**unit three**

**m a n d a t e s**

definitions

*mandate:* a claim for authority to exercise political and legal power

*will of the majority mandate:* claimed by the government and justified on the basis that the majority of people voted for government based on their policies, so there is a right and obligation to implement those policies

*specific mandate:* claimed by the government as the right to enact a specific election campaign promise (introduce new laws or repeal old ones)

*general mandate:* claimed by the government due to their general ideologies and political leanings

*right to oppose mandate:* claimed by the opposition to scrutinise the government and hold them accountable

*balance of power mandate:* claimed by the cross benchers of the senate when the opposition votes against the government

will of the majority mandate

*in favour*

* sections 7 and 24 state that the houses are “directly elected by the people”, providing a democratic mandate
* government represents the majority of people
* abcc bill

against

* winning party often does not have a clear majority (gillard minority)
* partisanship prevents electorates from being represented

examples

*specific mandate examples*

* turnbull called the 2016 double dissolution election on the basis of reintroducing the australian building and construction commission bill which had been twice rejected by the senate
* when the turnbull government was returned to office he also promised to introduce company tax cuts worth $50 billion in the 2016 election
* in 2013, abbott promised to repeal the ‘carbon tax’ and the mining tax

*general mandate examples*

* liberal party could be considered to have the ideological principles of higher business freedoms and lower government expenditure whereas labor generally opts for higher government regulation and measures to improve social equity
* in 2013, tony abbott’s opposition promised to ‘stop the boats’, a policy that required the cooperation of neighbouring countries as well as changes to australia’s migration act 1958
* in 2014, abbott responded to backlash about the budget cuts to health and education by claiming a general mandate that fiscal conservatism and responsibility was a key political belief of the liberal party

right to oppose mandate

*in favour*

* creates accountability for the government
* opposition must ensure that the government is acting within their power and in the best interests of the people
* represents the people who did not vote for the leading party
* the government does not always have a strong majority of seats (2016 labor opposition, 2010 liberal opposition)

*against*

* not the majority so they do not have the right to block government bills
* senate did not have the right to keep blocking the abcc bill as it is what the people wanted

examples

* in the 2016 double dissolution election, shorten’s alp opposition nearly won power and reduced the turnbull government to a one seat majority. they therefore felt emboldened by their near success
* abbott challenged the legitimacy of gillard’s 2010-2013 minority government. gillard had to make certain compromises with the green’s adam bandt including the specific policy approach on reducing carbon emissions through a fixed price on carbon. this compromise weakened the strength of labor and met effective opposition techniques from abbott that allowed him to brand the policy a ‘carbon tax’, a tactic which severely damaged labor in the following election

balance of power mandate

*in favour*

* represents dual voters (15% of all voters)
* shows democratic intention to hold government accountable and prevent tyranny of the majority
* democratic justification as the senate is directly elected (section 7)
* making amendments to bills may help to represent as many people as possible - the government initiates it and supports the views of the majority, and the minor parties and independents help amend it and support the views of the minority
* one in three votes are for non-major party candidates (antony green, 2013)

*against*

* malapportionment (tasmanians have 12.8 times the voting power of nsw - brian harradine) breaches one vote one value principle
* below the line voting before 2016 reforms
* the government may have a double majority and be able to exert executive dominance

examples

* brian harradine, an independent, was in the senate between 1994 and 1999 representing tasmania and held the power to block legislation albeit the fact that he only represented about 69 000 voters total, or 0.12% of australian voters
* ricky muir from the motoring enthusiasts party won a seat in 2013 despite only receiving “1” votes from 0.51% of tasmanian voters
* howard government held a double majority allowing them to pass the controversial workchoices legislation (2005)
* prime minister paul keating once referred to the senate as “unrepresentative swill”

quizlet for definitions and examples

<https://quizlet.com/_7b3mzo>

example essay structure

introduction - mandates definition, origin and types of mandates, strong thesis with argument

paragraph 1 - will of the majority for and against with examples, evaluate

paragraph 2 - right to oppose for and against with examples, evaluate

paragraph 3 - balance of power for and against with examples, evaluate

conclusion - final evaluation with strong finish

practice essay questions

“a mandate is claimed by anyone who wishes to influence power in the hope it will strengthen their own ability to do so.” evaluate this claim with reference to both the theory and practice of competing mandates. {25 marks}

“mandates are respected as often as they are disrespected in the australian political system.” evaluate this claim with reference to at least three examples. {25 marks}