**Cartoon Capers**

*Teacher's Guide*

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**Item / Resource Description**

This cartoon, by Simon Letch, shows the public perception of Labour leader Kevin Rudd during the 2007 federal election campaign after eleven years of a Liberal-led government. It portrays him as a winged saint in a stained glass window. It first appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald on 6 March 2007.

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**Summary of Activity**

Students examine how this, and other cartoons, are used to convey political messages, and explore the concepts of opinion and bias. They examine the situations behind the cartoons, which represent some key points in Australia’s history, as well as investigating how today’s events are being portrayed. They create their own cartoon to represent an issue that is important to them.

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**Media Element**

Still Image

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**Core Understanding**

Content: There are points of view embedded in media messages.

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**Curriculum Links**

VELS – Communication, Listening, viewing and responding, Levels 4 and 5
VELS – The Arts, Exploring and responding, Levels 4 and 5
VELS – Civics and Citizenship, Community engagement, Levels 4 and 5
Focus Questions

- Why are cartoons used to express an opinion?
- How do they help us understand issues?
- Why is humour an effective way to convey a message?
- How can we use cartoons to give us an insight into history?
- What kind of cartoons might our children use to learn about our life?

Activity Detail

Investigate what the students already know about political cartoons. Then discuss the 'St Kevin' cartoon by Simon Letch.

- Who is the person in this cartoon?
- Why was he shown this way at the time?
- What role did he have then?
- What does the cartoon say about how people thought of him?
- How does the cartoon sum up people's opinions?
- What is the role of bias and opinion in cartoons?

Have students select one of these cartoons and investigate what was happening at the time to inspire it. Have them identify the message, opinion or perspective of the cartoonist.

First World War enlistment cartoon (CW6TZJ) shows a smiling Australian soldier near a signpost that reads 'TO TURKEY'.

'Dr Jekyll and Mrs Hyde' by Judy Horacek, 1991 (KTB9XL) explores the dual roles of women in the workplace and at home.

'Photographing marbles' cartoon by Judy Horacek, 1997 (AL6C3C) comments on the lack of coverage of women's sport in the Australian media.

'Wake, Australia! Wake', 1888 (XB5L3Q) is one of many at the time warning against the 'Chinese invasion' of Australia.

'Scientific whaling' cartoon by Pat Campbell, 2006 (BE25BX) comments on the of killing of whales for scientific purposes by Japan.

Suffragist publication cover, 1900 (FBV3L6) comments on the campaign for the right of women to vote.

'Life. Be in it.' fitness campaign, 1977 (7BEWSR) encourages Australians to exercise.

Political cartoons have been used widely in Australia since 1880, and remain one of the most popular forms of political commentary. Discuss how one image, with or without words, can so succinctly sum up a situation.

Extension Activities

- Have students collect examples of political cartoons from today’s media and explore the circumstances behind their message.
- Are there any that should be added to the National Museum of Australia’s collection because they offer a perspective on an issue that could become part of Australia’s history? Why?
- Have students select an issue – school, local, state or national – that interests them and identify the various arguments which surround it. Have them use a drawing application such as MS Paint or Tuxpaint to create a cartoon which sums up one of the perspectives.