigration.

Imperialism did contribute towards attitudes of immigration between colonial and federated Australia. Firstly, in 1890, NSW Premier Henry Parkes reiterated that Australia was a ‘crimson threat of kinship with Great Britain and this exemplified Australia’s desire to be synonymous with Britain and its European characteristics. Thus, this somewhat influenced Australia’s anti non-European immigrant sentiment. Secondly, Australia was federated and created with Great Britain in mind as the January 1901 Federation parade was, according to Eric Idle, ‘overwhelmingly British’. This insinuates that the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act was somewhat influenced by Britain which developed greater negative attitudes towards non-white migrants. Thirdly, Britain recommended to Australia that the nation use the Dictation Test to most effectively turn away non-European immigrants. This influenced most prejudicial attitudes and actions towards immigration processes as by 1909, 1359 immigrants had taken the test and only 52 had passed. Therefore, imperialism assisted in somewhat developing negative attitudes towards immigration.

However, Australia’s growing national identity and fear of invasion also developed attitudes to immigration. Firstly, in 1852 Latrobe announced that immigrants should be ‘owing no allegiance to Britain’. This underscores how Australia’s growing national identity created greater acceptance of migrants becoming ‘Australian’ and not ‘British’. Secondly, in the 1880s, an Australian journalist by the name of Goodge argued that Australia ‘must be a white man’s country’. This exemplifies how Australia’s growing identity was a significant factor influencing most discriminatory attitudes towards immigration. Thirdly, invasion novels began to become prevalent in the 1880s also as Australians became fearful of invasion by the Chinese; according to Stuart Macintyre, ‘the Australian nation was swayed by the fear of invasion’. In 1887, the novel White or Yellow was produced about a futuristic race war between Australia and Chinese. This shifted attitudes towards becoming more protective of who Australia let into the country.

Ultimately, Australia’s fixation on creating a ‘white Australia’ was the most influential idea that developed significant bigoted and unjust attitudes towards immigration. Firstly, during the 1850s, ‘the sudden arrival of a large number of Chinese prompted discussion of a different kind of threat … danger posed by aliens’ (Reynolds). These anti-Chinese sentiments set a precedent for the following decades and engendered great prejudiced attitudes towards non-white immigrants; as a prominent Chinese immigrant commented on these discriminatory attitudes, ‘there is injustice’ (Lowe Kong Meng). Secondly, the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act was termed by Alfred Deakin ‘the policy of securing a white Australia’. This was influenced by great negative perceptions of immigrants as, according to Stuart Macintyre, ‘the Australian nation was [also] swayed by the … concern for the purity of race’. Therefore, racial ideas of creating a white Australia influenced the negative attitudes of non-white immigration.

Overall, imperialism only somewhat contributed towards Australia’s unjust attitude of immigration. It was moreover the concern for a white race that developed more prejudiced ideas and attitudes of immigration.

Question 3

Question 3 required students to evaluate whether the most significant change to the exercise of power was a result of the broadening of rights for all Australians, up to 1913. Many students identified that it was white males who experienced the most significant broadening of rights and thus experienced the most significant change to the exercise of power, through the spread of democratic and economic rights (such as the creation of the Conciliation and Arbitration Court and the introduction of the basic wage under the Harvester Judgement). By contrast, women experienced some changes, most notably to voting rights, but these did not represent as significant a change to the exercise of power as that experienced by white men, and Vida Goldstein was unsuccessful in each of the five times that she ran for parliament. Additionally, Aboriginal peoples did not experience any broadening of rights. Instead, Aboriginal peoples experienced ongoing, and arguably worsening, discrimination, for example, through their exclusion from the Australian Constitution.

Higher-scoring responses discussed the degree to which rights were broadened for different demographic groups in Australian society and evaluated the ‘most significant change to the exercise of power’. Lower-scoring responses tended to focus only on whether rights were broadened for all Australians.

An alternative approach to this question, which was rarely taken, was to consider the broadening of rights collectively and to then also argue about other changes to the exercise of power, such as through the spread of self-government and responsible government in the colonies and the federation of the Australian colonies into the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

By 1913, the significant change in the exercise of power for white male workers established the vision of Australia as a ‘workingman’s paradise’. This profound shift in power and control did not encompass the broadening of rights for all Australians, rather it was greatly limited to white male workers. Whilst white women experienced advancements, their rights continued to be restricted. Whereas Aboriginal peoples experienced no change in the exercise of power by 1913.

The rights of white male workers were significantly advanced with the shift in the exercise of power. Influenced by ideas of Chartism, originating in Britain in the 1830s, white male workers challenged the power of the squattocracy. Fuelled by the poor political representation and little agency on the goldfields, men experienced improvements in their lives through protest. The enforcement of a 30 shilling a month mining licence designed to ‘oppress, entrap and emasculate men’ (Wright) sparked the 1854 Eureka Stockade. The stockade helped broaden the rights for white men a part of lower classes by resulting in male suffrage for white men by 1860 (encompassing the abolishment of property and wealth qualifications). Additionally, ‘the creation of a political party out of the existing industrial defeat’ (Macintyre) further challenged the exercise of power by employers as the formation of the Australian Labor Party in 1901 affirmed the idea of the nation as a ‘workingman’s paradise’ by passing democratic reforms, improving the rights of workers. The 1904 Conciliation and Arbitration Act ‘multiplied the opportunities of the masses’ (Deakin) and advanced the rights of white men by providing them with an opportunity to negotiate wages with workers. Furthermore, the 1907 Harvester Judgement further progressed the rights of white men as the decision offered a basic wage of 7 shillings per day for a 6-day week. This achievement was a 21 per cent increase in wages commonly paid to unskilled workers and thus challenged the power of upper echelons. Hence, white men experienced a significant change in their rights.

Women were successful in challenging the traditional exercise of power, yet were limited in broadening their rights. The idea that the right to vote would ‘take away from the charm and beauty of women and cause them to neglect their domestic duties’ (Glassey) was dismantled with the extension of the right to vote to white women. The ‘simple act of justice’ (Smith) changed the exercise of power by providing women with a voice in the public domain, something they lacked. The enfranchisement of women improved their rights and living conditions as before franchise, the infant mortality rate was 111 deaths per 1000 babies, a decade later this dropped to 77 deaths. The vote ‘offered women a more equitable place within family law, advanced educational opportunities and increased employment choices’ (Grimshaw). However, in challenging the exercise of power, through the gaining of the vote, women’s rights for equal pay were diminished with the 1912 Fruit Picker’s Judgement. The judgement saw ‘the ability of women to achieve a fair wage … dealt a sore blow’ (Grimshaw), with the basic wage of women set at 54 per cent of the basic male wage. This failed to change the exercise of power held by men, reinforcing the idea of the man as the breadwinner. Thus, whilst women’s rights were broadened with the gaining of franchise, the exercise of power was dominated by white men.

Furthermore, Aboriginal peoples experienced no change or improvements in the rights and the exercise of power. The federation of Australia in 1901 reaffirmed the vision of a ‘white nation’ (Hirst). The exclusion of people of colour failed to change the conventional exercise of power. Additionally, the passing of the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act furthered the rights of white men by removing the perceived threat of coloured labour. The purpose of the Act to limit foreign immigration enabled the ‘higher races to increase and live freely for higher civilisation’ (Barton). Through the federation of Australia, Aboriginal peoples were excluded from being counted in the census under section 127 and prevented the Commonwealth Government from making laws specific to Aboriginal peoples under section 51 (xxvi). Furthermore, the exercise of power was rigid for people of colour, which was further reflected in the 1912 Maternity Allowance Act. The exclusion of Aboriginal women from receiving the benefit of a 5 pound payment upon the birth of a child emphasised the discrimination to Aboriginal peoples.

Therefore, white men experienced significant change in rights and exercise of power by 1913, whereas women and Aboriginal peoples were limited.

Question 4

Question 4 required students to evaluate whether and how the Australian experience of participating in World War I and World War II impacted Australians’ loyalty and commitment to maintaining the security of the Empire. Many responses argued that Australian reactions to World War I and participation in that conflict demonstrated a strong sense of loyalty and commitment to the security of the Empire. Higher-scoring responses often went beyond discussing the initial responses to war in 1914 and analysed what the experience of the years 1915 to 1918 revealed about Australian attitudes towards the Empire, considering events such as the conscription debates and industrial tension (prominently in 1916 and 1917) and examining the emergence of an Australian national identity built around the image of the ‘digger’. Higher-scoring responses also often argued that this emerging assertion of national identity and pride in the achievements of the Australian Imperial Force existed alongside an ongoing commitment to Britain and belief that Australian security depended on the maintenance of the British Empire.

Students commonly argued that initial participation in World War II also demonstrated loyalty to Britain and a commitment to the security of the Empire, but in more cautious and muted tones. However, as the threat of Japan grew, especially following Pearl Harbor, the fall of Singapore and the bombing of Darwin, Australians increasingly perceived the US as a stronger military partner. Many students referenced the Telegram Wars as evidence of a growing desire to protect Australia’s own security, rather than that of the Empire. Despite the presence of US troops in Australia and the cooperation between the two nations during World War II, high-scoring responses also noted that Australian loyalty to Britain was not significantly dented.

This question was well handled in general, although many students neglected to use the phrase ‘security of the Empire’ and focused instead only on loyalty to Britain throughout their response. Some responses also used knowledge from Area of Study 2. Although there was no date range prescribed by the question, an argument that went beyond participation in World War I or World War II and beyond loyalty to Britain or maintaining the security of the Empire (by arguing that Australia’s participation in Cold War conflicts demonstrates our commitment to new alliances, such as with the US) was only of marginal relevance to this essay question. However, responses arguing that ongoing loyalty to the Empire beyond World War II was demonstrated through Australian involvement in Malaya were relevant. Furthermore, some responses confused the Cold War period with the experience of World War II, by arguing that fear of communism and the domino theory influenced Australian involvement in World War II, rather than the threat posed by Japan.

The response below is an example of an essay that engaged with the concepts of loyalty to Great Britain and commitment to the security of the Empire. This response uses dates to establish context and identifies the perspective of each quote (such as PM or historian). This response was also quite novel in that it effectively used recruitment posters from the period as evidence of Australian loyalty to the Empire.

The Australian experiences of global conflict in the two world wars were innately different, and though by 1942 Australia’s defence priorities had shifted away from the British Empire, the nation remained vastly loyal to Great Britain. World War I was an opportunity for the newly federated Australia to prove its worthiness as a key member of the British Empire, and in 1939, World War II seemed to present a similar chance. However, when Australians came to know the threat of invasion on its own shores, tension strained the previously unyielding military alliance as Australia turned to the United States. Yet, whilst Australia gained a crucial military alliance in the US, the nation remained steadfastly loyal to the British Empire.

The outbreak of World War I in 1914 prompted the immediate response of the parliament, in which both the government and the opposition pledged Australia’s allegiance to Britain. Soon to be Prime Minister Andrew Fisher stated that Australia would defend Britain to the ‘last man and the last shilling’ in his 1914 election speech. Many Australians at this time still regarded Great Britain as the ‘Mother Country’, and so patriotism and loyalty were on full display, as the nation felt great enthusiasm to defend their ‘homeland’. The unwavering loyalty to Britain is evident, as Australia’s war effort from 1914 to 1918 was entirely voluntary, despite the efforts of PM Billy Hughes to introduce conscription in the referenda of 1916 and 1917. Such sentiment of strong patriotism was evident in official propaganda such as ‘The Trumpet Calls’, ‘Show the enemy what Australian sporting men can do’ and ‘Australia has promised Britain 50,000 more men’, successfully intertwining images of Australian national identity like sports and kangaroos with obligations to the British Empire to convince men to enlist. Australia’s affiliation with Great Britain maintained an entirely voluntary war effort sent to aid Britain; historian David Day additionally interpreted that Australia was ‘convinced that its fate rested on Britain’, the fear of a German conquering further exhibiting the nation’s concern and devoted defence of the British Empire’s security.

World War II promised to be a similar experience on the Australian homefront, and certainly, in 1939 it began this way when PM Robert Menzies announced on the 3rd September, the very same day that ‘Great Britain [had] declared war on her [Germany]’ and that, ‘as a result, Australia is at war’. With the memories of hardship, shortages and bereavement still raw from WWI, historian Kate Darian-Smith discovered that there was ‘a general sense of foreboding’, a stark contrast to the farewell parades and excitement of 1914. Yet Australia once again displayed great support for the Empire, shipping off Australian Imperial Force troops in January 1940 for the British Empire. Up until December 1941, Australia’s war effort was largely motivated by defending the security of their ruling British Empire; however, when the Japanese entered the war, creating a new theatre of war in Australia’s home Pacific region, the nation’s motivation for participation transformed and loyalties expanded beyond Great Britain.

War came to the Australian homefront for the first time in 1941, as the threat of Japanese attacks and invasion cast fear into the nation. Australia in 1941 was only 40 per cent ready to fight a war (Adcock et al.) and so PM John Curtin turned to the nation’s primary military alliance for desperate aid. This is where tension cooled the alliance between Britain and Australia; the Telegram War of 1942 revealing PM Curtin’s plea for aid and the return of Australian troops and British PM Winston Churchill’s inability to provide or return troops as the war escalated in Europe. The military alliance lost reciprocity and with Australia’s full attention now on its own national security, PM Curtin announced in 1942 ‘Australia now looks to America’ and ‘we will not be left quite alone’. The new military alliance with the US was a mutually beneficial forging, as PM Curtin desperately required troops to defend an unprepared Australia and the United States desired a base in the Pacific from which to repel Japanese expansion. The latter part of WWII witnessed Australia focus militarily on its own national and regional security rather than that of the British Empire.

Whilst the military alliance between Australia and Britain may have lost some reciprocity due to the direct threat of war, Australia’s devotion and commitment was never fractured. The countries retained a strong alliance despite a slight tension in WWII, as Australia would devote troops and military aid at Britain’s request later in the 20th century during the Malayan emergency.