

INVESTIGATIONS OF AUSTRALIA'S JOURNEY TO NATIONHOOD FOR THE MIDDLE YEARS CLASSROOM M<sub>O</sub>AD LEARNING 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 – Tasmania

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Edited by Katharine Sturak and Zoe Naughten Designed by Deanna Vener







The idea behind Federation was that it would benefit all six colonies, and that there would be a federal defence force able to protect every part of the nation. But, for Federation to become a reality, an Australian Constitution had to be written. The Constitution would explain how the new nation would be governed. During the 1890s, Premiers and delegates from all Australian colonies came together in special meetings, called conventions, to discuss, debate and draft a Constitution for the Commonwealth of Australia. Once they reached agreement, the Constitution would be put to the people of each colony in a vote, called a referendum.

Reaching agreement was not easy. Each colony had particular interests they wanted to protect under a federal system. Tasmania, the smallest colony, wanted to be sure that larger colonies would not have too much power in the Federal Parliament. But, not all colonies had the same idea about how power should be shared.

There were also different views about trade. Tasmania relied on income from intercolonial tariffs, or taxes it charged on goods coming from other colonies. However, with Federation, only the Commonwealth could charge import tariffs (and only on goods coming from overseas). New South Wales, the largest and wealthiest colony, did not charge tariffs and wanted the Commonwealth to continue with this policy.

When the first referendum took place in 1898, the Constitution put to voters included details that Tasmania's Premier, Edward Braddon had to fight for at the Federal Conventions. These ensured that money from tariffs would continue to flow to the colony. However, the referendum failed because the Constitution was not approved in New South Wales. This led to a meeting of the colonies' leaders (the 'secret' Premiers' conference), at which all Premiers agreed to some amendments to the Constitution.

A second referendum was held in 1899, with all colonies, except Western Australia, taking part. This time the referendum passed. In 1900, Western Australia held its referendum and voters decided that their colony would join the new nation too.

In 1901, more than 10 years after the Federation movement began, all six Australian colonies united to form the Commonwealth of Australia. The vision of 'a great national government', dealing with 'all great questions ... in a broad light and with a view to the interests of the whole country', was finally a reality.

#### Investigations

- **1.** Why were intercolonial tariffs an issue for Tasmania?
- **2.** Why was the structure of the Federal Parliament particularly important for Tasmania?
- **3.** What was the 'Braddon clause', and why were there conflicting views about it?
- **4.** What were some of the arguments presented by Tasmanians for and against Federation?
- **5.** What happened in the referendums on Federation?
- **6.** If you had been a Tasmanian voter, would you have been in favour of Federation?

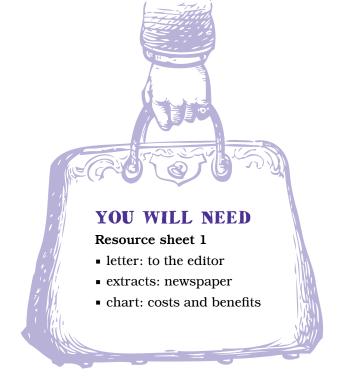


# Why were intercolonial tariffs an issue for Tasmania?

Before Federation, each Australian colony had different trade laws, especially in regard to whether or not they charged taxes, or intercolonial tariffs, on incoming goods.

Tasmania was one of the colonies that charged intercolonial tariffs, and it relied heavily on the income they generated. The tariffs made imported goods more expensive. This protected local industries that were not profitable enough to compete with cheaper imports. The Tasmanian Government did not want to lose these tariffs as a result of Federation.

How might the proposed removal of intercolonial tariffs have affected Tasmanians' attitudes to Federation?



Investigate what effect the removal of intercolonial tariffs could have had on Tasmania.

#### **Activities**

- **1.** As a class, read the letter and the newspaper extracts. Discuss or use a dictionary to find meanings for any words you don't know.
- **2.** Form four groups. Each group will carefully examine either the letter or one of the newspaper extracts. Discuss the following questions and record your answers.
- Who, in Tasmania, does your letter or extract represent?
- Is your person in favour or against the removal of intercolonial tariffs? Provide evidence for your thinking.
- Could the issue of removing intercolonial tariffs have been used as a reason to federate with the other colonies? Provide reasons for your thinking.

- Could the issue of removing intercolonial tariffs have been used as a reason **not** to federate?
   Provide reasons for your thinking.
- **3.** Use the 'costs and benefits chart' to record possible short- and long-term costs of, and benefits for, the removal of intercolonial tariffs on the people represented by your letter or extract. Share your group's response with the class.
- **4.** Based on what you have found out so far, do you believe the decision to federate would have been an easy one or a hard one for the people of Tasmania? Provide reasons for your thinking.



# Why was the structure of the Federal Parliament particularly important for Tasmania?

The draft Constitution proposed that the Federal Parliament would have two houses or chambers: the House of Representatives and the Senate. Previously, colonies had to elect representatives in these chambers. Passing new laws would require a majority of votes in both houses. However, the colonies differed greatly in population. How could the Parliament be organised to ensure that each colony's voting power was appropriate to its size?

In the House of Representatives, the answer was relatively simple. Each representative was elected by the people of an area called an electorate. Every electorate has about the same number of people living in it. Larger colonies would have more electorates, and therefore, more representatives than smaller colonies. The proposal for the Senate, however, was that each colony, large or small, would have the same number of senators. If you had been a Tasmanian voter or politician, do you think you would have been happy with this arrangement?



Explore whether the proposed Senate was fair or unfair.

#### YOU WILL NEED

#### Resource sheet 2

- poster: 'We want a fair Federation'
- data: population for each colony, 1899
- diagrams: proposed representation in a new Federal Parliament

#### **Activities**

- 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. Click on 'Law making' to access 'Pass the Bill', then follow the instructions for this online interactive.
- **2.** Form small groups. Examine the 'We want a fair Federation' poster. Discuss the following questions and record your responses.
- Are the New South Wales creators of this poster in favour of Federation or not? Provide reasons for your thinking.
- Why might this poster focus on the voting in the Senate and not the House of Representatives?
- If Tasmanian voters had seen this poster, do you think it would have convinced them to vote in favour of, or against, Federation? Provide reasons for your thinking.
- **3.** Look at the population data in 1899 and the number of representatives for the House of Representatives and the Senate. 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. Use the figures to work out how they arrived at this claim. Discuss the following questions.
- How could you use the numbers to prove that a Federal Parliament would be fair for all Australians?
- What problems might arise if Tasmania had less representation in the Senate?
- Could the 'We want a fair Federation' poster affect progress towards Federation? Provide reasons for your thinking.
- In your group, 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. Individually, design your own graphics to represent either:
- the proportions in the House of Representatives; or
- how the two chambers work together to create a fair system.

Display your designs around the classroom.



# What was the 'Braddon clause', and why were there conflicting views about it?

Under the proposed arrangements for a new Federal Parliament, intercolonial tariffs were to be collected by the Commonwealth. Colonies that had charged intercolonial tariffs before Federation would no longer be able to do so. Tasmania was one of these colonies, and its leaders believed that losing the tariff income would leave them without enough money to properly run the colony (or State, after Federation).

In meetings held before the colonies voted on Federation, Tasmania's Premier, Edward Braddon, negotiated a clause in the Constitution, which would guarantee to the States some continuing income from tariffs. People who did not want the Commonwealth to set higher tariffs – particularly those in New South Wales, which was a free-trade colony – opposed this clause and referred to it as the 'Braddon blot'.

Why did some people feel that the 'Braddon clause' was wrong, while others believed that it was essential?



Explore whether or not Braddon's proposed amendment was a 'blot'.

#### YOU WILL NEED

Resource sheet 3

- diagram: 'Braddon clause'
- extract: report by

Robert Mackenzie Johnston

extract: speech by New South WalesPremier George Reid

#### **Activities**

**1.** As a class, examine the diagram that represents Braddon's amendment clause. In your own words, explain to a partner what information you think it is telling you.

Look at the two tables to see how Braddon proposed money raised through federal tariffs would be distributed. With your partner, continue the sequence of numbers in each table for at least four more places to show that you understand how Braddon's proposed clause would work.

- **2.** As a class, read the extracts from the report by Robert Mackenzie Johnston and the speech by George Reid. Discuss or use a dictionary to find meanings for any words you don't know.
- **3.** Divide into two groups.

#### Group 1

With a partner, discuss the following questions and record your responses.

- Why might Robert Mackenzie Johnston have been concerned about the financial arrangements as they were originally proposed? Provide reasons for your thinking.
- How might this issue affect Federation? Provide reasons for your thinking.
- Based on what you have read, was Braddon's clause a problem or a solution for colonies such as Tasmania, which relied on the intercolonial tariff? Provide reasons for your thinking.

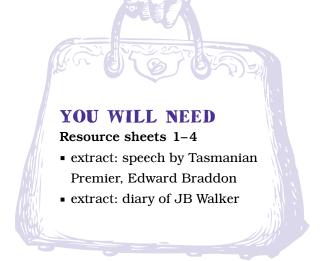
#### Group 2

With a partner, discuss the following questions and record your responses.

- Why might George Reid have been concerned about Braddon's clause regarding this proposed financial arrangement? Provide reasons for your thinking.
- How might this issue affect Federation? Provide reasons for your thinking.
- Based on what you have read, was Braddon's clause a problem or a solution for free-trade colonies such as New South Wales? Provide reasons for your thinking.
- **4.** Share your responses with your group. Combine your group's responses and share them with the other half of the class.
- **5.** Write a letter to Edward Braddon supporting or criticising his proposed amendment to the Constitution. Explain why you feel the amendment is or is not a 'blot'.
- **6.** Share your letter with your classmates.



# What were some of the arguments presented by Tasmanians for and against Federation?



Many people who had strong opinions about Federation actively campaigned to build support for their viewpoint. Tasmanian federation leagues were established to promote the advantages of Federation.

Groups were also formed to oppose Federation. These people were known as 'anti-Billites' because the referendums on Federation would involve voting on a proposed law (the Constitution Bill), which would allow the Australian Constitution to become official.

Both campaigns used many strategies to gain support. Strategies included holding meetings throughout the colony, writing to newspapers, giving speeches, displaying posters and gathering signatures.

What arguments do you think supporters of Federation and 'anti-Billites' might have presented in their campaigns?

Investigate the arguments for and against Federation. Form an opinion, and then develop a political campaign.

#### **Activities**

- **1.** As a class, read the extracts by Braddon and Walker. Discuss or use a dictionary to find meanings for any words you don't know.
- **2.** In a small group, complete the following tasks.
- Make a list of the reasons for and against Federation.
- Add any other reasons you can think of to the list.
   You can refer to all the resources you have read.
- Share your responses with another small group.
   Combine your responses and share them with the rest of the class.
- **3.** Have a 'question and answer' session. Ask any questions you may have about the reasons for or against Federation, or anything else that may be unclear to you.
- **4.** If you had the right to vote at the time, would you have voted for or against Federation? Provide reasons for your choice.

- **5.** Join with three or four classmates who share your views about Federation. Your small group will develop a political campaign. It will need to do the following tasks.
- Decide who the target audience for your campaign will be – remember, different groups in the community had a range of concerns.
- Record a short number of reasons why your audience should support your point of view. Think of catchy slogans to clearly explain your reasons.
- Think of the techniques you will use to present your campaign. Use different strategies, including posters, letters and speeches to demonstrate the reasons people should support your point of view.
- Present your campaign to your classmates.



## What happened in the referendums on Federation?

The first referendum on Federation was held in 1898, and involved New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia. Queensland and Western Australia were not yet sure they wanted to join in Federation.

For the referendum to pass, all colonies had to achieve a majority 'yes' vote. In New South Wales, the opponents of Federation had increased the required number of votes to 80,000, which was more than a majority. When the votes were counted, there were not enough 'yes' votes in New South Wales to allow Federation to go ahead.

The colonies' leaders met early in 1898 at a 'secret' conference. The media and the public were not allowed to attend. The concerns of New South Wales Premier, George Reid were the key issues the meeting addressed. He wanted the national capital to be in New South Wales, not Victoria, and he believed that the Constitution should set some limits on colonies that wanted continuing income from trade tariffs. A time limit of 10 years was agreed upon.

The Constitution was amended and campaigning for Federation began again. Referendums were held in 1899 in Tasmania, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia. Western Australia followed in 1900, and the six Australian colonies formed the Commonwealth of Australia.

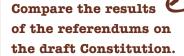
#### YOU WILL NEED

#### Resource sheet 5

- table: results of the 1898 referendums
- table: results of the 1899 referendums
- table: results of the 1900 referendum

calculators

spreadsheet software





#### **Activities**

- 1. With a partner, use the voting results table for the 1898 referendums and a calculator when discussing the following questions and recording 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.

In which colonies did the referendum succeed or fail? Which colony had the biggest proportion in favour of Federation?

- **2.** Use the voting results table for the 1899 and 1900 referendums to discuss the following questions and record your answers.
- Calculate the total number of votes and the percentage of 'yes' votes and 'no' votes for the second referendum (See Step 1).
- Compare the results of the 1898 referendum with results of the 1899 and 1900 referendums. Make a list of the most significant differences in the results.
- In which colonies did the referendum succeed or fail? Which colony had the biggest proportion in favour of Federation?
- **3.** Work with a partner. Use spreadsheet software to graph the data from the two referendums.

Write three questions for other students in the class to answer. Focus on comparing 'yes' votes and 'no' votes and comparing the results of Tasmania to the other colonies. For example, did more or less than 50 per cent of people living in Tasmania vote in favour of Federation at the two referendums? After Tasmania, which colony reported the next highest 'yes' vote?

**4.** Swap your questions with another pair of students. Answer their questions. When you and the other pair of students have finished answering the questions, correct one another's responses.



# If you had been a Tasmanian voter, would you have been in favour of Federation?

YOU WILL NEED

#### Resource sheet 6

- chart: rank the issues
- voting slip

People had many issues to consider on the road to Federation. How could Federation serve the interests of Tasmania and help to create the best possible future for the nation as a whole? Could there be disadvantages for Tasmania if it became part of a federal system instead of remaining a separate colony?

Imagine that you had lived in Tasmania in the late 1880s. What issues would have been most important for you and your colony? And, after weighing up the issues, what would your opinion on Federation have been?

Consider the importance of the issues surrounding Federation and how you would have voted as a Tasmanian.



#### **Activities**

- **1.** You have considered a variety of issues surrounding Federation, including:
- equal representation in the Senate;
- intercolonial trade;
- defence; and
- distribution of money raised by a Federal Parliament.

Use the chart to rank the issues in order of importance from 1 to 4 with 1 being the most important. Provide a reason for each of 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 and urgently needed resolution. Do further research, if necessary.
- 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 4, 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 or 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.



#### Letter to the editor

To show how Tasmania cannot compete with Victoria in dairying, I will only touch on butter and cheese, as these two main industries will be sufficient to demonstrate our position. In the western districts of Victoria ... it is affirmed that 200 acres of native grass pasture will carry 100 milch cows. A dairy farm in Tasmania of 250 acres is considered a good one if it will carry 60 milch cows. Note the difference ...

Should any reader question the capabilities of Victorian dairies to [be so profitable], I refer them to their very large export trade in butter, over 900 tons ... being exported in one season. These facts go to prove her productiveness, and Tasmania's inability to compete in production of butter and cheese.

JT Cramp, The Mercury, 7 May 1898.

#### **Newspaper extracts**

... intercolonial freetrade ... will bring inestimable advantages to the people of the mineral West. Everything that the residents of these mining centres eat, wear, or use in any way is now subject to heavier Customs tariff than exists in the adjoining colonies, and they suffer accordingly. With the removal of Customs duty from mining machinery which we require to equip our mines our only industry must necessarily benefit, and by taking off the exorbitant tariff now existent on the articles of food that we have to import from the other colonies, every man, woman and child in the community will derive an advantage.

Zeehan and Dundas Herald, 26 July 1899.

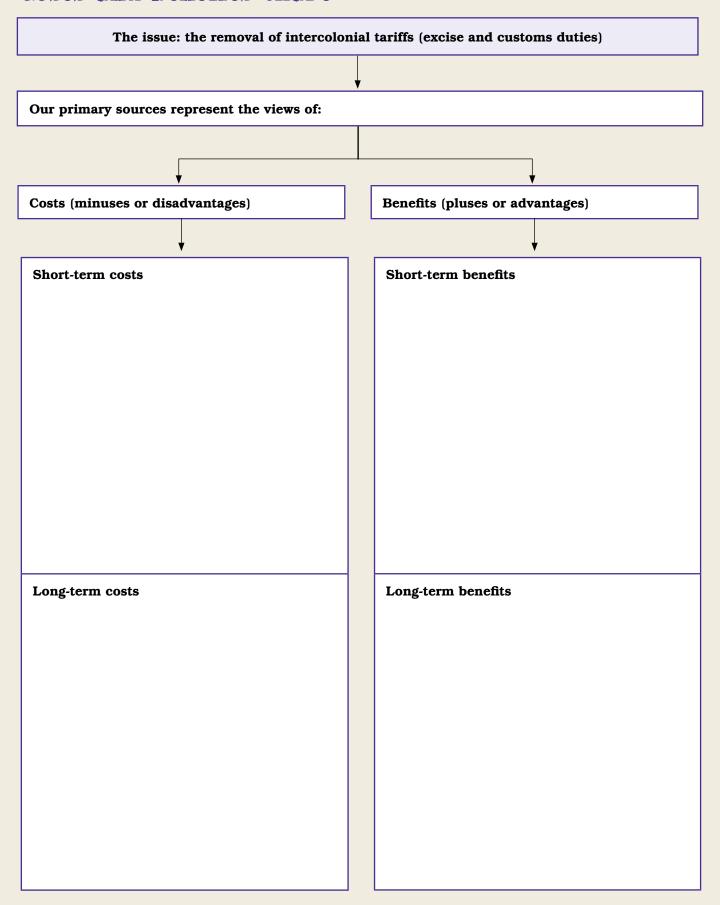
John Bradley and Teddy Mulcahy say the woollen manufacturers are in favour of the Bill. Just so: the tariff against their chief competitors—the English woollen factors—will be twice as high as at present. Food will be cheap because of the pouring in to Tassie of South Australian wheat; cheap food for factory hands means low wages. Low wages and high prices for heavily protected woollen goods ought to suit the big manufacturers splendidly. It won't suit the consumer for he will have to wear a high-priced colonial suit or go without a suit altogether. Of course we can blacken our hides with Tasmanian coal and use duty-free Newcastle [coal] for boiling our duty-free Victorian spuds and Sydney cabbage. Houp la! Clipper, Hobart, 4 June 1898.

The fact that Tasmania derives so much a greater proportion of her revenue from Customs and excise duties than any of the other colonies appears to be quite overlooked ... Tasmania will have to obtain from her people a considerably larger amount by direct taxation than will be the case in the other colonies ... Can Tasmania afford to face State insolvency in order to join a federal union ... Can this Colony afford to join in the federal finance scheme accepted by the Convention?

Tasmanian News, Hobart, 10 May 1898.

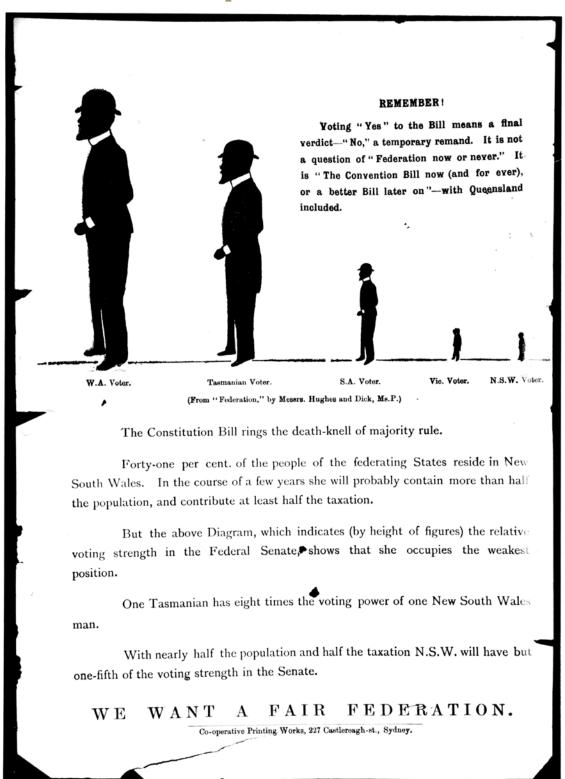


### Costs and benefits chart





#### 'We want a fair Federation' poster



We want a fair Federation, 1901, National Library of Australia, nla.pic-an13118328-1.

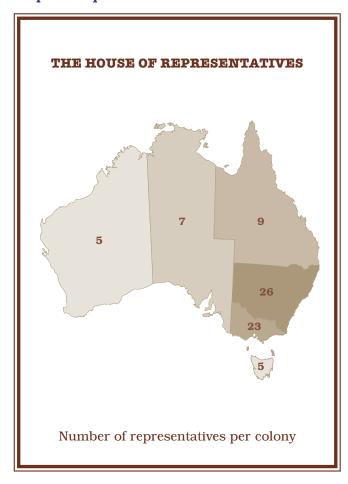


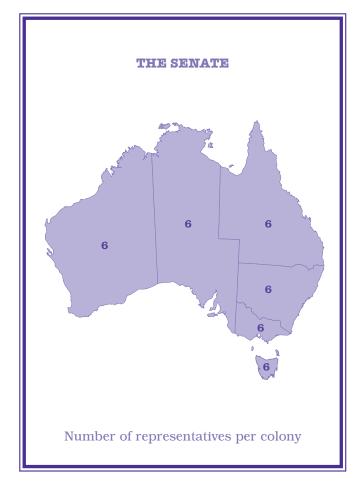
#### Population data for each colony in 1899

Colony	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	Tas	WA
Population in 1899	1,348,400	1,162,900	482,400	370,700	182,300	171,030

 $State\ Library\ of\ New\ South\ Wales,\ http://image.sl.nsw.gov.au/Ebind/f990\_1\_c/a111/a086115.html.$ 

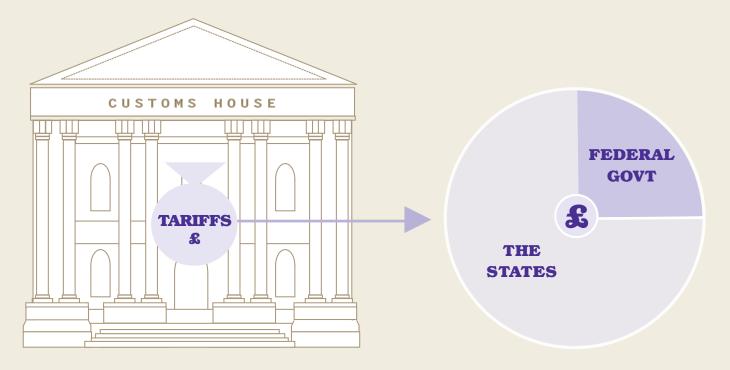
#### Proposed representation in a new Federal Parliament







### The 'Braddon clause'



#### Raising small amounts of money

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

#### Raising large amounts of money

The proposed Braddon clause would mean that if the new federal government collected	£500,000	£600,000	£700,000	£800,000
it could only keep one-quarter of the money it raised, which was	£125,000	£150,000	£175,000	£200,000
and the States would receive three-quarters of the money totalling	£375,000	£450,000	£525,000	£600,000



## Extract of a report by Tasmanian Government statistician, Robert Mackenzie Johnston

Tasmania ... would require to double her existing Land and Income Tax—an impossibility—to enable her Treasurer to discharge her remaining State obligations and functions ... Tasmania ... cannot possibly double her already overburdened Land and Income Tax, her only resource; ... the finance proposals of the ... Convention Draft Bill are *simply impossible*!

RM Johnston, Federal Finance. Observations on the Difficulties of the Problem, with an enquiry into Their Underlying Causes, Hobart, 1897, pp 27–28.

## Extracts of speech by New South Wales 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 ... Sir Edward Braddon's amendment has put in the constitution for all time this extraordinary provision ... that for every £1 raised through the Customshouse 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.

The Sydney Morning Herald, 29 March 1898.

# RESOURCE SHEET 4



#### Sir Edward Braddon, JW Beattie, State Library of Tasmania, AUTAS001125880757.

#### Extracts from a speech by Tasmanian Premier, Edward Braddon

Electors of Tasmania-

... This Federation would give us also such security against hostile aggression as must be hopelessly beyond our reach if we attempt to stand out of the union ... if Tasmania became part of the Commonwealth the whole strength of the Commonwealth forces would be available for Tasmania's protection in the hour of need ...

If you fail to carry by a sufficient affirmative vote ... what will Tasmania's position be? She would be then a small fragment of that outside world against which the Commonwealth would set up its Customs barriers. The markets of New South Wales, now free to us, would be barred against us by the federal tariff,

and instead of that wider market which intercolonial free-trade would give for our fruit, jam, timber, oats, hay, straw, potatoes, woollen manufactures, etc., we should have a market even more restricted than that which now blights many of our industries ...

If Tasmania fails to pass the bill ... and seeks to enter the Federation subsequently, she will have to bargain for that which is now hers by right, and equal representation in the Senate would probably be sought in vain ...

Launceston Examiner, 28 May 1898.

#### Diary extract, 2 June 1898

... Federation was in many respects a leap in the dark, thoughtful men looked at the other alternative—what would be Tasmania's position if she was left alone outside the Federation with United Australia bonded against her. Slowly many of us came to the conclusion that this was a worse alternative than the possible financial risk of joining ...

Every year of delay would make the problem more difficult, the conflicting interests more irreconcilable, the prospect of agreement on fair terms more remote. That this would especially be the case with the smaller colonies who would be the more overshadowed by the large and rapidly growing populations of NS Wales and Victoria. Now Tasmania is offered equal terms in the Constitution—equal representation in the Senate with the great colonies, a minimum of 5 members—instead of 3 her proportionate number—in the House of Representatives.

JB Walker, diary, 2 June 1898, Reports on the Historical Manuscripts of Tasmania, Nos 1–5, Hobart, 1964, pp 179–181.

#### Results of the 1898 referendums

Colony	Voted 'yes'	Voted 'no'	Total votes	Percentage of 'yes' votes	Percentage of 'no' votes
New South Wales	71,595	66,228			
South Australia	35,800	17,320			
Tasmania	11,797	2,716			
Victoria	100,520	22,090			

#### Results of the 1899 referendums

Colony	Voted 'yes'	Voted 'no'	Total votes	Percentage of 'yes' votes	Percentage of 'no' votes
New South Wales	107,420	82,741			
Queensland	38,488	30,996			
South Australia	65,990	17,053			
Tasmania	13,437	791			
Victoria	152,653	9,805			

#### Results of the 1900 referendum

Colony	Voted 'yes'	Voted 'no'	Total votes	Percentage of 'yes' votes	Percentage of 'no' votes
Western Australia	44,800	19,691			

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.

The issue	Your ranking	Reason for this ranking
Equal representation in the Senate		
Intercolonial trade		
Defence		
Distribution of money raised by a Federal Parliament		

### Voting slip

Voting slip Number the squares from	3
1 to 4. Number every square.	
Equal representation in the Senate	
Intercolonial trade	
Defence	
Distribution of money raised by a Federal Parliament	