In 2014 we will be commemorating the 100th anniversary of Australia’s entry into and experience of the First World War.

One of the key areas of this commemoration will be an exploration of the Australian military experience, and the creation of the Anzac Spirit as part of Australian national identity.

There will be many units of work that we will produce in association with the Returned and Services’ League (RSL) to explore this tradition (see the box for an explanation of the RSL program).

At Year 9 the key curriculum focus is *The Making of the Modern World*: This unit can be used to explore Compulsory Depth Study 3: *World War 1 (1914-1918)*

The curriculum specifies this **Knowledge and Understanding**: An overview of the causes of World War I and the reasons why men enlisted to fight in the war.

In the previous two units in this series we have asked what type of society Australia was in 1914 when World War 1 began, and what the reactions were in Australia to its outbreak.

In this unit we ask you to think about 10 decisions that had to be taken soon after war started.

Will you be a good government decision-maker?
INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

‘Picturing’ the impact of the war

On 5 August 1914 at 9.00 am Australian eastern standard time Australia went to war. It is hard now to imagine the extent of the impact of that war on Australian society.

Here is one way of starting to picture it:

1. Every third person in your class stand up. That is the proportion of the male population that enlisted during the war and went overseas to fight. Every one of you standing has family and friends. There were very, very few people in Australia during the war who did not have a direct connection to a man or woman serving overseas.

2. Of those standing, 1 in 5 sit down. You were killed.

3. Of those still standing, 1 in 7 sit down. You were taken prisoner.

4. Of those still standing, 1 in 2 sit down. You were wounded at least once.

5. Of those still standing, 1 in 2 sit down. You came back with an illness.

6. Of those still standing: Some of you, we don’t know how many, would have been suffering mentally as a result of the war.

This was all in the future for the people of 1918. They did not know what would happen, but the government and the people had to make many decisions over the first few months. In this unit you are going to be given some of the situations that they faced, and asked what you think should have been done each time, and why. Then you will find out what the Australian government decision makers of 1914 actually did.
Look at these options and decide what you would do. Be able to explain and justify it.

**THE OPTIONS**

A. Deport the enemy nationals.

B. Lock up the enemy nationals.

C. Lock up only those who might be dangerous.

D. Register enemy nationals and have them report periodically to a police station.

E. Watch them.

F. Do nothing — there is no evidence that any are dangerous.

G. Suggest your own option.

**THE SITUATION**

From 5 August 1914 Australia was at war with Germany and Austria-Hungary. There were about 33,000 residents in Australia who had been born in Germany, and 2,700 in Austria-Hungary. The largest populations were in Melbourne and Sydney (nearly 3,000 each), Adelaide (1,400) and Brisbane (1,000). Some of these people had been in Australia for many years, had married Australians, and had Australian-born children. Others were recent arrivals. There were also over 74,000 Lutherans, a religion that had strong attachments to German culture and heritage. During wartime there is a possibility that nationals of enemy origin might spy locally, and send important information back to the enemy.

The government had to choose what to do.

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Now see what actually happened in 1914.

German migration to Australia in the 19th Century.
Imagine that you have been asked to prepare a set of criteria to apply in choosing who should be interned. Work in a small group to create your list.

Then have the whole class compare lists, and decide on a master list of criteria. Do you think this was a reasonable reaction by the Australian government? Justify your answer.

Discuss whether it was an easy or difficult task to create this final list, and why.

Do you think the Australian Government made a good decision in this situation? Explain your reasons.

How might the internment of aliens and enemies be commemorated in the centenary year? Watch the official commemorations site to see if anything is done. See http://www.anzacentenary.gov.au
What do you do about anti-German feeling and attitudes?

THE SITUATION

There was some strong anti-German feeling in the Australian community. When war was declared some German buildings or clubs were attacked, and several were burned down.

Soon after the German invasion of Belgium there were reports of atrocities committed on Belgians by German soldiers — women and children used as human shields, civilians shot, mutilated, bayonetted or hanged, priests and nuns shot, children having their hands cut off.

In Australia there were many examples of anti-German propaganda. The Bulletin magazine in particular carried Norman Lindsay images of Germans as ape-like creatures, disrobing women, crucifying victims and looming over occupied peoples, their hands dripping blood.

THE OPTIONS

A   Encourage propaganda in private newspapers and magazines as a way of binding people together in support of the war.
B   Create official posters for the same purpose.
C   Ignore the issue.
D   Ban anti-German propaganda.
E   Suggest your own option.
The government commissioned official posters that showed the German as the ‘Hun’, as a way of encouraging people to join or to support the war. This Norman Lindsay poster was a government-produced one, and there were many others of his that the government commissioned during the war.
What do you do about enemy ships in Australian ports?

Look at these options and decide what you would do. Be able to explain and justify it.

**THE OPTIONS**

A. Let them all go as soon as they were loaded or unloaded — they were innocent civilian ships.
B. Seize them and hold them until they could be returned to their German owners at the end of the war.
C. Seize them and use them for the war effort.
D. Seize them and sink them.
E. Suggest your own option.

The Australian Government passed laws that allowed them to seize the ships and use them for the war effort.

Do you think the Australian Government made a good decision in this situation? Explain your reasons.
What do you do about a ship trying to leave port?

THE SITUATION

One of the enemy merchant ships in Australian waters at the time of the outbreak of the war was the SS Pfalz. It was in Melbourne, and sailed on the morning of 5 August with an Australian pilot aboard to help it navigate the tricky passage through the Port Phillip Bay heads and into the ocean.

War had been officially declared at 11:00 pm on 4 August London time, which was 9:00 5 August Melbourne time. The Pfalz left Port Melbourne at 7.45 am on the 5th, and reached the entry to the bay at 10:00 am — so Australia was now at war with Germany.

There was a fort at the entrance to the bay. It ordered the Pfalz to stop. The ship kept going.

Look at these options and decide what you would do. Be able to explain and justify it.

THE OPTIONS

A Sink it.
B Fire a warning shot.
C Let it go because there is an Australian pilot aboard.
D Send a warship after it.
E Suggest your own option.
WHAT WAS DONE IN 1914

The fort fired a 45 kilogram shell across the ship’s rear as a warning. The pilot now struggled with the ship’s captain, and the ship was turned around and headed back to port. This was the first shot fired by British forces in the war. (In a great coincidence the same fort fired the first shot of World War 2!)

The Pfalz had its name changed to HMAT A42 Boorara and served as a troop transport for the rest of the war, making its first voyage as an Australian ship with the great convoy that carried the AIF to Egypt from Albany in November 1914.

2 Do you think the Australian Government made a good decision in this situation? Explain your reasons.

3 The main rival claimant for the first British shot of the war is the HMS Lance, which sunk a German mine-layer off the British coast early in the morning of 5 August British time. One of these guns is now in the Imperial War Museum in London.

4 An Australian group is trying to recover the shell fired from Fort Nepean from the floor of Port Phillip Bay. Do you think this is an appropriate use of funds and effort? Explain your views.
What do you do about German trade and businesses?

Look at these options and decide what you would do. Be able to explain and justify it.

THE OPTIONS
A Ban the trade with Germany in these areas.
B Keep trading with Germany for the good of the economy.
C Take them over and transfer them to Australian ownership.
D Suggest your own option.

The Situation
There were several areas where trade with Germany was significant for the Australian economy: wool (about 25% of total Australian wool exports), and base metals (lead, tin, copper, zinc). Australia imported many German manufactured goods.

The Options
A Ban the trade with Germany in these areas.
B Keep trading with Germany for the good of the economy.
C Take them over and transfer them to Australian ownership.
D Suggest your own option.

Now see what actually happened in 1914.
WHAT WAS DONE IN 1914

The government stopped all trade with enemy countries, and took control of enemy businesses. This resulted in the growth of the giant Broken Hill Proprietary Company Ltd (BHP) as a steel manufacturer in Australia, but this took time and there was increased unemployment and reduction in the standard of living for many workers in the early years of the war.

2 Who would benefit, and who would be hurt by this decision?
3 Do you think the Australian Government made a good decision in this situation? Explain your reasons.

TRADING WITH THE ENEMY.

No. 9 of 1914.

An Act relating to Trading with the Enemy.

[Assented to 23rd October, 1914.]

Answer: A knockout for German trade
THE SITUATION

War created many situations that Australians had not faced before — the need to recruit an army, pay the soldiers, control trade, deal with possible enemy agents, stop profiteering by some businesses, raise money to pay for the war, ship soldiers overseas, supply and arm them, control news that might help the enemy and harm the Allies. The Constitution did not give the Commonwealth power to make laws in many of these areas.

THE OPTIONS

A  Have the states pass uniform laws.
B  Change the Constitution by referendum to give the Commonwealth new powers.
C  Have the Commonwealth pass laws under its existing Defence power in the Constitution.
D  Do nothing — just work it out as you go.
E  Suggest your own option.

Now see what actually happened in 1914

WHAT WAS DONE IN 1914

The Commonwealth passed the War Precautions Act under its existing Defence power. The Act said that the government could make any law ‘for securing the public safety and the defence of the Commonwealth’. This meant that the Commonwealth could do lots of things which it normally could not. If it was to help defence, the Commonwealth could do it. So the Commonwealth passed laws to raise money from taxation, censor newspapers, intern enemy aliens, fix the price of food, seize enemy ships, and more.

When the Commonwealth politician in charge of the War Precautions Act was asked: ‘Would it be an offence under the War Precautions Act to . . . ’ ‘Yes!’ he said, without having to hear the rest of the question.

1 Look at these options and decide what you would do. Be able to explain and justify it.
2 Why would such a broad power be necessary in wartime?
3 What danger might having such a law create?
4 Do you think the Australian Government made a good decision in this situation? Explain your reasons.
Australia was at war against Germany. The fighting was in Europe — but Germany controlled areas just to the north of Australia, in German New Guinea.

The German colonies or protectorates included the northeastern part of New Guinea (Kaiser-Wilhelmsland), the Bismarck Archipelago islands of Neu-Pommern (Now New Britain) and Neu-Mecklenburg (New Ireland), and the German Solomon Islands, Caroline Islands, Palau, Mariana Islands (except for Guam), Marshall Islands and Nauru.

**THE OPTIONS**

A Leave the German possessions alone.

B Organise a force to invade and capture them.

C Blockade them.

D Take out the communications bases only and leave the rest.

E Suggest your own option.

1 Use an atlas to identify the German possessions on the map below.

   1 Brown = German New Guinea;
   2 Yellow = German Pacific Protectorates;
   3 Red = German Samoa;
   4 Orange = Solomons.

Germany had a strong fleet in the area that could disrupt commercial shipping, there were plenty of coaling stations for the ships to be re-supplied, and there was a chain of telegraph stations for sending news about Allied activities in the area back to Berlin.

Great Britain cut all German undersea cables in the area, but the German telegraph and coaling stations in the Pacific still supported the fleet.

2 Look at these options and decide what you would do. Be able to explain and justify it.

**THE OPTIONS**

A Leave the German possessions alone.

B Organise a force to invade and capture them.

C Blockade them.

D Take out the communications bases only and leave the rest.

E Suggest your own option.
**WHAT WAS DONE IN 1914**

The government immediately formed a volunteer force, the Australian Naval and Military Expedition Force (ANMEF) to be sent to take control of German territories in the Pacific.

On 11 September 1914 a naval convoy carried the ANMEF to Rabaul. The force comprised 500 naval reservists from every state except Western Australia, and 1000 volunteer soldiers from New South Wales.

A party landed at Bitapika near Rabaul and suffered the first two Australian deaths of the war, Able Seamen John Courtney and Bill Williams, as they successfully took the telegraph station.

By 21 September the ANMEF had forced the surrender of all German forces in the area, for the loss of six men killed and four wounded.

At the end of the war the former German territories were divided between Japan and Australia. Australia was granted a mandate to administer German New Guinea. The Japanese invaded and controlled it between 1942 and 1943, when it was won back. In 1949 it was merged with Papua to become the Territory of Papua New Guinea, and then the nation of that name in 1975.

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3 Do you think the Australian Government made a good decision in this situation? Explain your reasons.

4 How might the ANMEF battle be commemorated in the centenary year? Watch the official commemorations site to see if anything is done. See [http://www.anzaccentenary.gov.au](http://www.anzaccentenary.gov.au)

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Official War historian CEW Bean wrote about these men:

This, the first force to be sent oversea from Australia in this war, exhibited in its composition the remarkable diversity of types that also characterised the A.I.F. Almost every vocation was represented: school teacher and wharf labourer, bank clerk and bushman, shop assistant and farrier, stood side by side on the parade-ground, waiting for the medical examination. There were those who, drifting without moorings in the ebb and flow of city life, clutched at this chance of a new career; some were lured by a spirit of sheer adventure; others, putting material interests and family ties behind, answered simply to the call of duty. It was serviceable material; there were men who could turn their hand to everything, and there were men who had special technical or professional qualifications and experience. When, at a later stage, it became necessary to carry on the administration of German New Guinea, it was found that from the members of this force every position, whether administrative, technical, or industrial, could be competently filled.

CEW Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*, vol 1, 1921

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Route of HMAS Australia during the New Guinea campaign
How might the loss of the AE1 be commemorated in the centenary year?
Watch the official commemorations site to see if anything is done.
See http://www.anzaccentenary.gov.au

To the men of the AE-1 entombed but not forgotten

She faced no battle flame, she heard no German gun,
The ship without a name, the luckless AE-1.
Yet were her sailor’s lives no less for Empire lost,
And mothers, sweethearts, wives must pay the bitter cost.
Australia’s warships sweep the broad Pacific main,
But one from out the deep will never rise again.
Yet we shall not forget, through all the years that run,
The fate that she has met – Goodbye to AE-1.

Pent in their iron cell, they sank beneath the wave,
Untouched by shot or shell, they drifted to the grave.
Until their painful breath at last began to fail;
Upon their way to death let pity draw the veil.
They could not strike one blow, but out of sound and sight
Of comrade or of foe they passed to endless night;
Deep down on Ocean’s floor, far from the wind and sun,
They rest for evermore – Goodbye to AE-1.

A harder fate was theirs than men’s who fight and die,
But still Australia cares, and will not pass them by;
When Honour’s lists are read, their names will surely be
Among the gallant dead who fought to keep us free.
Their winding-sheet is steel, their sepulchre is wide;
Theirs is a Monument of History, begun
When down to death they went – Goodbye to AE-1.

Poem by Del M’Cay in Sydney Sun 1914

The greatest tragedy of this campaign was one of two Australia’s submarines. The submarines AE1 and AE2 had been built in Britain and arrived in Sydney in May 1914 to be the newest part of the Royal Australian Navy. Both were crewed by a mixture of Royal Navy (British) and Royal Australian Navy (Australian) submariners. There were 35 men in each crew.

The AE1 was sent to Rabaul as part of the ANMFE. On 14 September AE1 set off to patrol the Cape Gazelle area. It was seen at about 3.30 in the afternoon. It has never been seen since.

It is most probable that there was some sort of steering or engine fault. The submarine either sank to the bottom of the sea with all crew trapped, or hit a reef and flooded. No wreckage was found during an extensive search for the submarine at the time, and its resting place is not definitely known, though it is suspected.
On 1 November 1914 at 6.25 am a great convoy started sailing out of King George's Sound, Albany.

It carried 30,000 soldiers, and nearly 8,000 horses. The 36 transport ships, crewed by merchant seamen, were escorted by three Australian warships, the HMAS Sydney, Melbourne and Minotaur.

The ships had arrived at Albany during October from Melbourne, Adelaide, Hobart and New Zealand.

They met up with two more transports carrying troops from South Australia and Western Australia, and the Japanese escort warship, Ibuki. The convoy now headed for Alexandria in Egypt, stopping at Colombo, and going through the Suez Canal.

The ships in the convoy all had different maximum and safe cruising speeds.

1. Look at these options and decide what you would do. Be able to explain and justify it.

THE OPTIONS

A. Split it in four groups of ships with similar speeds, with a ship to protect each.

B. Keep all bunched together, travelling at the pace of the slowest one.

C. Let them go at their own rate, and keep the escorts travelling back and forward between the fastest and slowest to protect them.

D. Get the fastest ones safely there as quickly as possible, and let the slow ones take their chances.

E. Suggest your own option.
The convoy travelled together for safety, limited to the speed of the slowest ship.

The 28 Australian transports sailed in three lines, with ships being 1500 metres apart, and 800 behind the one in front. The 10 New Zealand ships were in two lines.

The escorting warships were organised to be in front, behind and on the sides of the transport.

The convoy arrived at Colombo for re-coaling and to take on fresh water, and left on 25 October, travelling through the Suez Canal, and disembarking at Alexandria on 3 December.

3 Mark the route of the convoy on this map.

4 Do you think the Australian Government made a good decision in this situation? Explain your reasons.

5 How might the great convoy of the AIF be commemorated in the centenary year? Watch the official commemorations site to see if anything is done. See http://www.anzaccenntenary.gov.au
**THE SITUATION**

Life on board the ships depended upon whether they carried troops or horses. Aboard the troopships the force carried out a rigorous training scheme.

Eight of the ships in the convoy were horse transports, but they also carried men of the Light Horse and artillery troops.

There were up to five horses per man. Properly caring for the horses was a time-consuming task: cleaning the stalls, rubbing down of horses as a substitute for exercise or walking them round the decks, providing food and water and medical care.

From the experience of other armies transported across the sea, it was expected that the A.I.F. would lose from 15 to 20 per cent of its horses in a six weeks’ voyage.

**THE OPTIONS**

A Provide the horses with full care, and ignore the men’s training.

B Focus on the training to ensure the safety of the men in combat, and look after the horses properly after landing in Egypt.

C Balance both tasks.

D Suggest your own option.

**WHAT WAS DONE IN 1914**

The men of the light horse, artillery, and transport gave priority to the horses over their own training. With fine weather, with the stalls well secured, the decks cleaned, the animals massaged, and a flow of fresh air let into all the horse-decks as a precaution against pneumonia, the horses reached Egypt with a loss of only 224 out of 7,843, or 3 per cent. In the transports carrying artillery and light horse the men and officers were trained during such leisure as was found.

The importance of this achievement can be understood by comparing it with the experience of a French horse-transport that came into Alexandria at about the same time as the Australian horse transports. Her smell preceded her up the harbour. Her stalls had not been cleaned since she sailed, and the horses that survived were standing in half a metre of manure.

**Now see what actually happened in 1914**

1 Look at these options and decide what you would do. Be able to explain and justify it.

2 Do you think the Australian Government made a good decision in this situation? Explain your reasons.
THE UNIQUE CASE OF SANDY

Of all the 150,000 or so horses sent from Australia to war only one was brought back alive — Sandy, the horse ridden by the commander of the Australian 1st Division, Major-General Sir William Bridges.

Sandy was at Gallipoli but was never unloaded, so was sent back to Alexandria in Egypt. Bridges was killed, and Sandy was sent to France. In May 1918 he was sent to England, and then after passing quarantine regulations, to Melbourne. He grazed in retirement at the Central Remount Depot at Maribyrnong, the staging point for all Australian war horses. Sandy died there in 1923. His body was buried there, but his head and neck were mounted and became part of the Australian War Memorial’s collection, and his hooves became paperweights and inkwells at the Royal Military College, Duntroon, in Canberra.
As the convoy of the AIF was steaming in the Indian Ocean from Albany to Egypt the German warship *Emden* was nearby, in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands. The *Emden* had captured or sunk 25 civilian trading vessels since the start of the war, had shelled the port of Madras, and had destroyed two Allied warships at Penang. It was in the Cocos Islands now to capture and destroy the communications tower on Direction Island.

The *Emden* was about the same size as the HMAS *Sydney* and *Melbourne*, which were both protecting the troopship convoy. The *Emden* was slower and less-well armed than the Australian cruisers *Melbourne* and *Sydney*, but its guns had a longer range — its guns could be raised to 30 degrees, giving it a greater range than the *Sydney* or *Melbourne*, whose guns could only be raised 18 degrees.

Look at these options and decide what you would do. Be able to explain and justify it.

**THE OPTIONS**

A  Let somebody else go after the *Emden*.

B  Send the *Sydney* or *Melbourne* to attack it.

C  Send a warship back after the convoy has safely been delivered.

D  Suggest your own option.
HMAS Sydney was sent to investigate. The Emden had landed a party to take and destroy the communications tower.

While they were still ashore the Sydney appeared. The Emden opened fire first — the Sydney had to sail in under fire, until it was close enough for its artillery to hit the Emden.

There were four stages to the battle:

1. The Emden fires before Sydney can. It scores some hits (09:40 to 09:50, positions 1-3).
2. Emden tries unsuccessfully to cross astern of Sydney, but is wrecked by Sydney’s dominant fire position (9:50 to 10:05, positions 4-6).
3. Visibility is low because of smoke, so Sydney gets closer to fire a torpedo, which is unsuccessful, and then resumes long-distance gunnery action (10:05-10:30, positions 7-10).
4. Emden runs ashore and finally surrenders (10:30-11:20, positions 11-17).

Four of the crew members aboard the Sydney were killed, and 16 wounded. On the Emden 134 men were killed, 69 wounded and 157 captured (including the crew of the collier that accompanied the Emden). The 50 men on Direction Island seized a passing boat and escaped, eventually making their way back to Germany via Constantinople.

Do you think the Australian Government made a good decision in this situation? Explain your reasons.
WAYS OF REMEMBERING SYDNEY-EMDEN

Here are some ways the battle has been remembered — both officially, and unofficially.

1 On a tobacco tin

2 On an Australian medal

3 On a German medal

4 In a naval training base

5 In a commemorative stamp set

How might the role of HMAS Sydney and its sinking of the Emden be commemorated in the centenary year? Watch the official commemorations site to see if anything is done. See http://www.anzaccentenary.gov.au
CONCLUSIONS

Australia had entered the war against Germany and its allies in August 1914, and by December 1914 it had already created and transported an army, engaged in combat, suffered deaths, taken prisoners of war, interned enemy citizens, seized enemy ships, introduced censorship and propaganda, and passed laws that gave the Commonwealth Government unprecedented powers over people’s lives.

In a few months the AIF would be thrown into battle on the Gallipoli Peninsula, and the death and injury figures would soar. It would also influence Australian national identity in a way that continues strongly today.

How and why was the AIF used in this way? What happened on that first day, 25 April 1915? Was it a victory or a defeat? This is what will be explored in the next unit.