VICTORIAN CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY

Victorian Certificate of Education 2013

SUPERVISOR TO ATTACH PROCESSING LABEL HERE

STUDENT NUMBER

									Letter
Figures									
Words									

AUSTRALIAN POLITICS

Written examination

Monday 4 November 2013

Reading time: 3.00 pm to 3.15 pm (15 minutes)
Writing time: 3.15 pm to 5.15 pm (2 hours)

QUESTION AND ANSWER BOOK

Structure of book

Section	*Number of questions*	*Number of questions to be answered*	*Number of marks*
A	4	4	60
B	4	1	20
			Total 80

- Students are permitted to bring into the examination room: pens, pencils, highlighters, erasers, sharpeners and rulers.
- Students are NOT permitted to bring into the examination room: blank sheets of paper and/or white out liquid/tape.
- No calculator is allowed in this examination.

Materials supplied
- Question and answer book of 19 pages.
- Additional space is available at the end of the book if you need extra paper to complete an answer.

Instructions
- Write your **student number** in the space provided above on this page.
- All written responses must be in English.

Students are NOT permitted to bring mobile phones and/or any other unauthorised electronic devices into the examination room.

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SECTION A

Instructions for Section A

Answer **all** questions in the spaces provided.

Australian democracy

One of the main views people have of everyday 'politics' is snippets of Question Time from parliament on the nightly television news. These pictures and sounds are often marked by conflict and confrontation, mostly very male-dominated and an overly black and white, *party* political approach to issues which really need to be discussed in a more complex, intelligent and sensitive way. Question Time is the means by which the Opposition can hold governments to account, to put them under scrutiny and pressure. From time to time it does actually fulfil this function. But more often the Question Time is a very artificial and predictable show. The politicians take it in turns. First there is a sharp hostile question from an opposition member of parliament to a government minister. This comes complete with interjections and back-up calls for action or resignation from other opposition members. Then the government has its turn, and one of the government backbenchers asks a set-up question to a government minister, inviting them to tell everyone how well the government is doing – or how badly the opposition is doing – on a particular issue. This usually leads to a long, often boring and usually self-congratulating speech from a government minister. This scripted set-up question is called a 'Dorothy Dixer'.

Source: Andrew Scott, *Politics, Parties and Issues in Australia: An Introduction*, Pearson Originals, NSW, 2012, p. 79

Question 1 (15 marks)

Select the most appropriate answer (**A.–D.**) for **parts a.** and **b.** and write your answers in the boxes.

a. Which of the following is the most accurate definition of the term 'Question Time' in the Australian Parliament? 1 mark

A. a session during a sitting of the House of Representatives in which the executive questions and scrutinises the legislature

B. a session during sittings of both the House of Representatives and the Senate in which the executive questions and scrutinises the legislature

C. a session during a sitting of the House of Representatives in which the prime minister answers questions from the Opposition

D. a session during sittings of both the House of Representatives and the Senate in which the legislature questions and scrutinises the executive

b. Which of the following parliamentary questions is best described as a 'Dorothy Dixer'? 1 mark

A. 'Could the Prime Minister explain to the House just why the government has broken its promise not to introduce any new taxes?'

B. 'Could the Treasurer describe the government's current policies, which have resulted in the recent sharp fall in the level of unemployment in Australia?'

C. 'Why is the government aiming to reduce Australia's carbon emissions by far less than other comparable, developed nations?'

D. 'Did the Foreign Minister bring items into Australia that the Minister deliberately failed to declare to customs officials at the airport? Yes or no?'

c. Outline **two** ways in which Question Time could be reformed so that it might 'hold governments to account' more effectively than it does at present. 4 marks

d. Describe **two** key roles of the Australian Parliament, other than holding governments to account. 4 marks

e. Discuss the view that Question Time is often marked by a '*party* political approach to issues'. 5 marks

Australian democracy in perspective

Question 2 (15 marks)

> … Australian parties and the party system … are *the* critical components in the polity [political system] … Government is party government. Elections are essentially party contests, and the mechanics of electoral systems are determined by party policies and party advantages. Legislatures are party chambers. Legislators are overwhelmingly party members. The majority of electors follow their party identification. Politics in Australia are party politics.

Source: D Jaensch, *The Politics of Australia*, Macmillan Education Australia, South Yarra, 1998, p. 217;
Reproduced by permission of Macmillan Education Australia

a. What is meant by the term 'political party'? 2 marks

b. Outline **two** key differences between the Australian political party system and the political party system of another political system you have studied this year. 4 marks

c. Outline **two** ways in which political parties affect the democratic operation of the Australian Parliament. 4 marks

d. Explain **one** aspect of another political system you have studied this year that Australia could adopt to make its political system more accountable. 5 marks

Domestic policy

Question 3 (15 marks)

> People often ask me what vision I have for the APS [Australian Public Service]*. I have a short and simple one.
>
> My vision for the APS is for it to be and to remain the first choice for policy advice, policy implementation and program and service delivery for Australian governments.
>
> Now all kinds of organisations and individuals can and do provide policy advice, help to implement policy and deliver services for the Australian Government – and that's a good thing.
>
> I do not think that the APS ever has a monopoly on providing advice, implementation or delivery. I think that competition is a good thing, be it in the preparation of advice or service delivery. And there will be occasions when we should encourage governments to look elsewhere for knowledge or expertise.
>
> But in whatever tasks Australian governments face, the APS should be the organisation they look to first and foremost. And governments should be confident that the APS can meet their expectations of the work it needs doing.

Source: Dr Ian Watt AO, 'The APS: now and in the future'(speech), National Press Club, Canberra, 22 November 2011

*The Australian Public Service is commonly referred to as 'the bureaucracy'.

a. Name **one** department of the Australian Public Service. 1 mark

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b. There are two key roles of the Australian Public Service: policy advice and policy implementation.

Explain the difference between the two roles. 4 marks

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c. Outline **two** reasons why the Australian Public Service is a major source of policy advice for the Australian Government. 4 marks

d. Other than the Australian Public Service, explain the role of **two** organisations or individuals that have sought to influence the formulation of a contemporary domestic policy you have studied this year. 6 marks

Foreign policy

Question 4 (15 marks)

> The challenge for Australian foreign policy will be … to pursue our own political and economic interests with maximum effectiveness, but in a way that makes as positive a contribution as possible to a more peaceful and prosperous world … there are two very considerable potential assets which Australia can bring to that task. The first is our status as a middle power, with the capacity that implies for effective action and influence. The other is our location alongside South-East Asia in the Asia Pacific region, the most economically dynamic in the world.

Source: G Evans and B Grant, *Australia's Foreign Relations in the World of the 1990s*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1991, p. 321

a. In relation to Australian foreign policy, what is meant by the term 'middle power'? 2 marks

b. Outline **two** specific ways in which Australia has made a contribution towards 'a more peaceful and prosperous world'. 4 marks

c. Outline **one** way in which Australia has used its location in the Asia-Pacific region to its advantage. 3 marks

d. Traditionally, Australian foreign policy has been bipartisan in nature.
Discuss the extent of bipartisan political support for contemporary Australian foreign policies. 6 marks

END OF SECTION A

SECTION B – Essay questions

Instructions for Section B

Answer **one** of the following four questions in the space provided.

Question 1 (20 marks)

'There is a range of key values and principles in a democratic political system.'

How effectively does the Australian political system achieve these values and principles?

OR

Question 2 (20 marks)

'An effective legislative branch of government should closely reflect the society that it represents.'

How effectively has the Australian Parliament achieved this objective in comparison with the legislative branch of another political system you have studied this year?

OR

Question 3 (20 marks)

'A mandate granted to a government by voters is the most legitimate basis on which to introduce new public policy.'

Discuss this statement in relation to **one or more** contemporary domestic policy issues you have studied this year.

OR

Question 4 (20 marks)

Discuss the key challenges facing contemporary Australian foreign policy. How has Australian foreign policy dealt with each of these challenges in recent years?

Question No.

END OF QUESTION AND ANSWER BOOK

TURN OVER

Extra space for responses

Clearly number all responses in this space.

TURN OVER

A script book is available from the supervisor if you need extra paper to complete your answer. Please ensure you write your **student number** in the space provided on the front cover of the script book. **At the end of the examination, place the script book inside the front cover of this question and answer book.**