NEW SOUTH WALES
Road to Federation

GETTING IT TOGETHER
From Colonies to Federation

INVESTIGATIONS OF AUSTRALIA’S JOURNEY TO NATIONHOOD FOR THE MIDDLE YEARS CLASSROOM
Getting It Together: From Colonies to Federation has been funded by the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House.

Getting It Together: From Colonies to Federation – New South Wales

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PO Box 177
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Australia
Tel: (03) 9207 9600
Fax: (03) 9910 9800
Email: info@curriculum.edu.au
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Edited by Katharine Sturak and Zoe Naughten
Designed by Deanna Vener
New South Wales has a special significance in Australia’s colonial history because it was the first colony. It continued to play a leading role as other colonies were established in the 1800s. New South Wales had the longest history of self-government, the greatest experience of having an elected parliament, and the power to make laws and establish systems of transport, trade and defence.

New South Wales had much in common with other parts of Australia. Many people in the oldest colony believed that the colonies should unite to form a Commonwealth of Australia. New South Wales’ politicians, especially Henry Parkes, argued that Federation would make each colony and the country as a whole stronger.

Many political and social issues were debated during the 1890s, but the over-arching challenge for the pro-Federation movement was to develop an Australian Constitution defining how a Federal Parliament would operate. This Parliament would represent all colonies and make laws that would apply to the whole nation, so it was important to get it right.

There were a number of issues involved, including immigration, the economy and voting rights. Parkes also emphasised the need for Australia to have a strong defence force. In the 1890s, women in some parts of Australia were granted voting rights, and there was a growing movement to achieve the same rights for women across the country. Because of the 1890s economic crisis, the issue of non-European immigrants aroused strong feelings as many believed that the cheap labour they offered threatened the jobs of white workers. This led to the adoption of the ‘White Australia’ policy, which influenced legislation that intentionally restricted non-white immigration into Australia after Federation.

Premiers and other delegates from all colonies came together in special meetings, called conventions, to discuss and draft the Australian Constitution. Once they reached agreement, they presented the Constitution Bill to the people of each colony so they could vote in a referendum.

However, reaching agreement on the Constitution and Federation was not a simple matter. Each colony had its own special interests and wanted to be sure that these would be protected and respected under a federal system. New South Wales wanted to be sure that it was not giving up power to the smaller and younger colonies.

In the mid-1890s, New South Wales Premier, George Reid had doubts about the proposed Constitution. He was a supporter of Federation in principle, but disagreed with some of the proposed details. His doubts were well-known when New South Wales had its first referendum on Federation, in 1898. When the referendum failed, Reid negotiated with other Premiers to make changes to the draft Constitution.
A second referendum was held in New South Wales in 1899, and this time it passed because a large enough majority voted ‘yes’. In the same year, voters in Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Queensland voted in favour of Federation, and a successful referendum in Western Australia followed in 1900.

In 1901, more than 10 years after Henry Parkes declared his vision of a ‘great national government’ that would deal with ‘all great questions … in a broad light and with a view to the interests of the whole country’, all six colonies united to form the Commonwealth of Australia.

**Investigations**

1. What were the issues as the people of New South Wales considered whether or not to support Federation?

2. Why did the proposed structure of the Federal Parliament cause concern for New South Wales?

3. How did the views of Premier George Reid influence the people of New South Wales?

4. What happened in New South Wales at the first referendum on Federation?

5. When did New South Wales decide in favour of Federation, and what contributed to the positive result?

6. If you had been a New South Wales voter, would you have been in favour of Federation or against it?
What were the issues as the people of New South Wales considered whether or not to support Federation?

In the years before Federation, many people in New South Wales felt that there were aspects of their society that should be changed or strengthened. Some people believed that immigration should be more carefully controlled so that the colony would continue to have a mostly British population. There was also a belief that the colonies of Australia should improve their ability to defend themselves – and help to defend Britain – against any foreign powers that might pose a threat. People also demanded democratic and economic freedoms. For example, women wanted the right to vote, which they did not yet have in most colonies. Others wanted the freedom to travel and trade between colonies without unreasonable cost or inconvenience.

These issues were widely discussed in New South Wales in the 1890s. There was a widespread belief that it was time to take action to bring about change and build a better future. Many people believed that Federation was key to achieving this.

Activities

1. As a class, read and examine the texts, photograph and cartoon. Underline any words you do not know. Use a dictionary to find out what they mean.

2. Form four groups. Each will examine one of the issues in the primary sources: defence, customs, immigration or voting rights for women. Discuss the following questions and record your answers.
   - What issue does your primary source explore?
   - Who might it have been created for? Provide reasons for your thinking.
   - Could the issue have been used as a reason for New South Wales to federate with the other colonies? Provide reasons for your thinking.
   - Could the issue have been used as a reason not to federate? Provide reasons for your thinking.

3. Based on what you know about your group’s issue (defence, customs, immigration or voting rights), use the ‘choices and consequences chart’ to record:
   - the issue;
   - the positive (pluses) and negative (minuses) consequences for taking action on the issue;
   - the positive and negative consequences for taking no action on the issue; and
   - your group’s position on the issue if they had lived in New South Wales at the time – to take action or take no action. Provide reasons for your thinking.

4. Share your group’s chart with the class.

5. Based on what you have found out so far, do you believe the road to Federation would have been an easy one or a hard one? Discuss as a class, providing reasons for your thinking.

You Will Need

Resource sheet 1
- extract: speech by Henry Parkes
- letter: to a newspaper editor
- photograph: a customs station
- cartoon: ‘The Mongolian Octopus’
- extract: speech by Alfred Deakin
- extracts and leaflet: from suffragists
- chart: choices and consequences
Before the colonies could federate, they had to plan how a national parliament would operate. The structure and powers of the proposed parliament were set out in the Australian Constitution, which was drafted and debated in the 1890s, and had to be accepted by all colonies and by the British Government before Federation could go ahead.

The parliament would be based on the British ‘Westminster’ system, with two houses or chambers. All colonies would elect representatives to both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Laws could only be passed if they were supported by a majority of votes in both houses.

However, the colonies differed greatly in the size of their population. How could the parliament be organised to ensure that each colony’s voting power was appropriate for the number of people?

In the House of Representatives, the answer was relatively simple. Colonies such as New South Wales with large populations would have more representatives (and therefore more votes) than those with small populations. The proposal for the Senate, however, was that each colony, large or small, would have the same number of senators. This was to ensure that each colony would have an equal say, regardless of size. If you had been a New South Wales voter would you have been happy to accept this arrangement?

### Activities

1. To build your understanding of how the two chambers of the Parliament of Australia work to turn a bill into a law, go to ‘Kidsview – Parliament in Focus’ on the Parliamentary Education Office website [www.peo.gov.au/kidsview/menu.html](http://www.peo.gov.au/kidsview/menu.html). Click on ‘Law making’ to access ‘Pass the Bill’, then follow the instructions for this online interactive.

2. Look at the ‘We want a fair Federation’ poster and the population data for 1899. Discuss the following questions and record your answers.
   - Are the creators of this poster in favour of Federation or not? Provide reasons for your thinking.
   - Why might this poster focus on voting in the Senate and not the House of Representatives?
   - Do you think the diagram would have convinced many voters? Provide reasons for your thinking.

3. The creators of the ‘We want a fair Federation’ poster claim that one voter from Tasmania would have the same power as eight voters from New South Wales. Attempt the following and record your answers.
   - Examine the population data for 1899 again, and the number of representatives for the House of Representatives and the Senate. Use these figures to work out how they arrived at this claim.
   - How could you use the numbers to prove that Federal Parliament would be fair to the people of New South Wales?
   - What problems might arise if New South Wales had more representation in the Senate?
   - Could this issue have affected progress towards Federation? Provide reasons for your thinking.

As a class, vote on whether you think representation in the Senate is fair.

4. The picture on the ‘We want a fair Federation’ poster demonstrates the representation of voters from each colony in the Senate. Design your own graphics to represent either:
   - the proportions in the House of Representatives; or
   - how the two chambers create a fair system.

Display the designs around the classroom.
How did the views of Premier George Reid influence the people of New South Wales?

As leaders, the Premiers of the different colonies had important roles to play in Federation and the drafting of an Australian Constitution. What the Premiers wanted in the Constitution depended on their own political views and on the current laws and policies of their colonies, and the support they had in their own colonies.

There were a number of differences of opinion.

George Reid, who became Premier of New South Wales in 1894, was a supporter of free trade. His New South Wales Government did not charge intercolonial tariffs (taxes) on goods brought in from other colonies. Reid did not support the policies of colonies that did. He was outraged when Tasmanian Premier, Edward Braddon proposed an amendment to the Constitution, giving three-quarters of the money raised in tariffs by the Commonwealth back to the colonies or States. This meant that tariffs were likely to be high.

Reid was generally in favour of the colonies uniting, but issues such as this meant that he could not agree with Federation in every respect, and he made sure that the people of New South Wales knew of his doubts. His views on Federation and the Constitution were so divided between what he supported and what he opposed that he became known as ‘Yes–No Reid’.

**YOU WILL NEED**

Resource sheet 3

- diagram: the ‘Braddon clause’
- extract: speech by Premier George Reid
- cartoon: ‘The Yes–No Federationist’
Activities

1. As a class, examine the diagram that represents Tasmanian Premier, Edward Braddon’s amendment clause, also called the ‘Braddon blot’. In your own words, discuss with a partner what the diagram is attempting to explain. Remember that until 1966, Australia’s currency was pounds (£), shillings (s) and pence (p), not dollars and cents. There were 12 pence in a shilling, and 20 shillings in a pound.

2. Look at the two tables to see how Braddon proposed that the money raised through a federal customs tariff would be divided. With a partner, continue the sequence of numbers in each table for at least four more places, and consider the following questions.
   - Why might Tasmania have wanted to keep tariffs?
   - How would you feel about having to pay more for things that didn’t come from your State?
   - Do you think the tariffs would help unite or divide the colonies?

3. As a class, read the newspaper extract of Reid’s speech at the Sydney Town Hall in 1898, and examine the ‘Yes–No Federationist’ cartoon. Divide into two groups.

**Group 1**

Examine the speech. Discuss the following questions and record your answers.
   - Why do you think George Reid was in two minds about Federation? Provide reasons for your thinking.
   - Why do you think Reid was called the ‘Yes–No Federationist’? Do you think the name was justified?
   - How could Reid’s uncertainty affect New South Wales? Provide reasons for your thinking.
   - How could it affect Federation? Provide reasons for your thinking.

**Group 2**

Examine the ‘Yes–No Federationist’ cartoon from 1898. Discuss the following questions and record your answers.
   - Why might the cartoonist have shown Reid trying to row the boat from both ends?
   - What speeches are shown at both ends of the boat?
   - How is Australian Federation represented in the background?
   - Why might the cartoonist have represented Federation in this way? Provide reasons for your thinking.

4. Share your responses with the other half of the class.

5. Write a letter to convince George Reid that Federation is a good idea.
   - What reasons can you give to support Federation?
   - What solutions can you propose to overcome Reid’s concerns?

Share your letter with your classmates.
Investigation 4

What happened in New South Wales at the first referendum on Federation?

The first referendums on Federation were held in 1898. They involved New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia. Queensland and Western Australia would not hold referendums until 1899 and 1900 respectively, after they were convinced that Federation would proceed.

For Federation to proceed, all colonies had to achieve a majority ‘yes’ vote. In New South Wales, the amount of ‘yes’ votes had to be even greater. The opponents of Federation in the parliament had set a quota of 80,000, which was more than a majority. If the referendum failed, Federation might be in doubt – or, at least delayed.

Whatever the result, the referendum was important. It was the first opportunity to ‘measure’ the people’s support for Federation.

We know that Premier George Reid had significant concerns about the Constitution that was put to the vote. Looking at the referendum results, we can see whether most voters in New South Wales shared their Premier’s doubts.

You Will Need

Resource sheet 4
- table: results of the 1898 referendums
- calculators
- spreadsheet software
- access

Activities

1. Working in pairs, use the voting results table and a calculator to discuss the following questions. Record your answers.
   - Calculate the total number of votes for each colony by adding the number of ‘yes’ votes and ‘no’ votes together.
   - Calculate the percentage of ‘yes’ votes for each colony by dividing the number of ‘yes’ votes by the total number of votes and multiplying by 100.
   - Calculate the percentage of ‘no’ votes for each colony by dividing the number of ‘no’ votes by the total number of votes and multiplying by 100.
   - What reasons can you think of for the referendum failing?
   - Why might the opponents of Federation have set a quota of ‘yes’ votes for New South Wales? Provide reasons for your thinking.
   - Would the referendum have succeeded in New South Wales if the quota had not been raised?

2. Working in pairs, use spreadsheet software to create graphs representing the data from the 1898 referendum.

3. Write three questions for other students in the class to answer. Your questions will need to focus on comparing ‘yes’ votes and ‘no’ votes and comparing the results of New South Wales to the other colonies. For example, ‘Did more or less than 50 per cent of people living in New South Wales vote in favour of Federation’, or ‘After New South Wales, which colony reported the next lowest ‘yes’ vote?’

4. Swap your questions with another pair of students. When you and the other pair of students have finished answering the questions, correct one another’s responses.
The failure of the 1898 referendum did not mean that progress towards Federation stopped. To make a positive result more likely, there had to be further discussion and negotiation about the Australian Constitution and how a federal system would work.

Premier George Reid called a ‘secret’ meeting of all six Premiers in early 1899. It was called secret because the public and media were not allowed to attend. He was well-known for his Yes–No attitude to Federation, and had been critical of the Constitution voted on in the first referendum. In many ways, he had not changed his views.

Reid still believed that the Constitution should recognise the importance of New South Wales as the largest and oldest colony. He wanted the national capital to be in New South Wales, not Victoria. He also believed that the Constitution should not make the Commonwealth give back money raised from tariffs to the States.

However, all the Premiers, including Reid, may have been prepared to accept that they could not win on every point, and to consider possible compromises so that plans for Federation could move forward.

Later in 1899, voters in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania once again voted in a referendum on Federation. This time, Queensland also took part. Then in 1900, Western Australia held its referendum.

Activities

1. As a class, read the newspaper extract. Discuss how the issue of the Braddon clause was resolved.
2. As a class, read and discuss the posters. Make a list of the reasons for and against Federation described in the posters. Add other reasons you can think of to the list.
3. Have a ‘question and answer’ session. Ask any questions you may have about the reasons for or against Federation. Ask questions about anything you may be unsure about. See if you can help to answer your classmates’ questions.
4. With a partner, use the voting results tables for the 1898, 1899 and 1900 referendums to complete the following tasks. Record your answers.
   - Using a calculator and the results from the 1899 and 1900 referendums, repeat the steps used for the 1898 referendum in Activity 1, Investigation 4 to find the percentage of ‘yes’ and ‘no’ votes.
   - Compare the results of the 1899 and 1900 referendums to the results of the 1898 referendum.
   - Make a list of the most significant differences in the results.
5. Share your responses with a small group. Combine your responses and share them with the rest of the class.
1. You have considered a variety of issues surrounding Federation, including:
   - equal representation in the Senate;
   - voting rights for women;
   - defence;
   - immigration;
   - distribution of money raised by a Federal Parliament; and
   - location of the new nation’s capital.

Use the chart to rank the issues in order of importance from 1 to 6, with 1 being the issue that is the most important and in most urgent need of resolution. Provide reasons for your rankings.

2. Find four or five classmates that had the same issue ranked as number 1. Work as a team to develop an argument about why your issue was the most important.
   - Provide an introduction to the issue. Why was it an issue?
   - Present your first reason for ranking your issue as number 1.
   - State your second reason for your ranking.
   - Outline your third reason for the ranking.
   - Conclude your case with a summary of the arguments.

Present your case to the rest of the class.

3. Have the arguments presented by the other groups convinced you to change your mind about which issue was the most important? Using the preferential voting system, conduct a vote to see how the class ranked the issues. Cast your vote using the voting slip. Remember to number the squares from 1 to 6, and that every square must be numbered.
   - Tally the votes. Which issue was voted the most important? Which one was the least important? Were any issues deemed to be of equal importance?

(Information on the preferential voting system can be found at www.aec.gov.au/Voting/counting/index.htm.)
Now that you have completed the investigations in Road to Federation, use your knowledge to explore connections to your life today. Do one or more of the following activities.

1. Writing letters and emails to the editor of a newspaper is a very important way of participating in public debate. Look at the ‘letters’ page of a newspaper. What kinds of issues are people writing about? Choose one of the letters and write a response to the author, either agreeing or disagreeing with their point of view. Share your letter with your class.

2. Think of an issue or event in your school or community that you would like to comment on. Write a short play, or invent characters for a computer game or puppet show, to express your thoughts and opinions in a fun and creative way.

3. With another student, think about how you would appeal to national unity in Australia today, and for what purposes. Design a print or electronic advertisement for ‘One Australia’, using your ideas about nationhood.
Extract from speech by Henry Parkes at Tenterfield, 24 October 1889

General Edwards had also advised that the forces of the various colonies should be federated together for operation in unison in the event of war, so as to act as one great federal army. If an attack were made upon any of the colonies, it might be necessary for us to bring all our power to bear on one spot of the coast ...

The great question which they had to consider was, whether the time had now arisen for the creation on this Australian continent of an Australian Government ... to preserve the security and integrity of these colonies that the whole of their forces should be amalgamated into one great federal army ... They had now, from South Australia to Queensland, a stretch of about 2000 miles of railway, and if the four colonies could only combine to adopt a uniform gauge, it would be an immense advantage in the movement of troops ...

Surely, what the Americans have done by war, the Australians could bring about in peace ... it was essential to preserve the security and integrity of these colonies that the whole of their forces should be amalgamated into one great federal army ... they must appoint a convention of leading men from all the colonies who would ... devise the constitution (for) a federal government with a federal parliament ...

**Customs**

**Customs house regulations**

A letter to the editor

Sir,—I write to you to protest against your barbarous Custom-house regulations. I and my wife were passengers by the express from Adelaide last Thursday, and on arrival in Melbourne on Friday we were subjected to the ignominy of having our boxes, &c., searched and turned over before a crowd of railway porters and bystanders, although we had nothing but our wearing apparel, and no dutiable goods. I consider it a disgrace to the colony of Victoria that visitors from the neighbouring colonies should be subjected to such treatment. I am a Sydney resident and may state that this is the first time I have been so treated. What is the use of talking about federation, when I cannot travel from South Australia or New South Wales without being subject to having my luggage searched and turned over? Victorians should be heartily ashamed of themselves.—Yours &c., Indignant.

*The Argus. 2 February 1887.*

**A customs station**

Customs Officers at Her Majesty’s custom station, Wahgunyah, Victoria, c 1890s. Foord Family Collection, Accession #87/102, University of Melbourne Archives.
Immigration

‘The Mongolian Octopus—Its Grip on Australia’

Students, please note: today, a cartoon such as ‘The Mongolian Octopus’ would be considered racist.

In a parliamentary debate on immigration restriction, the kind of debate that led to the ‘White Australia’ policy, Attorney-General, Alfred Deakin stated that the Japanese and Chinese were a threat to the newly formed Federation for the following reasons.

‘It is not the bad qualities, but the good qualities of these alien races that make them so dangerous to us. It is their inexhaustible energy, their power of applying themselves to new tasks, their endurance and low standard of living that make them such competitors.’

Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, 12 September 1901.
Voting rights for women

‘The same rights as men’

We claim that as a human being, she should have ... the same rights and privileges as that other section of humanity called men.

Rose Scott in a report of a debate with Miss Badham in the *Australian Economist*, 1895.

**Woman’s Christian Temperance Union leaflet**

Rose Scott Papers, MLMSS 38, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

![Image of a leaflet titled "Why Should I, a Woman, Vote?"

1. Because my right to do so is logically involved in the constitutional right of a woman to occupy the British Throne.
2. Because the acknowledgment of my right to do so has been secured for me by men who believe in my intelligence and good sense, and fitness to vote, and I ought not to disappoint the confidence they have shown in me.
3. Because my single vote may decide whether the better or the worse candidate shall go to Parliament.
4. Because the supporters of the drink traffic, which is the greatest source of domestic misery, have most violently resisted my right to vote, and my vote is urgently needed to resist the baneful power of this traffic.
5. Because, men who want to see better Parliaments, better laws, and happier homes, ask for my help to secure these good ends, and I ought not to withhold it.
6. Because if I have to obey the laws, I have a right to help to decide who shall make them.
7. Because some social wrongs which women suffer will not be altered till women use their voting power.
8. Because if I neglect to vote, I make someone else's vote on the other side count double.
9. Because I am responsible for any public evils I do not do my share to remove.
10. Because God's command to “remove the heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke,” can sometimes be obeyed only at the ballot box.
11. Because my vote is most distrusted by those who have wrong purposes to serve, and therefore should be exercised as a terror to evil-doers.
12. Because, now that I have an acknowledged right to vote, I shall fail in my duty to my country if I do not use it.
### Choices and consequences chart

Record the issue contained in your primary source. List the positive (pluses) and negative (minuses) consequences for taking action and for taking no action on the issue. What would your position on the issue have been if you had lived in New South Wales at the time: to take action or take no action? Justify your answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is this issue?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Choices</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the people of New South Wales had chosen to <strong>do something</strong> about the issue, then ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the people of New South Wales had chosen to <strong>do nothing</strong> about the issue, then ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... what might the positive and negative consequences have been? Base your answers on what you know and the primary source material you have read.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pluses (+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minuses (–)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If I was living in New South Wales at the time, my position on the issue would be ...

because ...
We want a fair Federation. 1901, National Library of Australia. nla.pic-an13118328-1.
Population data for each colony in 1899

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colony</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>Vic</th>
<th>Qld</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Tas</th>
<th>WA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population in 1899</td>
<td>1,348,400</td>
<td>1,162,900</td>
<td>482,400</td>
<td>370,700</td>
<td>182,300</td>
<td>171,030</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Federal Parliament re: proposed representation per colony

**THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Number of representatives per colony

**THE SENATE**

Number of representatives per colony
The ‘Braddon clause’

Raising small amounts of money

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The proposed Braddon clause would mean that if the new Federal Parliament collected …</th>
<th>£1 (20s)</th>
<th>£2 (40s)</th>
<th>£3 (60s)</th>
<th>£4 (80s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>… it could only keep one-quarter of the money it raised, which was …</td>
<td>5s</td>
<td>10s</td>
<td>15s</td>
<td>£1 (20s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… and the States would receive three-quarters raised of the money totalling …</td>
<td>15s</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>45s</td>
<td>£3 (60s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Raising large amounts of money

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The proposed Braddon clause would mean that if the new federal government collected …</th>
<th>£500,000</th>
<th>£600,000</th>
<th>£700,000</th>
<th>£800,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>… it could only keep one-quarter of the money it raised, which was …</td>
<td>£125,000</td>
<td>£150,000</td>
<td>£175,000</td>
<td>£200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… and the States would receive three-quarters of the money totalling …</td>
<td>£375,000</td>
<td>£450,000</td>
<td>£525,000</td>
<td>£600,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Extracts of speech by Premier George Reid at the Sydney Town Hall, 28 March 1898**

I want to call your attention to an amendment made by Sir Edward Braddon at the very last moment almost in the history of the Convention ... the Treasurers of Victoria, Tasmania, and South Australia ... cannot put any more taxation on their people as State governments ... [They would be] thrown into financial distress if they did not get back the amount which they have given up ... Sir Edward Braddon’s amendment has put in the constitution for all time this extraordinary provision ... for every £1 raised through the Customs-house 15s must go back to the State ... the Commonwealth Treasurer, if he resorted to the customs at all, would have to raise £800,000 to get the £200,000 he needed. Of course, the other £600,000 would come back to the States, but would it ever get back to you? (Laughter.) That is a grave blemish in this bill ...

So far as I am concerned, with all the criticisms I have levelled at this bill, with all the fears I have for the future, I feel I cannot become a deserter from the cause of federation. (Loud and prolonged cheers.) I cannot take up this bill with enthusiasm. (Hear, hear.) I see serious blots in it which have put a severe strain upon me ... I consider my duty to Australia demands me to record a vote in favour of the bill.

*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 March 1898.

**‘The Yes-No Federationist’**

### Results of the 1898 referendums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colony</th>
<th>Voted ‘yes’</th>
<th>Voted ‘no’</th>
<th>Total votes</th>
<th>Percentage of ‘yes’ votes</th>
<th>Percentage of ‘no’ votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>71,595</td>
<td>66,228</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>35,800</td>
<td>17,320</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>11,797</td>
<td>2,716</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>100,520</td>
<td>22,090</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Helen Irving (ed), *The Centenary Companion to Australian Federation*. 
Extract of an interview with George Reid after the Premiers’ ‘secret’ conference, 3 February 1899

There is a general feeling of jubilation in Melbourne this morning at the sudden announcement of the fact that the Premiers had come to a unanimous agreement, and that a scheme of federation had been drawn up. It was understood that up to noon yesterday the Premiers were as far from agreement as ever. Sir E. Braddon stoutly declined to give way, and persisted in his clause remaining unaltered in the draft bill. Eventually, however, he was talked over by Mr. Reid … and agreed to the insertion of words limiting the operation of the clause to 10 years. Thus everything ended happily.

Finally Mr. Reid stated that he felt convinced that the agreement arrived at would give general satisfaction all round, and that he thought that federation would shortly be an accomplished fact.

*The Sydney Morning Herald*. 4 February 1899.
‘To the Australian Born’ Federation referendum leaflet

To the Australian Born.

No people in the world have been so manifestly marked out by destiny to live under one Government as the people of this island continent: but no people with so little reason have been so disunited in their public actions.

The Vote on Tuesday next will determine whether we will continue as we are, a cluster of petty provinces, each waging a wasteful competition with the other by means of hostile tariffs and railway rates; or whether we shall have the courage to accept the responsibility cast upon us by our heritage of this great Continent.

“A Continent for a People, a People for a Continent,” was Mr. Barton’s fine expression of a noble hope four years ago. If Australians are true to themselves this hope will be realised on June 29th.

All the difficulties in the way of Union vanish if we look at them as Australians, and not as the inhabitants of any single province. There should be no more difference between, say Victoria and New South Wales, than there is in Great Britain between Somerset and Yorkshire.

Australia is our home. Our aspiration is to make Australia great.

If this is “sentiment” it is also “hard sense.” No Nation has ever played a worthy part in the world unless it has had confidence in its own future.

A Nation’s Greatness does not depend upon Acreage of Territory or Material Wealth, but on the nobleness of the thoughts by which its people are inspired; and of all the impulses to noble deeds which history records there is none more universal or more potent than this sentiment of Nationality.

Let us become a Nation

and establish in the Southern Hemisphere a POWER which makes for Peace and Order in the sight of other nations, and which will prove to men of every race that the descendents of Britons in Australia have not lost their capacity for self-government.

‘Voters of New South Wales’ Constitution Bill referendum poster

**VOTERS OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

Do not be deceived by the cry that the present is an “amended” Constitution Bill.

The alterations made in it at the Premiers’ Secret Conference are alterations in words only.

In all its evil essentials the Bill remains the same.

---

**CONDEMNED THE CONSTITUTION BILL**

**WHY?**

BECAUSE it heaped a crushing load of Taxation upon New South Wales.

He said: “The people of New South Wales would have to submit to taxation to the extent of £3,000,000 a year.”

This arrangement was left UNTOUCHED by the Secret Conference!

BECAUSE it destroyed Democracy by Equal Representation in the Senate.

He said: “Take the equality of the Senate. It is foreign to all my notions and every article of my political creed. The powers of the Senate, I am bound to tell you, transcend any powers known to the British Constitution.”

Those powers remain unaltered by the Secret Conference!

BECAUSE of the Braden clause. He said: “The Braden clause must, of course, come out.” It is still in.

BECAUSE New South Wales should have the Capital as some compensation for the financial losses which, under any system, she must suffer.

He said: “As under any system of finance New South Wales must be prepared to make sacrifices, I consider that the Capital should be named in the Federal Bill.”

The only place named in the Bill is MELBOURNE!

BECAUSE Queensland was not included.

He said: “New South Wales and Queensland hold between them the key of the future.”

Queensland is still not included!

BECAUSE the other Colonies get financial benefits at the expense of New South Wales Taxpayers.

He said: “Make me a citizen of Victoria, or Tasmania, or South Australia, and I would stump those colonies from end to end in favour of the Bill; but it is on account of the feeling that this Colony is called upon to make sacrifices much larger than any other colony that I cannot take the responsibility of leading you, who have to make those sacrifices, from the most calm and impartial consideration of the matter.

Not one word of the arrangement he here denounced has been altered.

BECAUSE an effort to force an imperfect measure down our throats was to be condemned.

He said: “I have no sympathy with ‘Now or never!’ Are the people of New South Wales satisfied that this Bill is impossible of improvement? That is the question. I am glad to think that we are under the firm sceptre of the same monarch both on the 2nd June and the 4th June, whatever happens to this Bill. I will not give up in despair if the people do not accept this Bill.”

In the interval the Bill HAS NOT BEEN improved.

---

Here are seven different reasons given by the Premier for voting NO last referendum. They are all valid. They are all independent. Each of them separately condemns the Bill. Each of them stands good of the Bill to-day.

The Bill has not been changed on the points which Mr. Reid denounced; but Mr. Reid supports it to-day. **HE HAS CHANGED!**

He said: “I never believed it possible that a number of men who had sat in that Convention, as Messrs. Barton, O’Connor, and Wills had done, should have stamped this Country and made the speeches they did, which if they came from men of another colony you could forgive; but coming from Representatives you trusted, amounts to Practical Conspicacy.”

He has joined this conspiracy, and is to-day attempting, hand in hand with his former opponents, to secure the passage of this iniquitous measure over the downfall of our liberties.

W. E. Smith, Bridge Street, Sydney.

### Results of the 1899 referendums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colony</th>
<th>Voted 'yes'</th>
<th>Voted 'no'</th>
<th>Total votes</th>
<th>Percentage of 'yes' votes</th>
<th>Percentage of 'no' votes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>107,420</td>
<td>82,741</td>
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<td>Queensland</td>
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<td>South Australia</td>
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<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>13,437</td>
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<td>152,653</td>
<td>9,805</td>
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### Results of the 1900 referendum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colony</th>
<th>Voted 'yes'</th>
<th>Voted 'no'</th>
<th>Total votes</th>
<th>Percentage of 'yes' votes</th>
<th>Percentage of 'no' votes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>44,800</td>
<td>19,691</td>
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</table>

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

Rank the issues in order of importance from 1 to 6; with 1 being the most important. Provide a reason for this ranking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The issue</th>
<th>Your ranking</th>
<th>Reason for this ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equal representation in the Senate</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Voting rights for women</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defence</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Distribution of money raised by a Federal Parliament</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of the new nation's capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Voting slip**

Number the squares from 1 to 6. Number every square.

- Equal representation in the Senate
- Voting rights for women
- Defence
- Immigration
- Distribution of money raised by a Federal Parliament
- Location of the new nation's capital