

# Building a Bridge

The Matagarup Bridge over the Swan River to the Perth Stadium has opened. The first people to use the pedestrian bridge were football fans going to the AFL game between the Dockers and Port Adelaide.



(Photo: Perth Stadium)

The bridge took several years to design and build. It cost \$91.5 million.

- Read these news articles about the bridge:
  - [WA Today](#)
  - [ABC News](#)
- Look at this [Perth Stadium Fact Sheet](#) about the bridge.
- View a [Main Roads animation](#) of the arches of the bridge being lifted.

## Finding out

- Write down **three** things from your reading and viewing that you find interesting about the bridge.
- Do you think that the bridge is a good or a service? Write a sentence to justify your answer.
- Businesses use resources to produce goods and services.
  - Use an explosion diagram to brainstorm the resources that would have been used to build the bridge.
  - Use **three** colours to classify the resources into **three** types: natural resources, human resources and capital resources.
- If you pay for one thing it means that you can't use that money to pay for something else that you also want. It's the same for the government.
  - If the bridge wasn't built what else could they have used the money for?
  - Do you think that the state government's choice to build this bridge was 'good' use of their money? Write a sentence to justify your answer.

## Teacher notes

**Purpose**

This learning activity aims to show students a real world example of Economics and Business in a context with which they are probably familiar.

**Prior knowledge**

Students need to have been exposed to the following Year 5 syllabus content **before** undertaking this activity:

- Resources can be natural (e.g. oil), human (e.g. workers), or capital (e.g. machinery)
- How resources are used to make goods and services to satisfy the needs and wants of present and future generations
- Due to scarcity, choices need to be made about how limited resources are used

They also need to be familiar with an explosion diagram as a way to record the brainstormed information.

**Answers**

- There are a huge range of things that children this age may come up with (economic ideas such as that it cost a lot of money, the number of workers involved or the machines required AND non-economic ideas such as the shape, the colour, the size, the use by pedestrians only)

**Hint:** Get a few volunteers to share their ideas with the class.

- It is difficult to classify a bridge as a good or service.  
It looks like a good as it is a tangible thing that satisfies a want. However, no one (directly) pays to use bridge so it's not like most goods. In Economics such things are described as a public good (available to the community but difficult to charge users for). Typically, the Government provides these goods as it would not be profitable for a business to do so.
- Examples of resources that would have been used to build the bridge:
  - natural resources: iron ore, sand, rocks, the land and river bed that 'anchors' the bridge
  - human resources: crane drivers, truck drivers, engineers, architects
  - capital resources: cranes, trucks, barges
- If the government did not pay for the bridge they could have used the money to a wide range of things for which the state government is responsible, such as, building the new schools that are needed as the population grows, to build a new railway line to reduce traffic congestion caused by travelling by car, or to employ more police officers to reduce the crime rate.

**Note:** There is no need to get into levels of government in Year 5 (that is in the Year 7 syllabus). However, be aware that more aircraft for the navy and more overseas aid are federal government responsibilities and more playgrounds and skateboard parks are local government responsibilities.

**Hint:** Emphasise that whether the state government's choice to build this bridge was 'good' use of their money is an opinion (some people will say yes and some will say no) - there is no correct answer.

**Hint:** Get the individuals to share their opinion with the class. Perhaps put a tick in the YES or NO box on the white board or piece of chart paper.

## **Follow-up**

The learning about the bridge, the resources required and the overall YES/NO rating by the class could be shared with another class, their parents and/or the school community. This shows that HASS learning 'lives'.