



Teacher guide: Exploring the learning, options and extensions



About this resource

Victoria 2050 is a scenario-based learning experience, that immerses students in parliamentary decision-making and the potential long-term effects of these decisions. Through engaging with a mock parliamentary process of passing a bill followed by a future-focused design challenge, students explore potential impacts on population change, how resources are allocated, how priorities are negotiated, and how those decisions shape communities over time.

Victoria 2050 supports students to develop understanding of:

- Parliamentary processes
- Democratic decision-making
- Negotiation and compromise
- Representation and advocacy
- Evidence-based argument
- Resource constraints
- Long-term policy consequences

The experience enables students to understand not only how laws are made, but how decisions made now may shape Victoria's future. This process reinforces the idea that not everything can be prioritised, particularly when resources are limited. Resources are framed broadly to include financial, physical and human resources.

Structure

Exploring the learning

The *Exploring the learning* section breaks down some of the different learning opportunities in Victoria 2050, including decision-making, debating, using evidence, design thinking and representation.

Options and extensions

Victoria 2050 is intentionally flexible and can be adapted to suit different class sizes, abilities and timeframes. Complexity can be adjusted through:

- the number of policy areas used
- the introduction of electorates
- the depth of parliamentary procedure explored
- the level of constraint applied during the design challenge

These adaptations are discussed in more details in the section *Options and extensions*.

Exploring the learning

Parliamentary processes and representation

Part one, *Preparing for the future: Passing a bill* helps students explore the process of passing bills through parliament. This includes understanding of:

- how government is formed in the Legislative Assembly (lower house); the party who wins a majority of seats (50%+1 or 45 seats) at a state election
- the three readings in both the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council
 - First reading – Introduction of the bill
 - Second reading – Debate
 - Third reading – Vote
- the role of the Legislative Council (upper house) in reviewing bills

Students can develop their understanding further by:

- discussing representation
 - How do members of parliament represent their own values, their party values and the needs of their electorate?
 - The different role of representation between the Legislative Assembly (single member electorates) versus the Legislative Council (multi-member electorates)
- exploring the effects of a minority government on the passage of a bill
- how committee inquiries and petitions are part of the parliamentary processes

Decision-making within and across groups

A key learning focus of Victoria 2050 is unpacking decision-making processes. Students can explore:

- how parties determine and prioritise core values
- how decisions are made within groups
- who gets to speak on behalf of the party
- how party positions are named and presented
- how compromise occurs when priorities conflict

This includes grappling with whether it is better to:

- want everything now versus get nothing now (an ‘all or nothing’ attitude)
- get some outcomes now and maybe others later (a ‘something is better than nothing’ attitude)
- compromise and accept partial wins now to help with other issues in the future (a ‘compromise and work together’ attitude)

Students can also compare decision-making strategies when decisions need to be made by:

- a large number of people, such as a governing majority
- a smaller number of people, such as an opposition party
- a small group, such as a minor party
- a single person, such as an independent

The decision-making strategies students use can also be compared to different models of representation, such as consensus, direct or representative democracy or dictatorship.

Debating and deliberation

Students can explore the difference between debate and deliberation, and the effect on how arguments are structured. The differences that can be explored include:

- that debate is often about winning and losing, while deliberation is about exploring ideas, arguments and perspectives
- whether a robust democracy has space for both debate and deliberation
- how the different stages of passing a bill may reflect different forms of discussion. For example:
 - the second reading debate and committee of the whole function might be considered deliberative spaces.
 - the third reading, the vote, is about whether the bill has passed (won or lost)

Students can also explore the complexity of arguments through considering:

- that voting may involve judging the weight of evidence presented
- that voting “no” does not necessarily mean opposition to the issue itself. It may relate to specific clauses or the way an issue is being addressed.
- how party values influence how issues are approached, even when there is agreement on the issue itself. For example, agreement that water supply needs to be addressed, but disagreement about how.

Drawing on evidence

Part one and two both encourage students to draw on the evidence that has been provided to make decisions, form arguments and justify their choices. Students encounter evidence repeatedly across different stages, reinforcing its importance. The focus on evidence as something to be weighed mirrors real parliamentary practice, while the design challenge requires students to interpret information and consider implications.

Through drawing on evidence students can explore how to:

- read to identify key pieces of information that can be used as evidence
- incorporate evidence to support arguments
- use evidence to inform decision-making, especially in a parliamentary context
- use evidence to explore consequences (for example, “if this is the case, then what?”)
- consider confirmation bias and its effects on making arguments and decision-making
- justify their approach both in debate and the design challenge

Supporting students' reading to find evidence

To help students navigate the amount of information across the 14 industry and service areas, you may like to follow the information process that support students to locate, analyse and use information. This process includes:

- identifying and defining what the investigation is, for example:
 - Which industry and service areas are most important to Victoria's growing population?
- locating appropriate resources, for example:
 - reading through the information and identifying the key information that answers the question above
- selecting and recording the appropriate information, for example:
 - writing “this [area] is important to Victoria's future because ...” and/or “if this [area] is not a focus for Victoria's future then ...”
- processing and organising, for example:
 - beginning to discuss and rank the above statements on a continuum of most impact to least impact
- evaluating, for example:
 - determining the priority order of the areas, documenting the reasons for the choices that are made

Other questions and sentence stems that may help students identify key pieces of information and incorporate the evidence into their arguments include:

- this area is [high/low] priority because ...
- what are the consequences of not putting in extra resources?
- [area] is more important than [area] because ...

Design thinking

The design challenge invites students to engage in design thinking, drawing on information presented through the first part of the experience to make decisions and solve problems of the future. Through the design challenge students can explore:

- design thinking as an iterative process, including how ideas are developed, articulated and revised
- using perspectives and personas to identify issues or gaps, leading to revision of ideas
- accessibility considerations and how they may affect design solutions
- how context, including geographic location, influences outcomes, for example that an effective solution in one context may not work in another
- how to think about user needs and problems through innovative problem solving
- how to evaluate whether a solution matches user needs

The *Population scenarios* and *Engaging perspectives* can be used to help students consider specific contexts for their design solutions and identify any assumptions or gaps in their designs.

Options and extensions

Passage of a bill

While the process of passing a bill (the three readings in both the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council) remains the same, there are some opportunities to differentiate the learning for students. These opportunities include:

- assigning different priority cards to different parties, making debate, but especially the amendment process, more complex
- Priority cards can be the same for all parties, or can be different to potentially reflect different party or electorate values
 - Students decide on party values first, and then industry and service areas from the priority cards are allocated based on alignment with those party values
- exploring the impact of a minority government in the Legislative Assembly, where students in the government party must negotiate with the crossbench (minor parties and independents) for support
 - Students can also explore the impact of not having a government majority in the Legislative Council, where there may be a higher number of crossbenches across a number of minor parties and including independents

Electorate cards

The *Electorate cards* can be used to explore representation, values and decision-making, and include:

- 24 cards, one per student based on a class size of 24
- geographic information and specific values that suggest a focus on a particular industry and/or service area

The *Electorate cards* can help to determine what a student, acting as a member of parliament, might advocate for, and therefore help shape the arguments that they present to their party when determining party values and to the parliament when representing their electorate.

These cards can be also used in the Legislative Council by:

- grouping students into electorates that share electorate information but include students from different parties; this reflects the multi-member electorates of the upper house

Electorate cards can also be used independently to:

- discuss representation across electorates and parties
- explore personal values alongside party and electorate priorities

Population scenarios

Population scenarios may be introduced to increase complexity. These scenarios explore population impacts across:

- major cities
- inner regional areas
- outer regional areas
- remote regional areas

You may wish to:

- use a single scenario for the whole class
- assign different scenarios to different groups
- use scenarios selectively for extension or differentiation

Scenarios examine how population distribution across Victoria may have changed due to population growth and provide additional evidence students can draw upon, such as the impact on access to services.

The four geographic categories align with Australian Bureau of Statistics geographic classifications.

Additional perspectives

Teachers can differentiate learning through the use of *Engaging perspective cards* which allow students to consider:

- how that person might feel about an issue
- what specific needs that person might have
- what that person might be advocating for now
- what a person with similar perspectives and needs might need in the future

The *Engaging perspective cards* can be used to:

- support writing from a specific perspective
- support arguing from a specific perspective
- compare perspectives with:
 - party viewpoints
 - electorate viewpoints

Completing only one part

While Victoria 2050 is designed in two complimentary parts—the process of decision-making and the consequences of the decisions—each part can be run independently from each other, depending on time and focus.

Likewise, the *Electorate cards*, *Party cards*, *Area cards* and *Population scenarios* can all be used independently as their own scenarios.