



Investigation 1

Forming hypotheses about the conscription system

Australian servicemen and servicewomen were involved in the war in Vietnam from 1962 to 1973. The Australian Government had three main reasons for this involvement: to support the United States supported South Vietnam government against invasion by North Vietnam; to stop the spread of Communism through Asia and towards Australia; and to support our major ally, the United States, in its commitment to the conflict. Australia's military involvement included professional volunteer troops and those who had been conscripted for service.

1 Examine the cartoons on page 2 relating to aspects of Australia during the Vietnam War.

The first step is to be clear what each cartoon is showing. To work this out, ask the following questions of each cartoon. You can do this individually, or you might divide the cartoons between members of your group.

- Who is shown in the cartoon?
- What is the context or setting?
- What are the characters doing and saying?

- How does the cartoonist depict the people? (For example, are they figures of fun, sympathetically shown, realistic, exaggerated, etc?)

From this you will be better able to work out these last two questions:

- What is the attitude of the cartoonist to the situation?
- What is the message of the cartoon that the cartoonist wants you to take away?

2 If these cartoons were the only information you had about Australia and the war, what conclusions could you draw about:

- Why we were involved
- How extensive that involvement was
- The attitudes of Australians to the war
- What conscription meant
- People's attitudes to conscription
- Who was and was not involved in protests
- The impacts of the war on Australian society.

Record your ideas in the grid provided at the bottom of this page.

Aspect	Your Hypothesis, and your reasons for having this expectation
Why we were involved	
How conscription worked	
Responses of different groups to conscription	
Nature of Australian involvement in the war	
Impacts of the war on Australian society.	

You will be able to test some of these hypotheses as you complete the other Investigations in this unit.

Cartoon by Rigby ↻

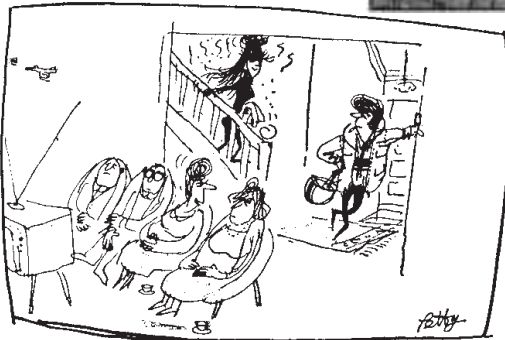


'The Ratbag Element'.
Cartoon by Petty ↻



↻ 'A great time to start searching your conscience!'
Cartoon by Petty

'Ballot day for National Service: "Lo! The smell of battle in the air and sounds of distant musketry . . . 'tis the call to arms!! . . .'"
Cartoon by Rigby ↻



↻ 'Our little girl is going to her first riot'.
Cartoon by Petty

'You'd better start praying that the VC send some help back, sonny!'
Cartoon by Rigby. ↻

