Fertile Question: Where do I draw the line?

Core Content Area 3: See, judge, act

TOPIC 3.2: Ethics in the workplace

Depthing Understanding: Where do politicians draw the line?

This looping detour is for students with an interest in politics or if there is a particular current issue that invites ethical debate.

Teachers: Before You Start!

1. Familiarise yourself with the resources referred to in this lesson.

For students to explore what moves politicians to draw the line, complete the following activities:

1. In November 2012, several Queensland state politicians resigned from their party saying they could no longer in good conscience work for it anymore. What helps politicians draw the line?

   i. Examine the code of conduct for government ministers and use this as a guide to examine a contemporary issue of alleged ministerial misconduct.

   ii. Choose a current or contemporary issue in the media regarding the ethical or unethical conduct of a Member of Parliament. One example is the Health Union Expenses Affair of 2012. (A list of past and present matters before the Queensland State Government Ethics Committee can be found here). Identify exactly what ethical behaviour is in question according to the code of conduct.

   iii. What do you believe are the values of an ethical politician in Australia today? View and analyse the values presented in the short clip of an address to secondary students by a Member of Parliament. Write a short paragraph that describes for you an ethical Australian politician.

   iv. Would you ever enter politics? Why/why not? A country is only as good as its government and a government is only as good as its politicians. How might citizens, fitting your description in the previous activity, be encouraged to join political parties, enter political life and aspire to political leadership? Discuss.