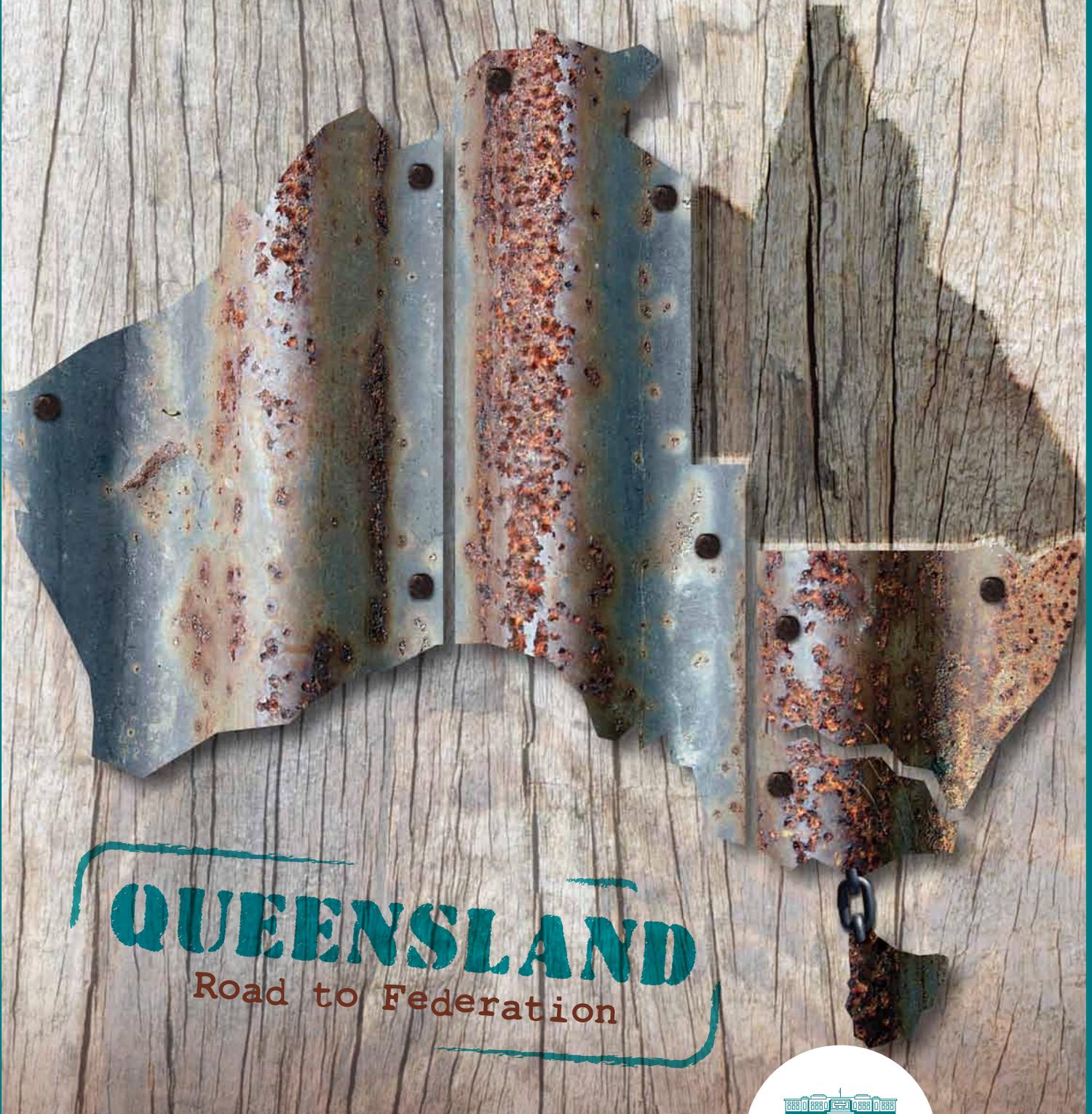


# GETTING IT TOGETHER

From Colonies to Federation



## QUEENSLAND

Road to Federation



MUSEUM  
OF AUSTRALIAN  
DEMOCRACY

OLD PARLIAMENT HOUSE

INVESTIGATIONS OF  
AUSTRALIA'S JOURNEY  
TO NATIONHOOD  
FOR THE MIDDLE  
YEARS CLASSROOM

MOAD  
LEARNING

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Designed by Deanna Vener



# Road to Federation

Queensland came together with the other Australian colonies in 1891 to draft the first Australian Constitution at the National Constitutional Convention in Sydney. One of Queensland's representatives at the time, Samuel Griffith, was in charge of writing that draft because he had extensive knowledge of constitutional law.

While the other colonies continued to work towards Federation, political leaders in Queensland turned their focus to other matters. They were busy developing Queensland's industries. They were also occupied by the central and northern parts of the colony wanting to form new colonies of their own. Plus, they had to deal with the rise of the union movement, an organisation formed by workers to campaign for better rights and conditions. The unions had found a voice through the Labor Party, which won seats in the Queensland Parliament. As a result of these issues, Queensland had no official representation at the 1897–98 Federal Conventions in Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne, where the final draft of the Australian Constitution was formulated.

But, debate about joining Federation did continue in Queensland. When it became clear that New South Wales would join, Queensland did not want to be left out. Many people saw advantages in a united 'White Australia', free of 'alien peoples' that could defend itself and the British Empire in the Pacific.

However, manufacturers in Brisbane were concerned that 'free trade' with the other colonies would ruin their businesses. And, Queensland's workers were suspicious that competition with industries in the southern colonies would threaten their jobs. Cattle farmers of the north, on the other hand, saw opportunities in the southern colonies for their products, and miners welcomed the prospect of cheaper goods. Sugar cane plantation owners, too, saw advantages in being able to sell their products in the southern colonies without intercolonial tariffs. But, they were worried that a new Federal Parliament would create laws to restrict immigration of non-British people. This would mean losing the South Pacific Islanders who worked their fields.

Finally, in September 1899, Queenslanders had their chance to vote on whether to join in Federation. They narrowly chose to do so.

## Investigations

-  1. How did Queensland's regional interests affect attitudes to Federation?
-  2. What were the attitudes of Queensland workers to Federation?
-  3. Why didn't Queensland participate in the Australasian Federal Conventions to draft the Australian Constitution?
-  4. How were voters influenced during the Federation campaign?
-  5. How did Queensland vote in the referendum on Federation in 1899?

## INVESTIGATION 1

# How did Queensland's regional interests affect attitudes to Federation?

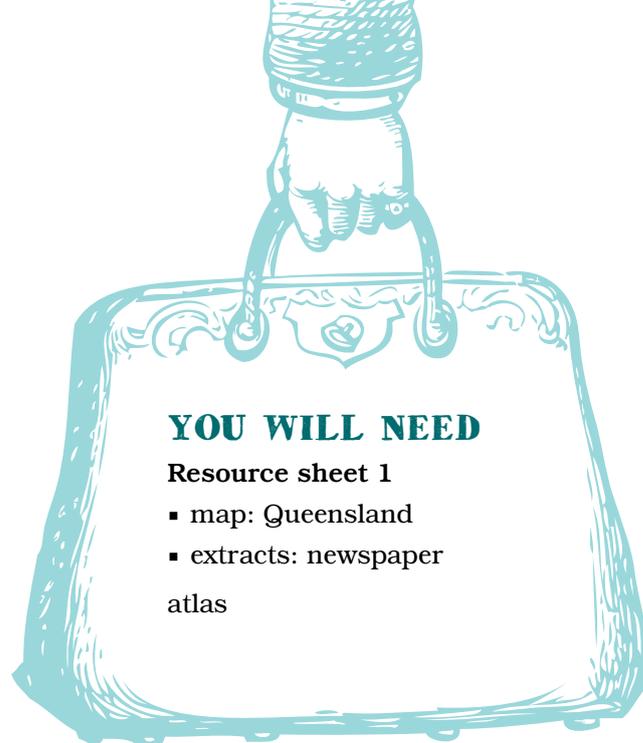
In southern Queensland, the manufacturers around Brisbane and those in the rural industries on the Darling Downs benefited from intercolonial tariffs. The tariffs were a tax charged on products imported into the colony making them more expensive. The people of central and northern Queensland, however, resented having to pay high prices for products made in the south. They did not want to be ruled from Brisbane, and often complained of unequal treatment. Those in central Queensland regarded Rockhampton as their major city, and up north, there were the growing towns of Cairns and Mackay.

In the 1890s, Federation and unity were of growing importance for the Australian colonies. But, many central and northern Queenslanders wanted to separate from the south and form their own colonies. Federation took on different meanings for Queenslanders depending on where they lived.

## Activities

**1.** In groups of four, examine the map of Queensland. Using an atlas, identify the major cities in each division. Using the scale and a ruler, calculate the distance between Brisbane and each city. Brainstorm reasons why Queenslanders might have seen themselves as having different interests depending on where they lived.

**2.** Read the newspaper extracts with others in your group. Locate where the newspaper came from on the map.



### YOU WILL NEED

Resource sheet 1

- map: Queensland
- extracts: newspaper atlas

### Your task

**Explore how regional differences and interests affected Queenslanders' attitudes to Federation.**

**3.** In a soapbox session, choose an extract and explain it to your group. As you do so, have other group members place a tick or a cross, in favour or against Federation, in the area on the map where your newspaper is from. When all four extracts are analysed in this way, which parts of Queensland were for, and which were against Federation?

**4.** As a group, make a list of the issues that divided Queenslanders on Federation. Create posters using words and images in order to persuade those against Federation to resolve their differences and join together as a colony. Display the posters in the classroom.

## INVESTIGATION 2

# What were the attitudes of Queensland workers to Federation?

In the early 1890s, Queensland, along with the other eastern Australian colonies, experienced an economic depression. Work was scarce, unemployment was high and working conditions were poor. Workers had banded together in unions in order to improve their conditions, but their strikes had been defeated. They wanted more political power, and to be able to stand for Parliament.

Federation was an issue that divided workers and their representatives in the Queensland Parliament. If Queensland joined the other colonies it might lead to job losses when intercolonial tariffs were removed. On the other hand, the promised 'White Australia' federal immigration laws would result in banning South Pacific Islander and Chinese workers, which would please those seeking employment in the north.

At the height of the Federation movement in the late 1890s, workers were represented in the Queensland Parliament by the Labor Party. They had their own newspapers, most notably *The Worker*, which publicised their concerns and perspectives on issues that affected them.

### Your task

Discover why Queensland workers were divided on the subject of Federation.

### YOU WILL NEED

#### Resource sheet 2

- cartoon: 'The workers' design for a triumphal arch'
- extracts: speeches
- cartoon: 'Barton defies the kanaka interest and cleans up Queensland'

## Activities

1. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, people often built arches for public celebrations. In pairs, examine 'The workers' design for a triumphal arch' cartoon.
  - Read the words that are part of the illustration. Identify the five characters shown.
  - What are the workers doing? Describe their situation.
  - Is the cartoon's title sarcastic or not? Give reasons for your answer.

Sketch your idea of a 'workers' triumphal arch'.

2. In pairs, read the two speech extracts aloud. Both are discussing the impact that Federation could have on workers in different parts of Queensland. Discuss the following questions.

- What is Mr McDonnell concerned about? Why is he arguing against Federation?
- What is Mr Dawson concerned about? Why is he arguing for Federation?

Imagine you have the opportunity to respond to Mr McDonnell and Mr Dawson's arguments for and against Federation. Write what you would say, and present it to the class.

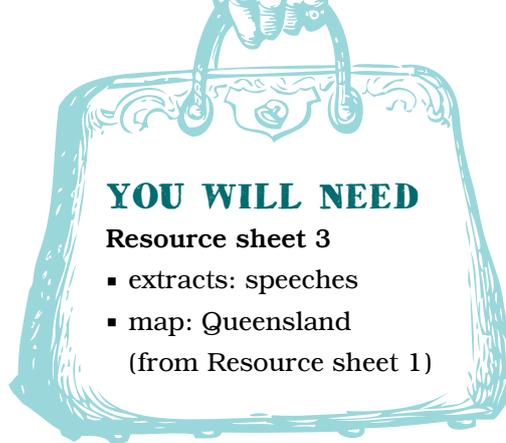
3. Examine the cartoon from *The Bulletin*, which appeared after Federation, in October 1901. The South Pacific Islander workers were generally known as 'kanakas'. Edmund Barton, Australia's first Prime Minister, is shown dressed as a woman. There are four distinct parts to the illustration. Circle them. In groups of four, discuss what you think each part is showing, allowing each member in your group to explain a section. Then, discuss the following questions as a whole class.
  - What impression of South Pacific Islanders is the cartoonist trying to create?
  - Why do you think the cartoonist is concerned about the 'kanakas'?
  - How is Queensland represented in the cartoon?
  - What does Prime Minister Barton want to do? Why?
  - What would a 'White Australia' mean for the South Pacific workers and the owners of sugar plantations?
  - Do you think that the solution the cartoonist proposes would help Queensland workers? Why or why not?
4. Create a slogan or a banner that sums up the choice before workers in the colony of Queensland in the Federation referendum in 1899.

## INVESTIGATION 3

# Why didn't Queensland participate in the Australasian Federal Conventions to draft the Australian Constitution?

In 1893, representatives from the colonies who were in favour of Federation met at Corowa, in southern New South Wales. There they decided that the parliaments of all the colonies should pass a law that allowed the people to elect representatives to a federal convention. Delegates to the convention would draw up and approve a draft Australian Constitution. A referendum would then be held, allowing people from each colony to vote on a Constitution Bill. If the majority of voters in a colony supported the Constitution, that colony would join in Federation.

When the Premiers of the colonies met in Hobart in 1895, they agreed to adopt the proposal. The Australasian Federal Conventions of 1897–98



### YOU WILL NEED

Resource sheet 3

- extracts: speeches
- map: Queensland (from Resource sheet 1)

were held in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. At the time, Queensland's Parliament was still arguing about who should represent Queensland and how their 10 representatives should be elected. Premier Nelson first insisted that the Queensland Legislative Assembly appoint its own members to the Convention, before deciding that it would be better if people elected the representatives. His opponents, however, wanted representatives drawn from Queensland's three regions, not just the south. The debate came to nothing, and Queensland was left without any representation at the Conventions.

### Your task

**Investigate how Queensland should have been represented at the Federal Conventions to draft an Australian Constitution.**

## Activities

1. In small groups, read the extract of the speech by Mr Leahy and record the number of electors for each division on the map of Queensland.
2. Use a pie chart to display the percentage of electors/voters for each division. Which division is the largest and which is the smallest in terms of electors?
3. Just as the other colonies, Queensland was entitled to 10 representatives at the Convention. Calculate the following.
  - How many electors would each representative be representing based on all the electors in Queensland?
  - What proportion of the electors would each representative represent?
  - What proportion would five representatives from southern Queensland represent?
  - What proportion would five representatives from central and north Queensland represent?
4. In your groups, each individual should take responsibility for reading and explaining to the group one of the speech extracts by Mr Leahy, Mr Thorn, Mr Curtis or Mr Kidston.
5. Create a group presentation, explaining which of the methods proposed for representing Queensland at the Convention would have been the fairest.
6. In the debates about representation at the Convention, another method was recommended. It involved the Parliament nominating 10 of its own members from the three divisions as representatives. This would include two from the centre, three from the north and five from the south. Would this have satisfied the Corowa decision and best represented Queenslanders? Discuss as a class, justifying your response.

## INVESTIGATION 4

# How were voters influenced during the Federation campaign?

In 1898, referendums to vote on the draft of the Australian Constitution were held in four colonies: Tasmania, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. The referendums were successful in three colonies, but not in New South Wales. A majority voted 'yes' but this still fell short of the quota of 80,000 votes set by the New South Wales Parliament.

After last minute negotiations among all the Premiers of the colonies, referendums were held again in 1899 everywhere, except Western Australia. The Queensland referendum was set for 2 September 1899, but there was still division in the colony. Many people in Brisbane and in southern Queensland opposed Federation, while others in the centre wanted 'separation before Federation'.

Newspapers such as the *Brisbane Courier* ran articles on Federation in every edition leading up to the referendum. Meetings hosted by federation leagues and anti-federation leagues were well attended, and organisers of these large public meetings would go to great lengths to invite eminent speakers. This included two very famous politicians, the leaders of the movement for Federation, Alfred Deakin from Victoria, and Edmund Barton from New South Wales.

### YOU WILL NEED

Resource sheet 4

- extracts: newspaper
- extracts: speeches

Your task

Investigate the arguments used to persuade Queenslanders to vote for Federation.

## Activities

1. Read the newspaper extract describing the Federation meeting at Exhibition Hall. Do one of the following tasks.
  - Sketch the scene that the reporter has described.
  - Write an account of the atmosphere from the perspective of an audience member.
2. In pairs, read the Chairman's speech. Discuss the following questions.
  - Who were the hosts of the meeting?
  - What was the main purpose of the meeting?
  - What is the 'right conclusion' that the Chairman refers to?Imagine the Chairman was standing under a banner as he delivered his speech. What slogan would be displayed on the banner? Share your slogans with other pairs.
3. With the class divided into two groups, each group takes responsibility for reading either Mr Barton's speech or Mr Deakin's speech.
4. Still in groups, create an affinity diagram with the following headings: 'Democracy', 'Patriotism', 'Efficiency' and 'Progress'. Beneath the relevant headings, record the examples from your speech that show the speaker using that concept. Write the speaker's name in brackets next to the clue. Rotate your affinity diagram through the groups, until the original returns. This way, all members of both groups can contribute to the diagrams.
5. As a class, use your knowledge of the debate over Federation in Queensland, to rank which of the four appeals – Democracy, Patriotism, Efficiency and Progress – would have been most relevant to different members of the audience in the Exhibition Hall in Brisbane on 12 May 1899. This was just four months before the referendum in Queensland. Rank the appeals for a worker in the north, a manufacturer in the south, and a separationist from the centre.

## INVESTIGATION 5

# How did Queensland vote in the referendum on Federation in 1899?

The people of New South Wales voted for the draft Australian Constitution and for Federation on 20 June 1899. Many in favour of Federation in Queensland were hopeful that this would encourage Queenslanders to unite with the other colonies as well. Queensland could not afford to be left out now if it wanted to trade freely and sell its products to the other colonies. Queensland also wanted to be assured that the other colonies would come to its defence in case of attack.

The 'Enabling Bill', the law that would allow the Queensland Parliament to put the draft Constitution to the people, had been hotly debated in Parliament. Some members of the Labor Party wanted 'every white male' to have a vote at the referendum. This meant removing the rule that a man had to be resident in one place for a certain time to qualify for the vote.

## YOU WILL NEED

Resource sheet 5

- table: results of the 1899 referendum in Queensland by region
- cartoon: 'Provincialism'
- map: Queensland (Resource sheet 1)

Those in favour of separation, especially from the centre of Queensland, wanted Queensland to be divided into separate colonies. However, the Enabling Bill was eventually passed and the date for the referendum was set for 2 September 1899.

When the people finally had their say, they voted 'yes', but by the narrowest margin of any Australian colony.

Your task

**Investigate the referendum vote in Queensland and speculate about the reasons for the distribution of the vote.**

## Activities

**1.** Examine the Queensland referendum results. Using the map of Queensland, shade the divisions where there was a majority vote for Federation. Write a caption for your map, describing in geographical terms the distribution of the 'yes' and 'no' majorities.

**2.** Think of reasons for the distribution of the 'yes' and 'no' majorities. Write them in dot points on the map in the respective region. Compare them to other students' reasons.

**3.** As a class, consider the political map of Australia at Federation. Imagine what it would have looked like if the north and central parts of Queensland had separated from the southern part before the Federation referendum. Do you think these divisions could have endured? Justify your response to the class.

**4.** Study the 'Provincialism' cartoon. Use a dictionary if you need to find out the meaning of the word. The cartoon appeared in 1899, the same year as the referendum was held in Queensland. List the different elements shown in the cartoon and answer the following questions.

- What is happening in the cartoon?
- Why is the character of Queensland shown to be clinging to 'provincialism'?
- How is Federation represented?

**5.** From what you know about Queensland in the late 1890s, and all the debates about whether or not to be part of Federation, do you think that the message in the cartoon is accurate? Write a letter to the editor, using the referendum results to support or refute the message in the cartoon.



## What are you thinking now?

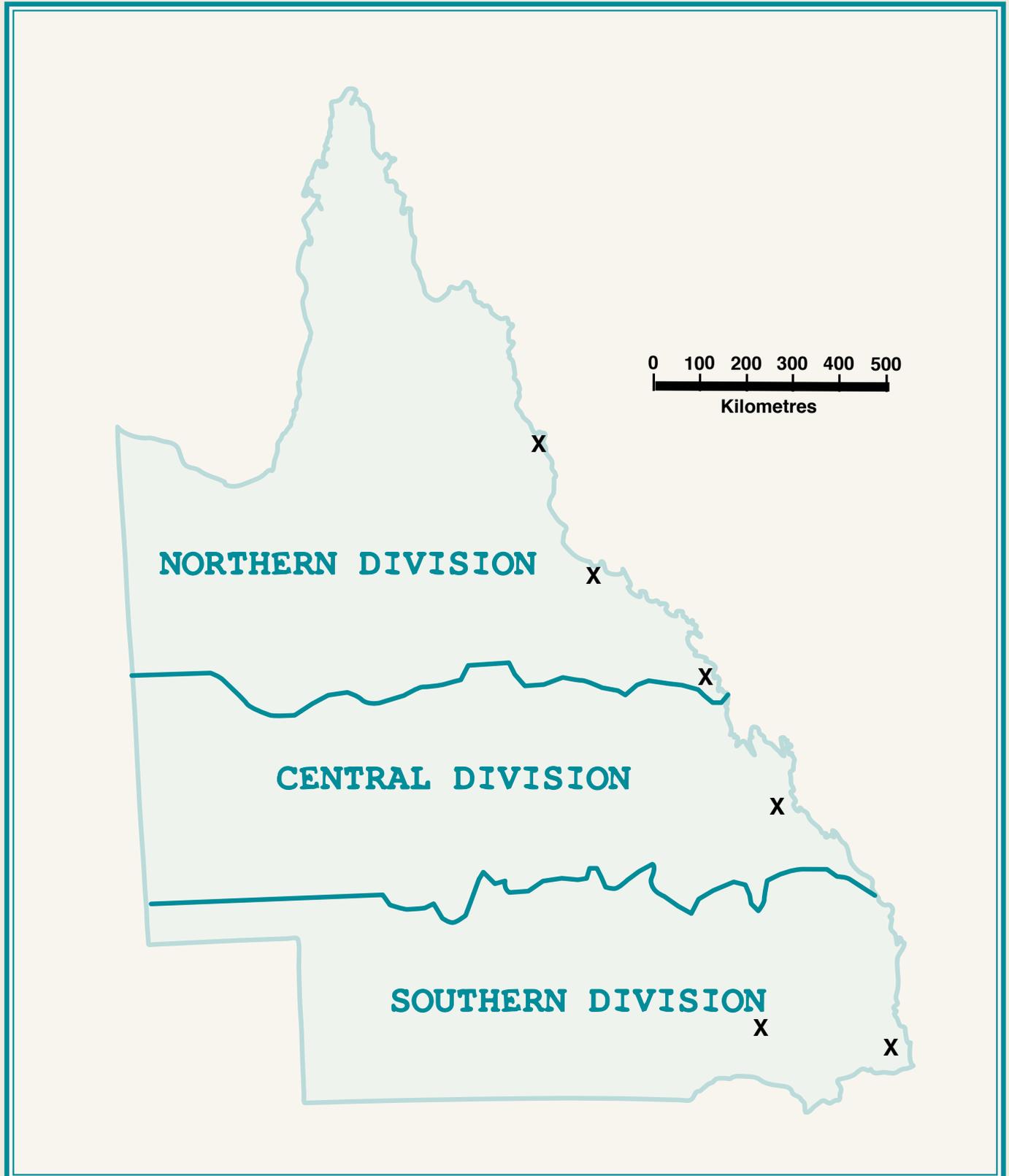
Now that you have completed the investigations in Road to Federation, use your knowledge to explore connections to your life today. Do one or both of the following activities.

**1.** Political cartoons are an effective way of conveying a political point of view. As a class, build a collection of political cartoons for a week or two. Display the cartoons. Discuss the point that each cartoon is trying to make and identify the qualities that make each one effective. Create your own political cartoon to critique a situation in your community or school.

**2.** Federation aroused deep passions in Queenslanders, and the people of the other Australian colonies. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, political campaigning relied on newspaper circulation and gifted speakers. How different is political campaigning today to that of the 1890s? Plan a campaign to raise awareness on an issue that is important to you, your community or your school, using different types of media and methods to promote your views.

# RESOURCE SHEET 1

## Queensland financial divisions, 1901



Based on Queensland Financial Divisions, 1901 in Ross Fitzgerald, *The Federation Mirror: Queensland 1901–2001*, Queensland University Press, 2002.

## The separation question

First comes the Separation question ... As far as I can see if we accept the bill we should have to fight, not only South Queensland, but all Australia as well before we will be able to obtain our rights ...

Every man whose interests are centred either in Northern or Central Queensland, and who votes for this bill as it is, will be committing an act of political self-murder, an act which will tend to prevent for several generations the attainment of our ... right to manage our own affairs and spend our own revenue.

WEH Elgar, letter to *Capricornian*, Rockhampton, 26 August 1899.

## From the far north

Brisbane has practically a monopoly of the trade of the North—a monopoly which exists by reason of the tariffs which a Southern Parliament had imposed ...

Under Federation our products will be admitted duty free to the markets of Australia, instead of to Brisbane only, and our imports being admitted duty free will enable us to secure the best goods in the best market at considerably less cost than at present. Once the present Intercolonial tariffs are removed, the South can have nothing to gain from holding the North in bondage, and ... there is infinitely more chance of the State agreeing to Separation than if the inducement is allowed to remain.

*Morning Post*, Cairns, 31 August 1899.

## A southern view

Under federation, people might get a slightly cheaper article, but at what a cost! The total extinction of our industry, employing 500 workers, of whom 200 are male adults, and as each of these latter has a wife and 3 children, on an average, this means at least 800 persons dependent on them.

supplement to *Queensland Times*, Ipswich, 31 August 1899.

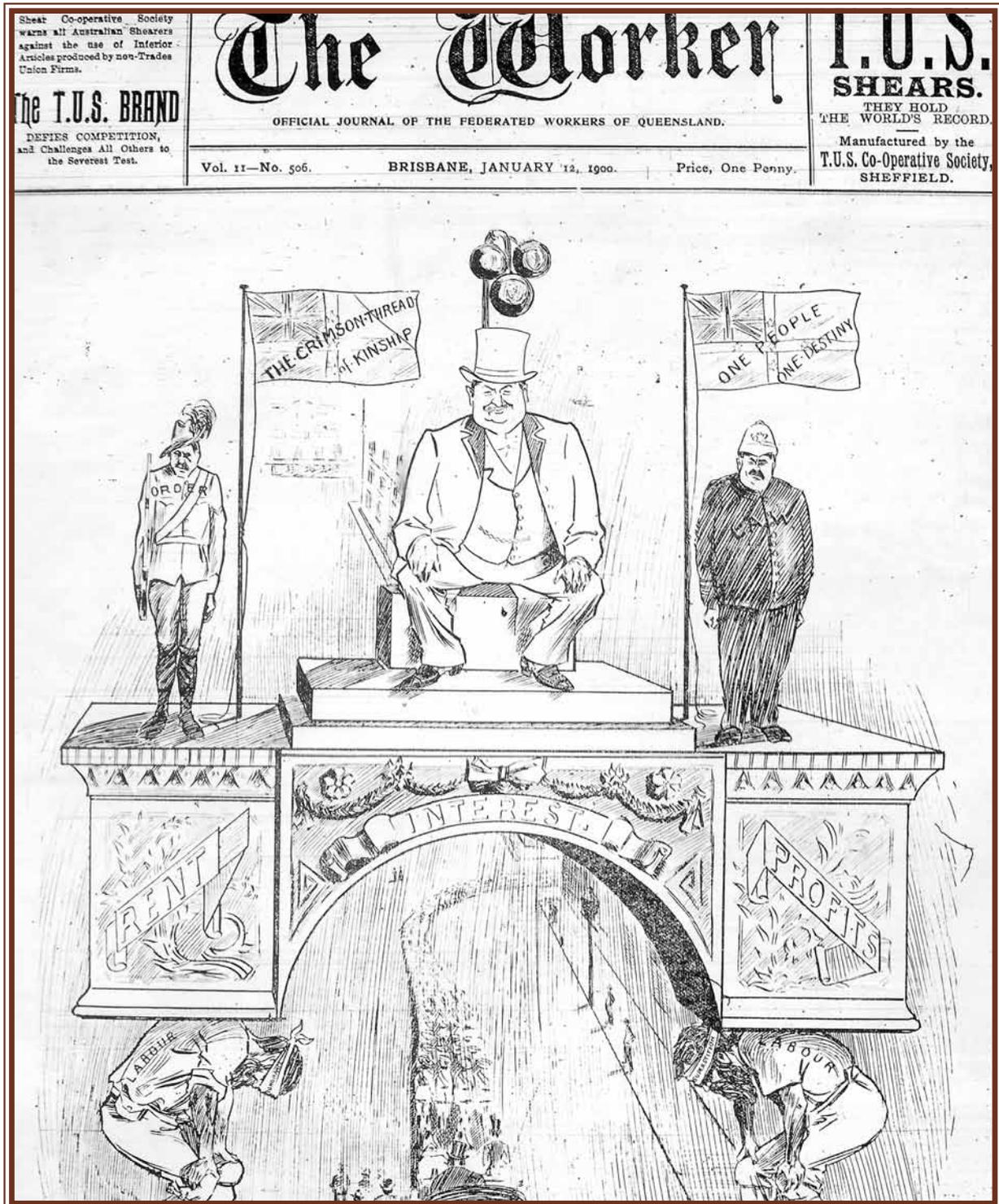
## Federation and sugar

Sugar growers will be in an infinitely worse position outside of the Federation than they would be even if the first Act of the Federal Parliament were to prohibit the introduction of colored labor. If the Bill is rejected by Queensland, sugar growers will lose their best and ever-growing market—the market of Australia, in which their products would otherwise secure the advantages of a large protective duty.

*Morning Post*, Cairns, 10 August 1899.

# RESOURCE SHEET 2

## The workers' design for a triumphal arch



The Worker, January 1900, State Library of Queensland.

## **A southern labour view – Mr McDonnell**

Is this Commonwealth Bill going to improve the condition of the workers of Queensland? Will this Constitution that we are asked to live under for all time, and which our children will be obliged to live under, promote more the happiness and comfort of the people as a whole ...?

... The local retailers will, at all events, reduce as far as possible their local purchases, and manufacturers will feel the effect from the very start. The result will be that there will be a decrease in the number of persons employed, and from the very start the manufactures of Queensland will suffer by the new arrangement. I feel certain that we are not in a position to compete with the more mature manufacturing industries of the southern colonies, and I am not in a position to subscribe to a Commonwealth Bill that will have the effect of throwing a large number of persons out of employment.

Queensland, *Parliamentary Debates*, Session 1899, Vol. LXXI, pp 281, 285.

## **A northern labour view – Mr Dawson**

The alien curse was growing, and, judging the future by the past, Mr Dawson could not see much hope for the democracy of Queensland fighting by itself and effectually checking the evil ...

“we shall federate in order to bring to our assistance the real power of our democratic brothers in the other colonies. I feel confident that when we are under the Commonwealth, with our own efforts and the tremendous assistance of our fellow-Australians, we shall put a very speedy and a very effective check on the coloured aliens, and whatever wealth there is to be gained, or comfort to be enjoyed, or work to be done, it will be for the white Australia ...’

*The Brisbane Courier*, 8 August 1899.

**Barton defies the 'kanaka' interest and cleans up Queensland**



**Students, please note: today, a cartoon such as this would be considered racist.**

The Bulletin, 19 October 1901, National Library of Australia.

# RESOURCE SHEET 3

## **Extract of speech by Mr Leahy, Bulloo**

Let us take, for instance, the Central division at the present time. It has 11,000 electors. The Northern division has 17,000, while the Southern division has nearly 60,000. The hon. member for Rockhampton proposes to give the 28,000 electors of Central and Northern Queensland the same number of representatives as the 60,000 electors of Southern Queensland.

## **Extract of speech by Mr Thorn, Fassifern**

I can tell this House and the Government that if there are three electorates—Southern, Central, and Northern—it will be playing into the hands of the separationists ... I disagree strongly to three electorates; I am in favour of one electorate, the same as in all the other colonies where the people were appealed to ... the whole colony should be one electorate, because by that means they would get one man one vote.

## **Extract of speech by Mr Curtis, Rockhampton**

I believe that if this Bill were enacted, and the colony constituted into one electorate, the electors of Central and Northern Queensland would probably for the most part not take the trouble to go to the poll. They would feel that it would be perfectly useless for them to do so, because the electors of Southern Queensland would outvote them by more than two to one.

## **Extract of speech by Mr Kidston, Rockhampton**

I hold that it is very important that each of the three great divisions of the colony should have the power to choose their own representatives ... My belief is that it would be better to have ten electorates; and I believe that the result would be a better and truer representation of the colony as a whole if there were three electorates in the North, two in the Central district, and five in the South.

# RESOURCE SHEET 4

## Meeting at the Exhibition Hall

The hall was crowded to the doors ... A special gallery was reserved for ladies ...

The galleries were draped with flags, the aisles decorated with handsome pot plants, and the thousands of well-dressed persons, earnest and anxious to hear and learn, made up a scene which has perhaps not been equalled in the political history of Queensland ...

Just on 8 o'clock Messrs. Barton and Deakin, who were accompanied by the Chief Justice (Sir S. W. Griffith, the chairman of the meeting), entered the hall. The visitors had an enthusiastic reception, the audience standing up and giving cheer after cheer.



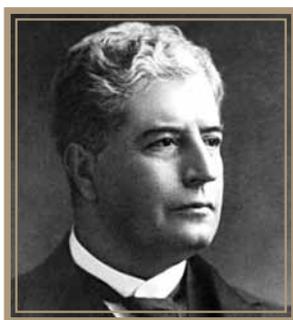
Portrait of Sir Samuel Walker Griffith, State Library of Queensland, 68165.

### The Chairman's speech

Sir S. W. Griffith, Chairman

... [T]he time, if not arrived, is now very fast approaching when it will be necessary for every citizen of Australia to make up his mind whether he desires that the colony to which he belongs shall or shall not be a member of the great Australian Federation which undoubtedly is about to be formed ...

The Queensland Federation League, of which I have the honour to be president ... desire to assist the electors of Queensland to come to a right conclusion upon the matter, and they believe that the best way to help to a right conclusion is to throw as much light as possible upon the subject.



Sir Edmund Barton, 1901, National Archives of Australia, A5954, 1299/2 PHOTO PL 375/1.

### Mr. Barton's speech

... Much as we should like to have the assistance of Queensland in a complete federation, while it has been felt that it would be not so great and not so powerful a federation as it would be without the assistance of this great and rich colony, it is not, and has not been, the opinion of the other colonies that they could not federate without Queensland ... It is one thing to be able to federate without you; it is another thing to confess that federation can never be perfect without you. (Cheers.)

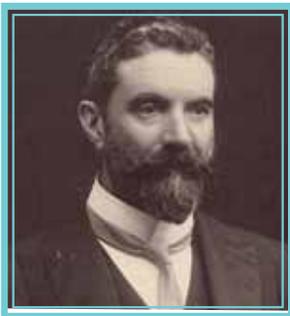
### A common state

The day will come when Australia, having federated for purposes of defence, they will lament their mistake if any of the colonies remain isolated. We cannot fight for any one of us unless we all fight for every one.

## Intercolonial fair-trade

... under intercolonial free-trade there will be an opportunity for every industry to live that has life worth living in it. Industries that cannot progress without a tariff must take a back seat in favour of progressive ones ...

I have said enough to justify me in this request with which I will wind up: That you will be true to your Australian countrymen of the other colonies. (Cheers.) If you are true to them as countrymen, you must be true to them, as fellow-citizens and brothers. (Cheers.) If you are true to them, you must believe that: when they enter into a solemn compact with you they will be as true to you as you are to them.



Portrait of Alfred Deakin,  
National Library  
of Australia,  
nla.pic-an23309831.

### Mr. Deakin's speech

Parliament will be elective in both the Chambers by the will of the people. From these Chambers will come the Government of the day. The Government of the day can retain office only by adopting a policy in accordance with the wishes of the majority of the people and thus you will find your case a more absolute power of control than any of you in this colony at present enjoy.

### Cost of union

Union will cost us something, but what of the distribution, for which we are paying every day? Did it not cost something to keep six Custom-houses and six Post Offices instead of one? Did it not cost much more for those six tiny Defence Forces, each with its own little General and its little band—(cheers)—than for one well-organised and efficient force?

### Sentiment

We did not meet for business. We were there for a far greater and a far higher work than that. We were there ... to lay some stones in the foundation of a Commonwealth. (Cheers.) We are not ashamed to be governed by a political ideal. We are proud to see it, and prouder to be inspired by it; but it will one day be said that this ideal knit together the people to the motherland, and made them one. "One people one destiny," and until we are one people that destiny will be narrow and confined.

*The Brisbane Courier*, 13 May 1899.

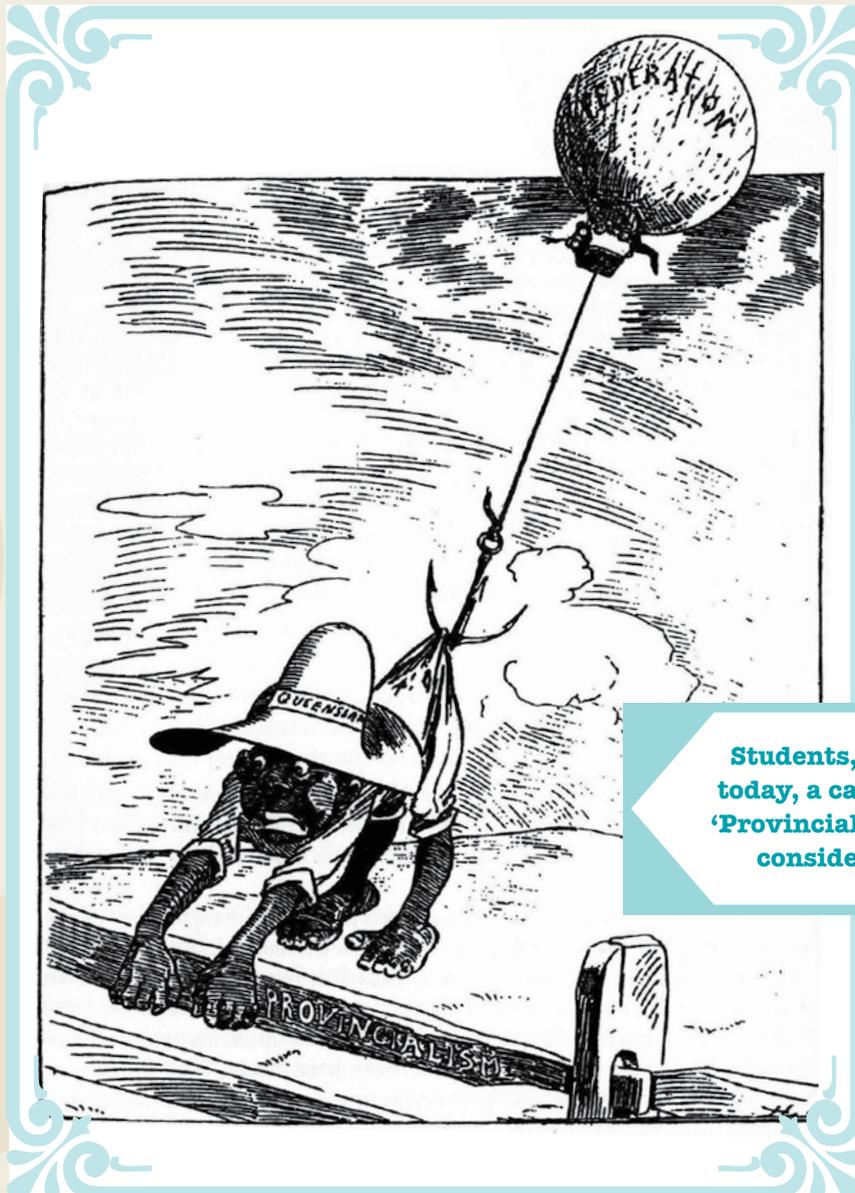
# RESOURCE SHEET 5

## Results of the referendum in Queensland by region, 1899

Electorate	For	Against	Total votes	Percentage of 'yes' votes	Percentage of 'no' votes
Total South	14,285	22,398			
Total Central	12,132	6,862			
Total North	12,376	3,332			
Total Queensland	38,793	32,592			

Irving, Helen (ed), *The Centenary Companion to Australian Federation*.

### Provincialism



Students, please note: today, a cartoon such as 'Provincialism' would be considered racist.

*The Brisbane Courier*, 1899, National Library of Australia.