

# 2010 Governor-General's Undergraduate Essay Competition

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*'Educating for Democracy'*

## What

Encouraging Young Australians to engage in our working democracy, the Constitution Education Fund Australia (CEFA) is proud to present the 7<sup>th</sup> year of the prestigious Governor-General's Undergraduate Essay Competition, which awards **cash prizes** to the authors of winning 2,500 word essays.

## Entry

The 2010 Competition is open to all Australian citizens enrolled in an undergraduate degree at an Australian University for all or part of 2010. This includes final year honours students, LLB and JD students. Answer one of the nine questions in 2,500 words for your chance to win!

## Judges

Every year the finalists of the Competition are judged by a panel of distinguished Australians. The judging panel this year is being chaired by The Hon Robert French AC, Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia.

Competition closes Monday, 17th December 2010, 5:00pm AEST

For full details of the rules of entry and how to enter, visit

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# 2010 Questions

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1. "Climate change is the great moral challenge of our generation." (The Hon. Kevin Rudd MP, "Opening Remarks to the National Climate Change Summit", 31 March 2007).  
Discuss.
2. "...the burqa has no place in Australian society. I would go as far as to say it is un-Australian." (Senator Cory Bernardi, "For Australia's sake, we need to ban the burqa", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 May 2010).  
Discuss.
3. "The Australian government should introduce mandatory internet filtering."  
Argue reasons for and against this statement and state your opinion. You may like to look at government policies in other countries to address this.
4. "Federal parliamentarians are usually encouraged to interact with any group in the community to ensure our democracy remains a representative and participatory one. To say that religious groups are in some way different and that they ought to be held at arm's length is clearly discriminatory." (Tom Frame, "Church and State: Australia's Imaginary Wall", 2006).  
Discuss this quotation with reference to the separation of church and state in Australia.
5. Australia's population has been projected to grow rapidly over the next forty years. What factors should be taken into account when determining an appropriate rate of population growth by 2050? What problems might be raised by competing policy considerations, and how might these be resolved?
- 6\*. Refugee policy is a major issue debated both in Australia and internationally. How should Australian laws address this issue while considering humanitarian concerns and national security?
- 7\*. In the inaugural Professor George Winterton Lecture ("Executive Power", *The University of Sydney Law School*, 18 February 2010) The Hon. Robert French AC, Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia, made reference to Cicero's comment in *Pro Milone*: "*silent enim leges inter arma*" ("in time of wars, the laws are silent").  
To what extent does the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia permit the laws to remain "silent" when executive action is taken, absent statutory authorisation, in times of national emergency or crisis?
- 8\*. Prime Minister Kevin Rudd had put forward the idea of a referendum to transfer power over hospitals to the Commonwealth. Similarly, Opposition Leader Tony Abbott has proposed a referendum to grant the Commonwealth control over the Murray Darling Basin.  
If either of these referendums succeeded, would it bear out the 1995 prediction of former Queensland Premier Wayne Goss that "[w]hat we will witness within a generation is the de facto, if not de jure, abolition of the States"?
- 9\*. Was the "anti-bikie" legislation implemented in South Australia and New South Wales an appropriate response to the problems faced by the respective legislatures, or was it an excessive response? What competing interests of individuals and communities need to be considered when evaluating such legislation?

\* Law students who answer these questions are expected to incorporate a higher level of legal inquiry.