

## TOPICS AND INVESTIGATIONS

# The voice of a vote in a world of change

During the 20th century vast changes occurred in attitudes towards human rights – the right to equality for all citizens and the right of nations to determine their own futures.

At the turn of the 20th century Australia regarded itself as a ‘white’ society and ignored the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the development of its Constitution. At the same time in the international arena, many African, Pacific and Asian nations were ruled by European nations which denied citizens’ rights in their colonial possessions.

Over the course of the 20th century most of these European colonies gained their independence. An example close to Australia was the former Portuguese colony of East Timor. After centuries of colonial rule the Portuguese government finally left East Timor in 1975.

*The voice of a vote in a world of change* explores the importance of the democratic vote.

The topic contains two investigations:

How did Indigenous Australians achieve civic rights?

How did East Timor take the first steps to democracy?

### Introductory activity

Explain to students that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was drawn up after World War II when there was international horror at the gross abuses of human rights under Nazism as well as concern for the future of former European colonies seeking independence and self-determination. Australia was one of the founding members of the United Nations, and one of the original signatories to the Declaration.

The Declaration is available on the United Nations website [www.un.org/en](http://www.un.org/en) (CyberSchoolBus>Curriculum>Human Rights>Resources & Links) in both its original form and a plain language version.

Provide students with a copy of the Declaration either in print or online. Have all students read the preamble to the Declaration then meet in groups to discuss and report on the following questions:

- > What are human rights and what is ‘universal’ about them?

- > What is the purpose of the Declaration, as outlined in the preamble?
- > The preamble introduces the words ‘dignity’, ‘justice’ and ‘equality’. What do these three words signify in your own lives?
- > What are our responsibilities towards our rights? Is this the same as our responsibilities towards the rights of others?
- > How can we make sure our rights are respected?

Divide the listed rights in the Declaration among groups in the class. (There are 30 rights so each group could look at four or five of these.) Students should prepare a brief presentation for the rest of the class that includes:

- > an explanation of the meaning of these rights
- > examples of how these rights are upheld (or otherwise) in Australia (for example through universal suffrage or anti-discrimination laws)
- > examples of how these rights are upheld or otherwise in relation to global or international issues that they know about. (This might include global issues such as refugees, as well as issues in particular countries.)

Student groups could use the results of the class discussion to develop a working definition of human rights with an explanation of key examples of these rights.

# Investigation

## How did Indigenous Australians achieve civic rights?

### RECOMMENDED LEVELS

UPPER SECONDARY

MIDDLE SECONDARY

LOWER SECONDARY

UPPER PRIMARY

The 1967 referendum is often considered as a symbolic acceptance of Indigenous Australians as equal citizens with non-Indigenous Australians. The referendum of 1967 gave the Commonwealth Government power to make laws for Indigenous Australians, and abolished a constitutional provision that said that they were not to be counted in the census.

However, advances in gaining the right and responsibility to vote for Indigenous Australians were made well before, and after, this historic date. In 1962 the *Commonwealth Electoral Act* was amended to provide that Indigenous Australians could enrol to vote in federal elections if they wished. Then, in 1984 compulsory enrolment and voting for Indigenous Australians came into effect.

In this investigation students engage in research about Indigenous Australians' civic rights. They also explore the importance of referendums in giving Australians a voice in creating political change.

### THE INVESTIGATION AT A GLANCE

<b>Background briefings for teacher reference</b>	Australian Electoral Commission; Constitution; Democracy; Indigenous Australians' Rights; Referendum; Universal Declaration of Human Rights
<b>Suggested classroom teaching time</b>	<b>Activity 1:</b> A question of equal citizenship (80 minutes) <b>Activity 2:</b> How referendums work (80 minutes) <b>Activity 3:</b> An historic vote (80 minutes)
<b>Indicators of student achievement</b>	Understand the role of constitutional change in a democracy Understand the importance of equality in a democracy Describe the evolution of political rights for Indigenous Australians Explain the way the Australian Constitution can be changed by a referendum
<b>Related articles in <i>Discovering Democracy Australian Reader Upper Secondary Collection</i></b>	People Make Politics: Fighting for a Cause



Fig 29: Indigenous Australians gained the right to vote in Commonwealth elections in 1962. Compulsory enrolment and voting for Indigenous Australians came into effect in 1984

## ACTIVITY 1

# A question of equal citizenship

### FOCUS QUESTIONS

- What civil and political rights did Indigenous Australians have before 1967?
- What key events served to change opinions about civil and political rights for Indigenous Australians?
- Why did Indigenous Australians seek to change the Australian Constitution?

### RESOURCES

- **BLM 1** Commonwealth Laws against Aborigines
  - The following are available from the AEC website:
    - Australian Electoral History: [www.aec.gov.au/Education/Democracy\\_Rules/web\\_links.htm](http://www.aec.gov.au/Education/Democracy_Rules/web_links.htm)
      - *Aborigines and the Vote*
      - *Electoral Milestones: Timeline for Indigenous Australians*
      - *History of the Indigenous Vote*
    - 'What Sort of Nation?' in *A Guide to Government and Law in Australia*, available: [www.civicsandcitizenship.edu.au](http://www.civicsandcitizenship.edu.au) (Discovering Democracy Units>A Guide to Government & Law in Australia>Under The Australian Nation)
    - 'Democratic Struggles', *Discovering Democracy Lower Secondary Units*, [www1.curriculum.edu.au/ddunits/](http://www1.curriculum.edu.au/ddunits/) (The Units>Democratic Struggles)
    - Australia's Democracy, Topic 4, The 1967 referendum, [www.civicsandcitizenship.edu.au](http://www.civicsandcitizenship.edu.au) (For Teachers>Teaching and Learning Activities>Upper Secondary>Australia's Democracy: Topic 4: The 1967 Referendum)
    - *Australia's Democracy: A Short History*, by John Hirst, Curriculum Corporation, Melbourne, 2002
- CD-ROM Animation** History of Voting
- CD-ROM Interactive** The History of Voting Game



## Gathering information

Provide students with a copy of **BLM 1**. Explain that this was produced by the Aboriginal–Australian Fellowship to encourage people to sign a petition to present to the Federal Government requesting it to conduct a referendum. This was one of 94 petitions presented to the Federal Government in the 10 years prior to the 1967 referendum.

## Identifying and analysing

Discuss the following questions with students:

- > What action does the writer of the petition want the readers to take?
  - > What problems does the writer have with sections 51 and 127 of the Australian Constitution?
  - > Why might there be reference to the United Nations in this document?
  - > What is meant in this document by the term 'equal citizenship'?
- Ask students to record their impressions of the document, as well as any questions they might have. These will be consulted at the conclusion of this activity.
- Divide students into pairs or small groups to research the following historical circumstances and events:
- > Indigenous Australians' voting rights pre-1901
  - > The *Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902*
  - > State and territory control of Indigenous Australians 1901–1967
  - > The Day of Mourning 1938
  - > Indigenous Australians' service in World War II and voting rights 1946
  - > The right to vote 1962
  - > The Freedom Rides 1965
  - > The Wave Hill strike 1966
  - > Compulsory enrolment and voting 1984.



Fig 30: Campaigning for Indigenous Australians' rights. The Freedom Rides, 1965

The resources listed above can be supplemented by online and library resources. Ask students to consider the following questions in their research:

- > What was the nature of the inequalities suffered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?
- > How are these compatible with students' understandings of human rights and citizenship rights?
- > How would these inequalities be affected by the changes to the Constitution proposed in the 1967 referendum?

### Presenting findings

Have students share their research findings with the class and discuss the rights that Indigenous Australians sought in the period up until the 1967 referendum and the ways that Indigenous Australians' rights differed from those of other Australians.

Ask students to refer again to **BLM 1**.

Using the information gathered through their research, as well as their impressions of the petition, ask students to write an explanation that would help an uninformed Australian to decide whether or not to sign this petition.

### FROM THE MARGIN

#### DIRECT DEMOCRACY

In ancient Athens the power to make laws was given to citizens (native-born free-men, which excluded women, slaves and migrants) who directly decided on the laws governing their city state.

## ACTIVITY 2

# How referendums work

### FOCUS QUESTIONS

- How does the Australian Constitution provide for altering the words of the Constitution?
- What role does the Commonwealth Parliament play in altering the Australian Constitution?
- What role does the Australian Electoral Commission perform?
- Who votes in referendums?

### RESOURCES

- **BLM 2** The Australian Constitution – alteration process
  - *Australian Referendums 1906–1999*, CD-ROM, AEC
  - Referendums: [www.aec.gov.au/Education/Democracy\\_Rules/web\\_links.htm](http://www.aec.gov.au/Education/Democracy_Rules/web_links.htm)
  - Enrolment: [www.aec.gov.au/Education/Democracy\\_Rules/web\\_links.htm](http://www.aec.gov.au/Education/Democracy_Rules/web_links.htm)
- CD-ROM Interactive** Quiz 1 – Referendums – Do you get it?



### FROM THE MARGIN

#### VOTING DAYS

A House of Representatives election must be held every three years. By law, elections for the Commonwealth Parliament are held on a Saturday, while in the United States and the United Kingdom elections are held on weekdays and voting is not compulsory.

### Gathering information

Discuss with students why the Australian Constitution (written before 1900) might need to be altered. What changes have occurred in Australian society that would not have been

foreseen by those who wrote the Constitution?

Ask students in groups to use the resources listed above to research one or more of the following about the referendum process and its significance.



The areas of research are:

- > the Australian Constitution provisions in section 128 (which include the role of the Parliament and the requirement of a double majority for change to occur)
- > the role of the AEC in conducting referendums
- > voter requirements
- > the significance of referendums in changing the Australian Constitution
- > the success of the referendum process in changing the Constitution.

Have students report back on their findings to their main groups.

### Identifying and analysing

After students have presented their research to their groups, ask the groups to suggest and record:

- > the reasons why Constitutional change appears difficult
- > the nature of the referendum questions that have been passed
- > the sorts of changes to the Constitution and powers of government that have resulted from successful referendums
- > the ways in which the 1967 referendum was different from other referendums held since federation.

### Presenting findings

Instruct the student groups to prepare an artefact entitled *The Referendum Process: A Voter's Guide* in a format of their choice. Remind the groups to include qualifications for voting in referendums.

Alternative or additional presentations could consider the following topics:

- > Changing the Australian Constitution: Some examples of success stories
- > Changing the Australian Constitution: What issues have been most important?

## ACTIVITY 3

# An historic vote

### FOCUS QUESTIONS

- How was the 'Yes' case put to voters?
- Why did the results of the referendum differ across States?
- What was the significance of the referendum to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders?

### RESOURCES

- **BLM 3** The case in favour
- *Australian Referendums 1906–1999*, CD-ROM, AEC
- *Timeframe*: [www.abc.net.au/time/](http://www.abc.net.au/time/) ('97 series>1967... Citizens At Last?)
- Referendums: [www.aec.gov.au/Education/Democracy\\_Rules/web\\_links.htm](http://www.aec.gov.au/Education/Democracy_Rules/web_links.htm)
- Australian Biography: [www.australianbiography.gov.au/](http://www.australianbiography.gov.au/) (Biographies of activists for Indigenous Australians' rights including Charles Perkins, Neville Bonner, Faith Bandler)
- [www.aph.gov.au](http://www.aph.gov.au) (Publications>Parliamentary Handbook >Referendums and Plebiscites>Referendum Results>1967)
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity website: [www.hreoc.gov.au](http://www.hreoc.gov.au).

**CD-ROM Animation** History of Voting

**CD-ROM Interactive** The History of Voting Game



Fig 31: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights activist, Faith Bandler

## Gathering information

### Why vote 'Yes'?

Provide students with a copy of **BLM 3**.

Divide students into groups to analyse the impact of each of these sources on Australian voters. The following questions will direct their discussion:

- > How might people have responded to sources 1, 2 and 3?
- > What messages are contained in the song and the poster? How might they have appealed to voters?

Ask students to consider the arguments used in the official 'Yes' case. How might these have appealed to voters?

Unlike in other referendums, there was no official 'No' case. How might this have influenced voters?

### What were the results?

Groups should use the *Australian Referendums, 1906–1999* CD-ROM or the Australian Parliament website to look at the results of the 1967 referendum. Ask students to graph the results by state and territory.

Ask them to identify electorates or states and territories where there were high 'Yes' votes and high 'No' votes, and to offer explanations for these differences.

### What was the significance to the campaign's leaders?

Next have student groups analyse the significance of the referendum to those who led the campaign. Use the ABC *Timeframe* online resource (which contains interviews with Chicka Dixon, Charles Perkins and Faith Bandler), as well as other online and print sources.

## Identifying and analysing

Have student groups examine their findings.

In relation to **BLM 3** ask students to consider the arguments used in the official 'Yes' case? How do these compare with their research in Activity 1, and their 'advice to uninformed Australians'?

- > What sorts of appeals were made to the Australian voters and how might Australians respond to them today?
- > What would have been the impact on voters of the absence of an official 'No' case?

In relation to the referendum results discuss with students:

- > What was the pattern of results across Australia?
- > Which electorates had high levels of 'Yes' votes? What are the characteristics of these electorates?
- > Which electorates had high levels of 'No' votes? What might account for this?

In relation to the views of the leaders of the campaign, discuss with students:

- > What were the key issues for them in the 1967 referendum?
- > How was the 1967 referendum significant?
- > What other issues do they identify as being important for Indigenous Australians to achieve equality in Australia?

## Presenting findings

Have students write an informative feature article for a general audience which analyses the significance of the 1967 referendum. Their article should include:

- > an appropriate heading
- > background information on Indigenous Australians' civil and political rights until the 1960s
- > information on the referendum process
- > analysis of the results
- > Indigenous Australians' perspectives including some key quotes
- > appropriate charts, diagrams, illustrations and photographs
- > a personal reflection on the issues
- > a bibliography of sources used.

## Going further

### Citizenship rights and the electoral process

Ask students to research one or more significant issues concerning Indigenous Australians' civil and political rights since 1967. These could include:

- > Land Rights issues (Mabo and Wik and contemporary cases)
- > Stolen Generations
- > Aboriginal deaths in custody
- > Reconciliation
- > Supporting informed voting among Indigenous Australians – post 1984.

Have students focus on:

- > the ways that elected parliaments have responded to these issues
- > the extent to which these issues have been resolved.

As a starting point, students could look at the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity website: [www.hreoc.gov.au](http://www.hreoc.gov.au).

### FROM THE MARGIN

#### MOBILE POLLING

Geographic remoteness is no barrier to helping electors cast their vote in a federal election. In the 2010 federal election, the AEC used road, air and sea transport to visit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their outstations, pastoral properties, small towns, tourist resorts and mine sites. A number of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were recruited to identify, interpret for and assist with the special needs of electors.

### Successful referendums

Ask students to research another of the referendums using the material available on the *Australian Referendums 1906–1999* CD-ROM, as well as online and library materials (the most contentious recent referendum is the Republic referendum).

The following questions could frame their research:

- > What changes were being sought to the Constitution?
- > What were the key arguments in the 'Yes' and 'No' cases?
- > What do you think of these arguments?
- > What were the views of the media at the time (if appropriate)?
- > What were the patterns of voting contained in the results – Australia-wide, by state and territory, and in individual electorates?



Fig 32: Australian citizens have an obligation to vote – wherever they may be

# Investigation

## How did East Timor take the first steps to democracy?

### RECOMMENDED LEVELS

UPPER SECONDARY

MIDDLE SECONDARY

LOWER SECONDARY

UPPER PRIMARY

East Timor is one of Australia's nearest neighbours but its experience of democracy could not be more different. After centuries of Portuguese colonial rule and 25 years of Indonesian occupation the East Timorese people were finally granted the opportunity to decide their own future through a democratic vote in a 'popular consultation'. In subsequent elections in 2001 and 2002 they voted for a representative assembly and president.

In this investigation students will focus on the significance of the vote in achieving momentous change – the status of an independent sovereign nation in East Timor, the first democratic nation of the 21st century. They will research the background to East Timorese independence and consider the roles undertaken by Australians through the United Nations. In particular, they will consider the role of the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) in assisting East Timor's progress towards democratic government.

### THE INVESTIGATION AT A GLANCE

<b>Background briefings for teacher reference</b>	Australian Electoral Commission; Democracy; International assistance – East Timor; Universal Declaration of Human Rights
<b>Suggested classroom teaching time</b>	<b>Activity 1:</b> A promise of democracy (80 minutes) <b>Activity 2:</b> International response (120 minutes) <b>Activity 3:</b> Introducing democracy: The role of the AEC (80 minutes)
<b>Indicators of student achievement</b>	Describe the situation in East Timor under Portuguese and Indonesian rule Explain the reasons for Australian and United Nations involvement in East Timor after 1975 Examine East Timor's progress towards democratic government and the AEC's role in that process
<b>Related articles in Discovering Democracy Australian Reader Upper Secondary Collection</b>	People Make Politics: Fighting for a Cause Shifting Boundaries



Fig 33: The Asia-Pacific region



## ACTIVITY 1

# A promise of democracy

### FOCUS QUESTIONS

What was East Timor like under Portuguese and Indonesian rule?

What roles did the East Timorese resistance play in drawing world attention to the plight of East Timorese?

How have Australians been involved in East Timor?

### RESOURCES

- **BLM 4** East Timor under Portuguese and Indonesian rule
- BBC News: [www.bbc.co.uk/news](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news) (Asia-Pac>Choose East Timor in the Asia-Pacific menu)
- US Department of State: [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov) (Countries and Regions>East Asia and the Pacific>Countries and other areas>Timor-Leste)
- Nobel Prize: [www.nobelprize.org/](http://www.nobelprize.org/) (Nobel Prizes>Nobel Peace Prize>All Nobel Peace Prizes>1996)
- More or Less: [www.moreorless.au.com/](http://www.moreorless.au.com/) (Heroes>Choose Xanana Gusmão, Carlos Belo and José Ramos-Horta)
- Australian War Memorial: [www.awm.gov.au/](http://www.awm.gov.au/) (Collections>Collections search>Type in key words such as 'Sparrow Force' or 'Balibo Five')

## Gathering information

Read through **BLM 4** with students.

Explain that they will work in groups to further research one of the aspects of East Timorese history under the headings: Portuguese rule, Indonesian occupation, East Timorese resistance, Australian contact with East Timor.

Divide the class into small groups to research one of the key events, the results of which they will bring back to the class for explanation and discussion. Each group must provide one or more images from their research for this discussion. The resource list is a basic list of websites that can be used. Encourage students to use search engines and library resources to find further material.

Emphasise that students maintain a bibliography of resources while they are completing this research.

## Identifying and analysing

After students have had an opportunity to conduct some research, bring them together to report their findings to the class, show images they have found and build a timeline of events. This could be done as a PowerPoint™ presentation, constructed on the board or drawn on a large sheet of poster paper.

Conduct a class discussion on the following:

- > What was the nature of Portuguese colonial rule?
- > What impact did Australian experiences with the East Timorese in World War II have on Australian attitudes to East Timor?
- > Why did Indonesia invade East Timor in 1975?
- > How significant was the Balibo Five incident in Indonesian–Australian relationships?

- > Why do you think Australia was the only country to recognise the Indonesian occupation?
- > What roles did key East Timorese leaders play in drawing attention to the plight of the East Timorese?

### Presenting findings

Have student groups use their research findings to produce three or four slides or screens that will become part of the timeline. Each group should use key images, and brief explanations of events.

Have a class presentation where each group speaks to and explains their slides.

## ACTIVITY 2

# International response

### FOCUS QUESTIONS

What was the purpose of the United Nations missions in East Timor?

How were Australians involved in the United Nations operations in East Timor?

What were the results of the East Timorese elections?

How did the people of East Timor respond?

### RESOURCES

- **BLM 5** The United Nations in East Timor
- Australian War Memorial: [www.awm.gov.au](http://www.awm.gov.au) (Collections>Collections search>Type in key words such as 'INTERFET')
- East and Southeast Asia: An Annotated Directory of Internet Resources:
  - <http://newton.uor.edu/departments&programs/asianstudiesdept/index.html> (East Timor>General Information)
  - United Nations: [www.un.org/english](http://www.un.org/english) (Peace & Security>Peacekeeping Operations>Past Operations>Asia and the Pacific)
  - United Nations: [www.un.org/english](http://www.un.org/english) (Peace & Security>Peacekeeping Operations>Current Operations>Asia and the Pacific)
  - Inside Indonesia: [www.insideindonesia.org](http://www.insideindonesia.org) (Past Editions>Edition 61, Jan–March 2000 (East Timor special))
  - AusAID: [www.ausaid.gov.au](http://www.ausaid.gov.au) (Publications>Focus Magazine>March 2000 (Focus on East Timor))
  - *East Timor: Birth of a Nation*: [www.abc.net.au/etimor/default.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/etimor/default.htm)
  - *Answered by Fire*: [www.shop.abc.net.au](http://www.shop.abc.net.au) (DVD>Drama and Fiction>Type in 'Answered by Fire') or online at: [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

## Gathering information

Read through **BLM 5** with students. Discuss with students:

- > Why might East Timor need a high level of international support?
- > What particular needs might the people of East Timor have?
- > Why might Australia be involved in these United Nations missions?

Divide the class into groups to represent the United Nations missions outlined: UNAMET, INTERFET, UNTAET, UNMISSET and UNMIT.

Within their groups students will be responsible for:

- > outlining the aims of this mission
- > analysing Australian contributions to each of these missions
- > explaining the results of these missions, including election results where appropriate.

Select one or two key primary or secondary sources that explain the mission from the point of view of the East Timorese or Australian participants. These could be in the form of photographs (such as INTERFET photographs from the Australian War Memorial website), newspaper articles from the Internet or reports from East Timorese leaders.

Explain to students that they can find a range of materials, including lists of countries involved in these missions, photographs and media reports from the United Nations website. Have students contribute to a media display of newspaper articles about current issues and events.

Use audiovisual material to provide further information to students. The following are recommended:

*Answered by Fire* is a two-part mini-series based on the 1999 East Timor conflicts that led to East Timor's independence. Available on DVD or online at: [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

*East Timor: Birth of a Nation* – This can be viewed online at [www.abc.net.au/etimor/](http://www.abc.net.au/etimor/)



Fig 34: Australian soldiers as part of INTERFET, about to undertake a patrol of an area between Suai and Matai, East Timor

## Identifying and analysing

Allow students two or three lessons to research. Have each group report on their findings after that time. Use student reports to discuss effective ways of presenting information.

Discuss the focus questions at the beginning of this activity as well as:

- > How important was democracy to the East Timorese?
- > What difficulties are they encountering on the path to democracy?
- > What kinds of support do countries with no experience of democracy need?
- > What light can the experience of democracy in East Timor throw on Australian democracy?

## Presenting findings

Have students present their findings in the form of a press conference to the class. (This could be preceded by a short videotape of a press conference as an example.)

Set up the classroom to represent a press conference: each group takes turns in presenting reports and the rest of the class members are the reporters. A volunteer should mediate the session and allocate questions from the reporters to the panel members.

Each of the groups could decide on a particular angle for their press conference such as the announcement of election results or the deployment of Australian troops. Other group members could present other aspects based on their research findings – including visual resources on a PowerPoint™ presentation.

The reporters should use the research questions to ask questions of the panel and take notes on their answers.

Have students use the material gained in this session to write a newspaper article about one of the issues discussed in the press conference.

## ACTIVITY 3

# Introducing democracy: The role of the AEC

### FOCUS QUESTIONS

What was the AEC's role in East Timor?

What are the challenges involved in establishing democratic institutions in a country that has had no experience of democracy?

What government and electoral systems did the East Timorese adopt?

### RESOURCES

- **BLM 6** Introducing democracy: The role of the AEC in East Timor
- AusAID: [www.ausaid.gov.au](http://www.ausaid.gov.au) (Countries>East Asia>East Timor)
- East Timor Government: [www.easttimorgovernment.com/](http://www.easttimorgovernment.com/)
- International Electoral Services: [www.aec.gov.au/Education/Democracy\\_Rules/web\\_links.htm](http://www.aec.gov.au/Education/Democracy_Rules/web_links.htm)
- Electoral Procedures: [www.aec.gov.au/Education/Democracy\\_Rules/web\\_links.htm](http://www.aec.gov.au/Education/Democracy_Rules/web_links.htm)

## Gathering information

Provide students with a copy of **BLM 6**.

Divide the class into groups and ask them to research the following:

- > What processes do people need to understand to conduct elections? (Students could look at [www.aec.gov.au/Education/Democracy\\_Rules/web\\_links.htm](http://www.aec.gov.au/Education/Democracy_Rules/web_links.htm).)
- > What skills and resources would people need to conduct democratic elections from scratch?
- > What information would be needed by East Timorese citizens to participate in democratic elections?
- > What institutions and procedures would need to be put into place to implement the requirements as outlined in the East Timorese Constitution?

## Identifying and analysing

Discuss with students the notion of 'sustainable government':

- > What does this mean and what role did the AEC play in supporting it?
- > In what ways are elections a 'complex logistical exercise'?
- > What knowledge and skills and resources should an Electoral Administrators Course contain?
- > What sort of education program is needed to inform the public about their rights and responsibilities as outlined in the East Timorese Constitution?

## Presenting findings

Have students complete one of the following scenarios:

Imagine you were developing a public education campaign to inform the East Timorese about democratic electoral processes and their rights and responsibilities in elections. Establish a series of brief key messages that would become the focus of your education campaign. Produce a poster or the text of a radio or television advertisement that will explain the key messages.

Using the extract from the East Timorese Constitution, write a report to the East Timorese minister responsible for elections. Include recommendations about:

- > the role of an electoral administration body
- > the knowledge and skills needed by people to be employed by this body
- > the public education that needs to be implemented.



Fig 35: Administering an election according to democratic ideals is crucial to elector confidence



## Going further

### Getting young Australians to enrol to vote

Students should now be familiar with the importance of the vote as an instrument of change. Discuss with them the political symbolism attached to voting, such as full membership of a community, equality, autonomy, freedom and responsive government. They should also know about different types of campaigns that encourage people to vote, and become informed voters.

Although it is compulsory for eligible citizens to enrol to vote in Australia, there is concern about low enrolment rates among young Australians. The Australian Electoral Commission estimated that for the 2004 election approximately 25% of eligible 18-year-old Australians were not enrolled to vote. Furthermore, although many young people may enrol when they are eligible, they are often highly mobile and fail to keep their enrolment current when they change their address.

At 30 September 2010, the AEC estimated that approximately 33% of eligible 18 year olds were not enrolled, an increase of 8%.

In response, the Australian Electoral Commission has created initiatives to encourage young people to enrol.

#### FROM THE MARGIN

##### ENROLLING AT YOUR ADDRESS

A person who has resided at an address continuously for more than one month is obliged to be enrolled at that address for an election. (*Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*, section 99)

### The Campaign – Enrolment Week

Provide students with **BLM 7** and **BLM 8**. Draw students' attention to **BLM 7** pointing out that the AEC has targeted specific youth events, but has not stated what form its message will take.

Have students work in groups of five to organise a campaign encouraging enrolment among young Australians. This should include all youth, as well as young people not in the education system. Ensure that each group member has individual responsibility for one of the sets of data from **BLM 8**. Their understanding of the data should be recorded on a 'plus, minus and interesting' chart and be communicated to the rest of the group.

Each group must produce a 'campaign centrepiece' encouraging young people to enrol to vote. This can take the form of a video, web page, billboard or television, radio or print advertisement. Teachers may choose to stop at the storyboard stage, or they may have student groups produce their artefacts. Each group's campaign should clearly demonstrate that they used information from **BLMs 7** and **8**. Their artefacts may be showcased during the AEC's 'Enrol to Vote Week' in schools.

Groups should develop their main message or messages using findings from the data (**BLM 7**) and the information from the AEC. They should also decide on the format of the campaign, and be aware that their target audience (young people) is diverse, and that their campaign and message should reflect this diversity (rural/metropolitan, gender, cultural background and socioeconomic status).

Allow students to present their findings at a storyboard or draft stage for class feedback, before going into full production. Depending on the formats chosen by the student groups, the cooperation of specialist teachers may be advisable. This activity may be integrated with Media, Technology or Communications learning areas. The AEC is most interested in student ideas and invites students to send in their findings and campaign suggestions.

Further research can be encouraged. Students may choose to examine the whole of the Youth Electoral Study at: [www.aec.gov.au/Education/Democracy\\_Rules/web\\_links.htm](http://www.aec.gov.au/Education/Democracy_Rules/web_links.htm) or make comparisons with young people's enrolment in comparable democracies, such as the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.