

SPEECH COMPETITION RESOURCES PAGE 2025

Theme: How important is respectful debate to the health of a democracy?

You must refer to Robert Menzies's involvement in advancing debate through his actions and policy.

The purpose of this document is to provide a link to useful resources that you may wish to reference in your speech in order to reference Robert Menzies involvement in advancing debate through his actions and policy.

- Menzies's broadcast on the death of Ben Chifley [Speeches etc. \(nla.gov.au\)](https://www.nla.gov.au/speeches)
- 'Freedom of Speech' Forgotten People Broadcast [Chapter 2 – Freedom of Speech and Expression – Menzies Virtual Museum](#)

'The democratic system is really built up upon debate, and the proper debating of a question takes us right back to what has been called the Socratic method of question and answer. Parliament itself is the chief debating society of the realm, and those who see in its methods only vain repetition and a waste of time have failed to appreciate that it is in the course of full and open debate that the solid truth is disposed to emerge' Robert Menzies, Political Campaigning Broadcast, 3 September 1943

'The great quality of democracy is that it is flexible and responsive to changed opinion and lends itself readily to that process of trial and error by which progress comes and the truth prevails. Thus, it is that though the majority may be wrong today, that courage and patience on the part of those actively engaged in affairs, with wisdom, which is born of bitter experience, will make the majority right tomorrow'. Robert Menzies, 'Is Democracy Doomed', Broadcast Address for ABC, 1934

'A good parliament cannot exist without good members. A good parliament cannot exist without good debate – strong debate, strenuous debate and, every now and then, if you like, heated debate. But we all know from our experience that when the debates are over, we look round the House and we on each side of the House know that we have a lot of close personal friends among our political opponents. This is as it should be'. R. G. Menzies, House of Representatives, 10 December 1965