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TEACH • LEARN • UNDERSTAND

Welcome to the Term 1 edition of the [Seriously Social](#) newsletter.

As most of you will be aware, Seriously Social is the umbrella title for school-focused resources, supports and activities sponsored by the [Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia](#) (Academy). The Academy Fellows are people elected for their expertise and contributions to different fields of the social sciences. The Academy's objectives are to promote the social sciences and enhance the contribution and quality they can make to civic life in Australia. An important aim of this work is to support teachers and student learning in these fields in schools.

I am Chair of the Academy's steering committee that oversees our education activities. Cindy Bin Tahal is the Academy's Education Director who leads our programs in this area. In this newsletter she outlines two important projects. The first, a Year 9-10 War History Curriculum Resource is a multi-faceted set of resources (module, videos, interactive timeline) that have

been developed drawing on the expertise of a host of the major historians in Australia. One particularly enlightening element (at least for me) was the interactive timeline they have developed, which allows students to chronologically place major events in Australia, in wars

developed, which allows students to chronologically place major events in Australia, in wars, and in other parts of the world against each other. I think this resource set is a major achievement (see further details below). Also, note that this and other resources produced by Seriously Social are free.

A second activity for your attention is a schools' Great Student Debate held in Canberra as part of Social Sciences Week in September. (See further details below.) I encourage you all to enter a team from your own school in this competition.

We look forward to continuing to engage with educators throughout the year and would be delighted to receive your feedback and suggestions as we work to support the great work of social sciences educators across Australian schools.



Professor Lyn Yates FASSA

Chair, Education Committee
Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia

Education Director's Message

Dear Educators,

I hope that your school year has begun well.

Thank you for engaging with Seriously Social. The learning module booklets that form part of the pilot program, launched just under two years ago, have now been accessed more than 20,000 times, and over 4,000 educators have subscribed to receive updates. Given that there are around 10,000 schools in Australia, these numbers are encouraging and suggest the Academy's aim to support learning across Australian schools is gaining momentum.

In developing resources and opportunities for schools, my role is to connect research expertise with the needs of teachers and students. This work is guided through consultation with advisory groups that include teachers, students and curriculum authorities.

Since 2024, a student advisory group has also provided insights into learning in their schools, along with feedback on draft resources. The group has included students from metropolitan, regional and remote communities in Western Australia, Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland, and reflects a range of ages and cultural backgrounds. This year, three members of the group have graduated from high school, leaving us with vacancies. If you would like to recommend a student to join this diverse advisory group who meet a few times a year, please get in touch.

In next term's newsletter we will share more about Social Sciences Week in readiness for September. In the meantime, we are planning a series of short webinars during that week with our subject expert Fellows providing 20-minute presentations followed by a 10-minute Q&A session on topics of interest to schools. If you have suggestions for topics, or requests for the preferred time of day that these sessions are conducted, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Best wishes until then.



Cindy Bin Tahal PhD Candidate, M.Ed, B.Ed

Education Director
Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia

What's New?

Years 9–10 War History curriculum resource

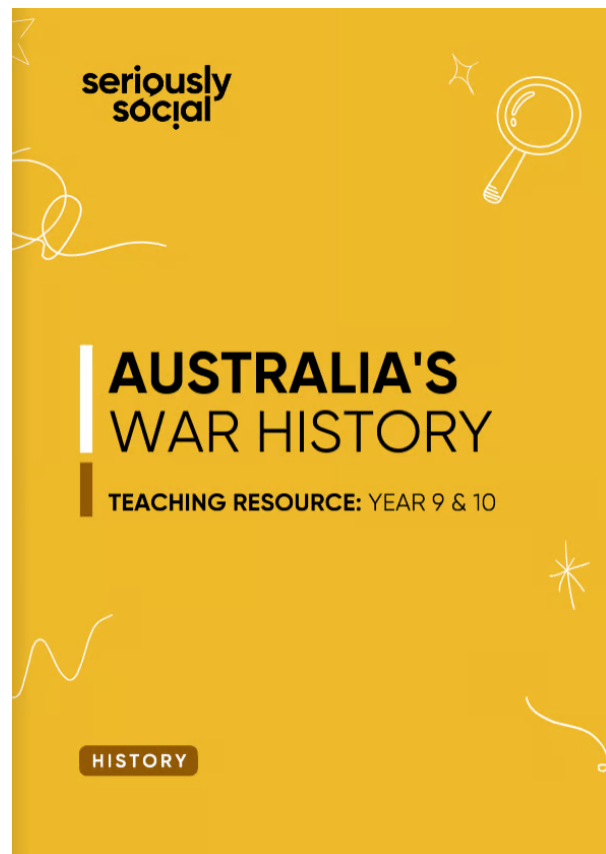
We are pleased to announce the launch of Seriously Social's newest resource *Australia's War History*, a comprehensive national curriculum resource designed to support Year 9 and 10 History learning across Australia. This project has been made possible through the contributions of the Department of Veteran Affairs, Saluting Their Service grants.

The learning resource consists of:

- Learning module of themed reading articles, learning experiences, teacher guidance and assessment.
- A series of 5 educational videos
- An interactive timeline

All resource items are available freely online [here](#).

Developed with input and peer review from Fellows of the Academy and leading scholars, the resource aligns with the Australian Curriculum and complements the NSW and Victorian curriculum frameworks for studies related to the First and Second World Wars.



The resource opens with the Australian Wars and concludes with an overview of Australia's military involvement since the Second World War, situating the World Wars within a longer and more complex history of conflict.

"This module is informed by the very best of scholarly research and serves as a contribution to support the great work of teachers in Australian schools and ultimately the learning of our young people," said Academy President and historian Professor Kate Darian-Smith.

"By combining the knowledge of teachers, students and curriculum associations with the

expertise of leading social scientists, we've created a resource that brings complex history to life for students."

Contributing Fellows include:

- [Emeritus Professor Bruce Scates](#)
- [Professor Kate Darian-Smith](#)
- [Emeritus Professor Joan Beaumont AM](#)
- [Professor David Lowe](#)
- [Emeritus Professor David Horner AK](#)
- [Professor Nicholas Brown](#)
- [Dr David Day](#)
- [Professor Michelle Arrow](#)
- [Professor Raelene Frances AM](#)
- [Professor Amanda Nettelbeck](#)
- [Professor Christina Twomey](#)
- [Professor John Maynard](#)
- [Professor Penny Edmonds](#)
- [Professor Russell Tytler](#)

Federal Education Minister Jason Claire extended his support for the project saying, "We live in the best country in the world because of the extraordinary sacrifices by the men and women who came before us to make Australia what it is today. The great work by The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia is teaching our kids about our history in a really powerful way."

The resource features an 84-page learning module with themed reading articles, educational videos, an interactive timeline, classroom learning activities and assessment guides, all shaped by expert input from 14 Fellows of the Academy, ensuring the highest standards of historical accuracy and scholarly depth.

Award-winning teachers contributed to the development of the project, including Sydney-based historian Lynette Silver AM MBE, 2025 Queensland History Educator Award recipient Peter Lawrence, and Seriously Social Education Director Cindy Bin Tahal.

Education Director Cindy Bin Tahal said the project aims to deepen students' understanding of both the broad events and personal stories from war.

"Our goal is to encourage deeper inquiry into the scale, diversity and impact of Australia's wartime service and sacrifice. War is complex and contested, and its story continues to unfold. Its consequences and interpretations still shape contemporary Australia and the world today," she said.

Advice and support were also provided by Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), the History Teachers' Association of Australia, Education Services Australia, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, and a national student reference group comprising high school students from across Australia.



Pictured above at the launch event held 9 March at the Sydney Anzac Memorial (LtR): Cindy Bin Tahal (Academy Education Director), Neil Silver and Lynette Silver (historian and writer), Marley Bin Tahal (Academy video presenter), Professor Michelle Arrow (Academy Fellow and Chair, Australian Historical Association), Dr Chris Hatherly (Academy CEO), Archdeacon Andrew Nixon (DVA), Professor Kate Darian-Smith (Academy President), Professor Frank Bongiorno (Fellow and President, Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences), Rachelle Willington (ACARA HASS Curriculum Specialist), Emeritus Professor Roy MacLeod (Academy Fellow), Professor Adam Possamai (Academy Fellow), and Tristan Black (Anzac Memorial Education Manager).

We would welcome samples of student work for inclusion in the online materials, feedback or input about this resource to info@socialsciences.org.au with the subject line Attention: Seriously Social. We hope that this resource complements and supports your great work.

The Great Student Debate and Social Sciences Week

The **2026 Great Student Debate – “That Australian politics is alive and well”** will take place on Thursday 17 September at the National Library of Australia. We hope to hear from many schools from across the nation by the end of March.

Applications are now open and will require coordinating teachers to submit plans from a

debate team and associated entry forms, as outlined in the application pack.

To help school prepare for the 2026 Great Student Debate, take a look at [Social Sciences Week - Seriously Social](#) where you will find teacher guidance, a debate kit, Australian politics and research skills webinars, all available to assist you with your applications.

Calliope State High School teacher, Scott Townley-Jones reflected on the experience of his students who were finalists in the 2025 Great Student Debate:

"The students still talk daily about things that happened in Canberra. I really think it's a moment they'll remember vividly for the rest of their lives. I cannot thank you and the team enough for the professionalism and kindness you displayed in helping fill the kids with the courage to perform. I think seeing something like debating on a big stage is a big pull for kids who only see sporting achievements recognised."

[Click here to find out more about the 2026 Great Student Debate](#)

THE GREAT STUDENT DEBATE
'THAT AUSTRALIAN POLITICS IS ALIVE AND WELL.'

An exciting national competition where students in Years 8, 9 and 10 engage in spirited debates, developing their skills while exploring key issues in Australian politics!

Eligibility: Open to students in Years 8, 9 and 10 who are new to competitive debating.

2026 COMPETITION DATES

Date	Information
27 January	Competition opens - visit seriouslysocial.org.au
5 March	Free information session about Australian politics - led by Dr Linda Botterill. Register interest at infosocialsciences.org.au
12 March	'The Great Student Debate Research Skills Webinar' - hosted by the National Library of Australia. Register here: https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register?W_N_YC5QknaBQYeyEr1r2D0XaA
31 March	Entries close at 10am AEST
1 May	Finalist schools informed of their selection

FINALIST TEAMS WILL RECEIVE:

- a debate coaching workshop led by experts ahead of the competition,
- a contribution to travel costs to attend the debate workshop and competition in Canberra,
- the chance to showcase their skills at a live debate at the National Library of Australia!

Debate resources

Head to [Seriously Social](#) to find a variety of debate resources to assist with 2026 Great Student Debate applications or to enhance students' learning in the classroom. New resources recently added include:

- this new [Seriously Social video](#) that captures students' perspectives on their learning experiences through debate, .
- a new video that features two educators discussing their approaches to [integrating debate into classroom practice](#).

To help schools prepare for the 2026 Great Student Debate, take a look at:

- The Seriously Social [debate guide for classroom teachers](#),
- a NEW debate kit with a focus on the 2026 Great Student Debate topic – [That Australian politics is alive and well](#),
- the [Great Student Debate 2026 application pack](#).

Seriously Social on the Road



State Library of NSW Teacher Conference

Seriously Social will be at the State Library of NSW conference - [Lit up! 200 years of curiosity program](#) | [State Library of New South Wales](#).

In this session, Cindy Bin Tahal (Education Director) and Michelle Arrow (Academy Fellow) will

explore Seriously Social's approach to supporting teaching, learning and student research through engaging, academically rigorous resources. Participants will be walked through the Debate Guide for Classroom Teachers, the main focus of the session, with insights from our Academy Fellow, Michelle, who will share her own experiences illustrating the value of debate as a teaching and learning strategy.

Participants will also be introduced to the investigation triangle and other frameworks from Seriously Social learning modules, highlighting how these tools can support classroom teaching, student inquiry and research skills. Participants will have the opportunity to see the range of available reading articles and educational videos and learn how these resources can be integrated effectively into the curriculum.

Cindy Bin Tahal is the Education Director at Seriously Social, bringing over 25 years of experience in teaching, curriculum development and school leadership across Australia, North America and Southeast Asia.

Michelle Arrow FASSA, FRHistS is Professor of History at Macquarie University and the president of the Australian Historical Association.



Queensland History Teachers' Association

HTAA National Conference 2026

Many Stories, Many Voices

July 8th - 9th 2026
State Library of Queensland | Brisbane

Australia's biggest event for history educators!

QHTA Queensland History Teachers' Association

HISTORY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION AUSTRALIA

www.qhta.com
qhta@qhta.com.au

History Teachers Association of Australia Conference, July 2026

Seriously Social will provide a workshop at the HTAA Many Stories, Many Voices 2026 conference - [HTAA Conference 2026](#).

History Through Inquiry: Building Skills in Investigation and Debate

This presentation will introduce learning content from the Seriously Social school program, focusing on World War history topics for Years 9 and 10. It will also showcase a range of debate topics that support inquiry learning in the history classroom, such as "that Australian history unites us".

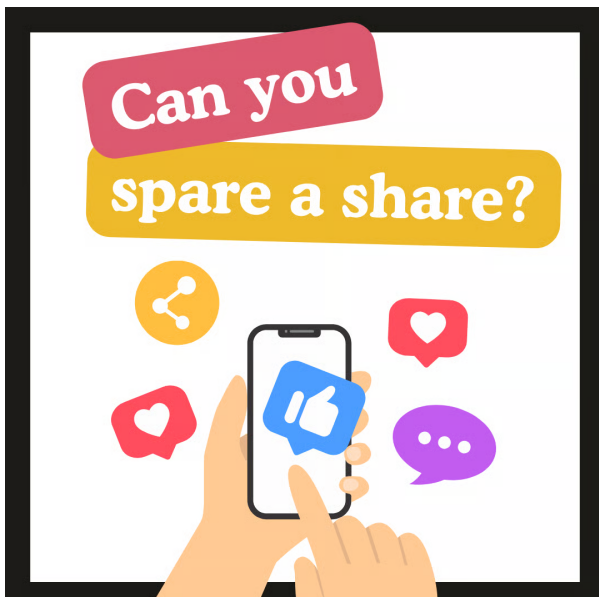
A key focus of the session will be developing students' research skills using the investigation triangle, a model that supports evidence-based inquiry and helps students construct well-reasoned arguments. The presentation will also provide practical guidance on using debate as a teaching method in the history classroom. Both the research model and debate approaches can be readily applied across history subjects, offering teachers adaptable tools to strengthen student engagement and deepen historical understanding.

Do you follow Seriously Social on LinkedIn, Youtube or Facebook?

Interactions from our followers ensure that more people see the free educational social science resources that we offer.

If you see us in your feed, please give us a like or share and help us to spread the word!

Click below to follow and share.



Seriously Social and the Academy's Education Committee provide support for teachers through learning modules developed with guidance from leading research experts. These modules offer adaptable classroom content, providing a full scope and sequence for teaching and learning or reliable, research-informed material to complement and enhance existing lesson planning and delivery. Offerings are also expanding to include debate as a teaching method showcased through

delivery. Offerings are also expanding to include debate as a teaching method, encouraged through the growing Seriously Social Great Student Debate concept.

Connect

Feedback and further inquiries are welcome via email: info@socialsciences.org.au.

Subscribe to stay up to date

Please help to spread the word—educators are invited to [subscribe](#) to the Seriously Social mailing list to keep informed of developments in the Academy's school program.

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