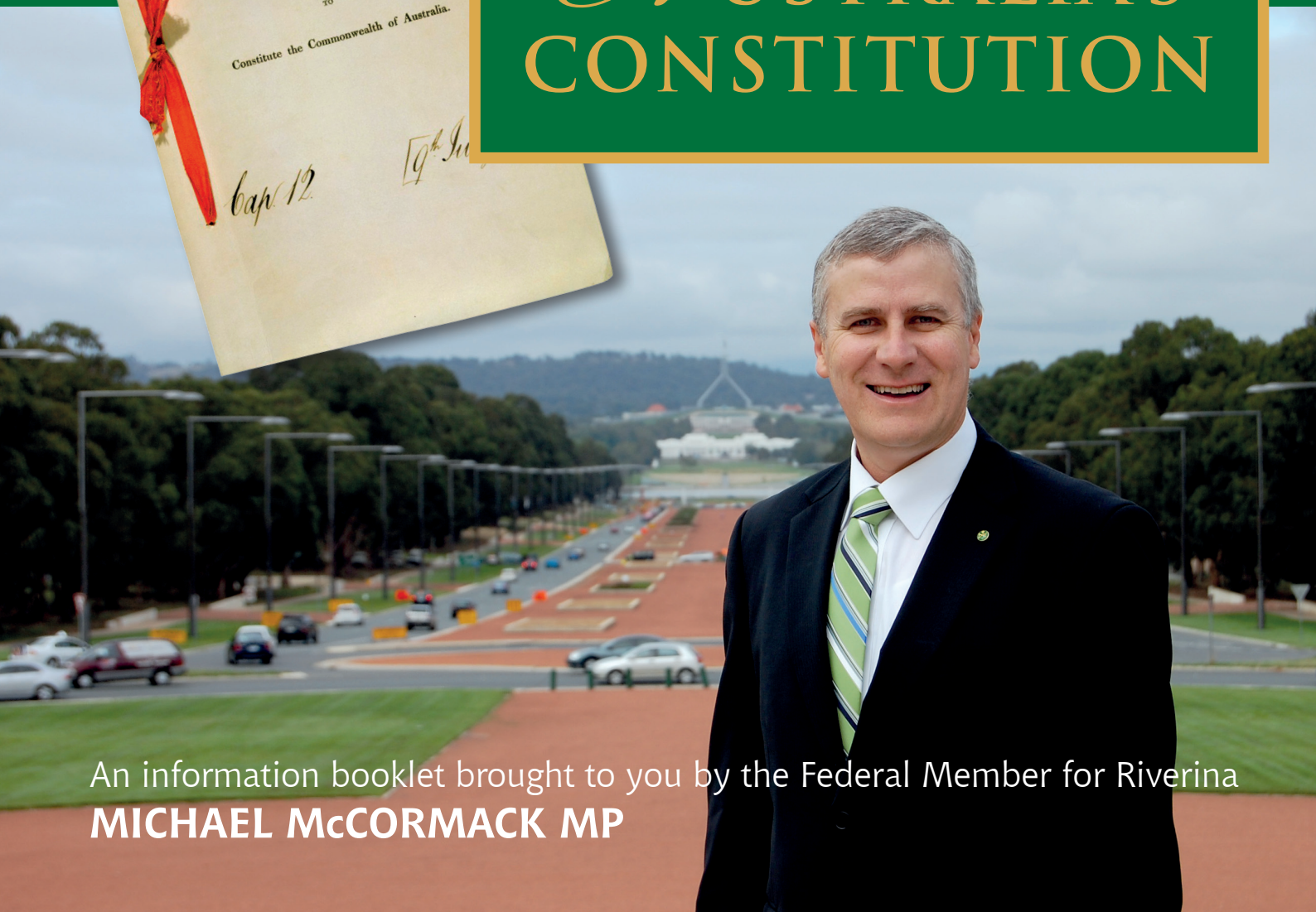




# AUSTRALIA'S CONSTITUTION



An information booklet brought to you by the Federal Member for Riverina  
**MICHAEL McCORMACK MP**

# UNITED IN PEACE, TOGETHER WE STAND

Australia's nationhood, unlike many other countries of the world, was achieved with a vote, not a war. Our democratic Parliament was founded in 1901 after many years of grand speeches, negotiations and meetings.

Premier Sir Henry Parkes (1815-96), who served five terms as Premier of New South Wales, is remembered as the "Father of Federation", even though he did not live to see its creation.

He was a passionate advocate for uniting the six colonies. On 24 October 1889, at the Tenterfield School of Arts, Sir Henry delivered his famous Tenterfield Oration.

This speech was seen as a clarion call to federalists and he called for a convention "to devise the constitution which would be necessary for bringing into existence a federal government with a federal parliament for the conduct of national undertaking".

There was a series of meetings to consider federation. Between 1897 and 1898 a Constitution was drafted setting out the organisation and procedures for a federal government.

In June 1898 voters in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania approved this Constitution, however, in NSW the majority of "Yes" votes for the proposals fell short of the required number.

Queensland and Western Australia did not vote. A second referendum was conducted in 1898 except Western Australia and the "Yes" vote won. West Australians voted in 1900 and came out in favour, too.

The Commonwealth of Australia was finally formed on 1 January 1901 as a union of the six colonies, now called states. The Duke of York, later King George V, opened Australia's first Federal Parliament in Melbourne on 9 May 1901.

The new Parliament had an Upper House called the Senate with six members from each State and a 75-member Lower House called the House of Representatives in which:

- NSW had 26 seats (including Riverina);
- Victoria had 23 seats;
- Queensland had 9 seats;
- South Australia had 7 seats; and
- Tasmania and Western Australia had 5 seats each.



Federal Member for Riverina MICHAEL McCORMACK MP

The new parliament had the authority to make decisions about communications, currency, customs, defence, quarantine restrictions, trade and other matters.

Australia's new flag was soon flying proudly across the nation. Its design was chosen after a worldwide competition in which there were five winners with similar ensigns. Two of the successful entrants were teenagers.

Federal elections for the inaugural Parliament of Australia were held in Australia on 29 March and 30 March 1901 following Federation and the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia.



**FIRST AND FOREMOST:** John Chanter (left) and Edmund Barton, who were the MP for Riverina and the Prime Minister respectively in our foundation Federal Parliament.

The Protectionist Party, led by Edmund Barton who would become the first Prime Minister, won 31 of the 75 seats, more than any other party. George Reid's Free Trade Party won 28 seats and Labour (the party dropped the "u" from its name in 1912) won 14 seats. Barton, supported by the first Member for Riverina John Chanter, was invited to form a minority government.



**BIG NEWS:** How The Wagga Wagga Express reported the inaugural Federal elections.

**VISION SPLENDID:** Snow-capped mountains are a magnificent backdrop to Parliament House.

Melbourne was the seat of government until the Provisional Parliament House in Canberra began operation on 9 May 1927. The present 4700-room Parliament House on Capital Hill was opened by Queen Elizabeth II on 9 May 1988.

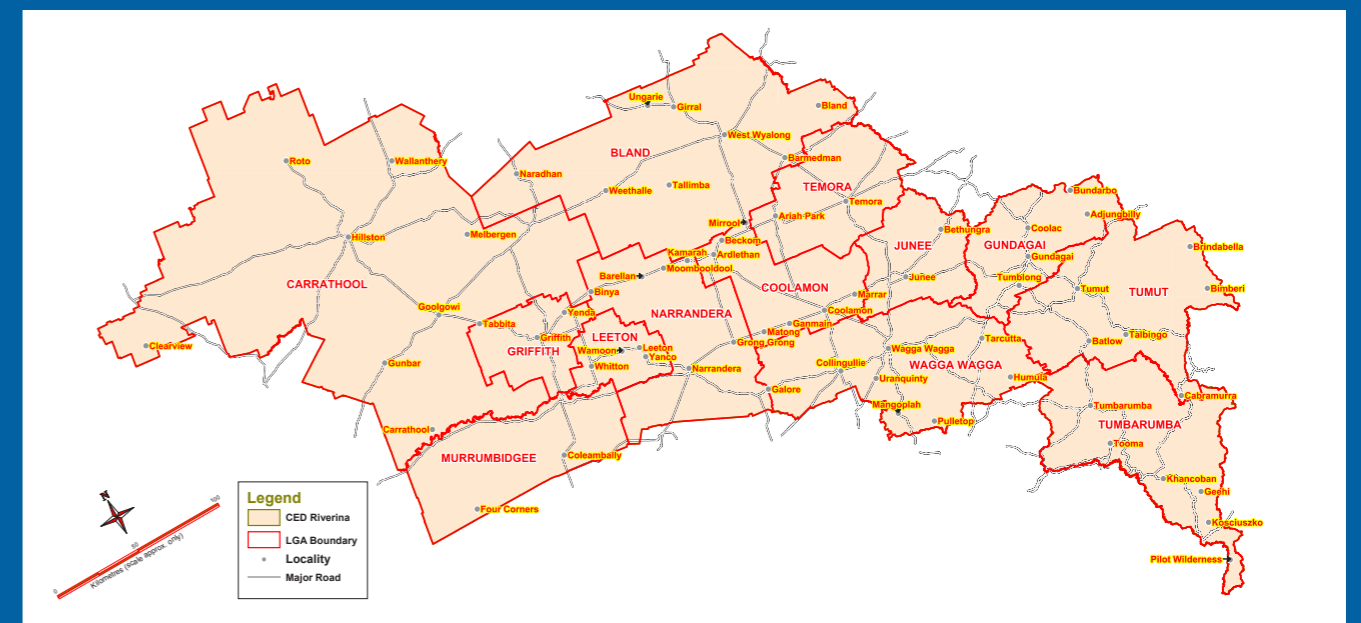
It is so important that we encourage everyone, especially young people, to take an interest in politics and the way in which our country is governed. I hope you can learn more about our democratic system of government.

This publication is a joint initiative of the Attorney-General's Department, the Australian Government Solicitor and the Parliamentary Education Office. It contains an overview of the Constitution and profiles of the 14 Members of Riverina since Federation. I trust it will enhance the reader's knowledge of the Constitution and heighten your appreciation of the document which underpins and sustains one of the world's most successful democracies.

*Michael McCormack*

MICHAEL McCORMACK MP  
Federal Member for Riverina

## Commonwealth Electorate Division of RIVERINA (NSW) with 2011 Local Electorate Boundaries



## Welcome

Thank you for taking the time to read through this informative booklet, which is a great guide to the Australian Parliament.

The Australian Government (also known as the Commonwealth or Federal Government) was designed to bring each of Australia's communities together.

**'The way our country was formed is unique - we were formed with a vote, not a war'**

We are also one of the very few countries in the world that actually began as a **true democracy** - where ordinary people have the power to choose their own leaders and where people are treated equally under the law.

### DID YOU KNOW??

- A total of 140,000 trees and shrubs have been planted on the site;
- 3,000 people work in Parliament House when Parliament is sitting;
- There are 26kms of internal corridors in Parliament House;
- Visitors are allowed in Parliament House every day of the year, excluding Christmas Day and are allowed to sit in on the sittings of the two Chambers;
- Over 1.1 million people visit Parliament House each year.



What do a prize fighter, an Irishman, a publican, a man credited with starting more Melbourne Cups than anyone, a soldier and the State's first female tow truck driver have in common? They all served as Member for Riverina in the Federal Parliament!

In the following pages there are biographies of the 14 people privileged to have been given the honour of representing this great region.

They are interesting individuals, who all had the collective aim of progressing the area they called home.

The seat of Riverina had a name change to Riverina-Darling from 1984-93 with Noel Hicks serving the electorate throughout that time.



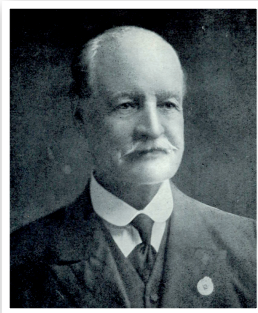
### Members for Riverina

First incarnation (1901–1984)

MEMBER	PARTY	TERM
John Chanter	Protectionist	1901–1903
Robert Blackwood	Free Trade	1903–1904
John Chanter	Protectionist	1904–1910
	Labor	1910–1913
Franc Falkiner	Commonwealth Liberal	1913–1914
John Chanter	Labor	1914–1917
	Nationalist	1917–1919
	Nationalist and Farmers and Settlers	1919–1922
William Killen	Country	1922–1931
Horace Nock	Country	1931–1940
Joseph Langtry	Labor	1940–1949
Hugh Roberton	Country	1949–1965
Adam Armstrong	Country	1965–1969
Al Grassby	Labor	1969–1974
John Sullivan	Country	1974–1975
	National Country	1975–1977
John FitzPatrick	Labor	1977–1980
Noel Hicks	National Country	1980–1982
	National	1982–1984

Second incarnation (1993–present)

MEMBER	PARTY	TERM
Noel Hicks	National	1993–1998
Kay Hull	National	1998–2010
Michael McCormack	National	2010–present



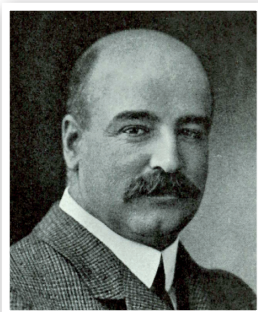
## John Moore Chanter

- Born 1 February 1845 in Adelaide, South Australia
- Died 9 March 1931 in Caulfield, Victoria
- Farmer, auctioneer, commission agent
- Married Mary Ann Clark in 1863; six sons and four daughters
- NSW MLA (member for Murray, Deniliquin) 1885-1901; Secretary for Mines 1889
- First President of Australian Natives' Association in NSW 1900-01
- Inaugural Moama Mayor 1891
- Noted for his democratic views and supported the first Prime Minister Edmund Barton in the lead-up to Federation
- Longest-serving Member for Riverina
- First Chairman of Committees 1901-03; also for four periods from 1914-22
- Member of Select Committee on Shipping Services 1905
- Member of Royal Commissions on ocean shipping service (1906) and on stripper harvesters and drills (1908-09)
- The first Member of the House of Representatives to be defeated three times in the same seat
- Described in the Australian Dictionary of Biography as: "A hard-working local member who was well acquainted with the vast areas he represented and considered every request from his constituents. Tall and rugged, he was a quiet man who spoke infrequently in debates, but when he did, explored all details of his subject and held tenaciously to his viewpoint."



## Robert Officer Blackwood

- Born 24 June 1861 in Crowlands, Victoria
- Died 22 September 1940 in St Kilda, Victoria
- Admitted to Trinity Hall, Cambridge, 1882, where he took up boxing, later becoming runner-up in the amateur light-weight boxing championship in England
- Businessman and pastoralist
- Married Constance Ferrier Hamilton 1895; no children
- Won Federal seat by five votes but the 16 December 1903 election declared void due to claim of electoral irregularities and he was defeated at the subsequent 15 April 1904 by-election by his predecessor John Chanter by 363 votes. He was cleared of all allegations but never stood for Parliament again
- Inaugural Conargo Shire President 1907
- Vice-president Royal Agricultural Society 1920-38
- Described in the Australian Dictionary of Biography as: "A slim man of great integrity and little humour, [who] devoted himself to music and business while Constance dwelt mostly overseas."



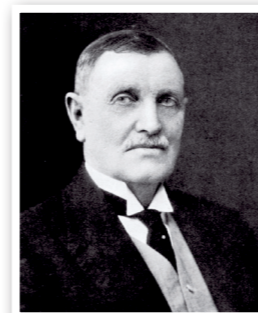
## Franc Brereton Sadleir Falkiner

- Born 17 June 1867 in Ararat, Victoria
- Died 30 October 1929 in Bungendore, New South Wales
- Prominent sheep breeder
- Married Edith Elizabeth Howat; two sons and two daughters
- Later served as Member for Hume as a Nationalist 1917-19
- Unsuccessful Senate candidate 1919
- Described in the Australian Dictionary of Biography: "A large man, balding, with a bristling moustache, he was an impatient Parliamentarian, brusque and humorous; he coined the phrase 'bangle bonus' for Andrew Fisher's 1912 maternity allowance."

### FAST FACTS

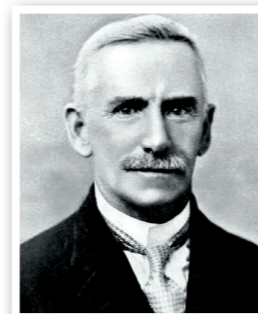
#### Why is the House of Representatives Chamber green?

The Australian Parliament adopted the parliamentary colours of green and red when the provisional Parliament House was built in Canberra in 1927. As green was the traditional colour of the House of Commons it was used in the House of Representatives Chamber and precincts. In the new Parliament House a distinctive shade of green which is more typical of the Australian landscape has been used to enhance our national identity.



## William Wilson Killen

- Born 1860 in Ireland
- Died 20 February 1939
- A New Stater and member of the Parliamentary Constitution Amendment League
- President of the Farmers and Settlers' Association of NSW 1921-22
- During a condolence motion, Prime Minister Earle Page said: "As an authority on matters connected with the pastoral industry, his contribution to debates on questions affecting rural industries were always welcome by his parliamentary colleagues." Opposition Leader John Curtin said: "I never heard him say an unkind or an unfair word. It was apparent that he was an upright man who could support his case without either prejudice or the desire to provoke bitterness."



## Horace Keyworth Nock

- Born 26 October 1879 in Salisbury, South Australia
- Died 2 August 1958 in Sydney
- Farmer and company director
- Married Marcia Nessie Clarke; two sons and a daughter
- President of Farmers and Settlers' Association of NSW 1928-1932
- Temporary Chairman of Committees 1934-37
- Country Party Whip 1937
- Minister without portfolio in charge of External Territories 1940
- Minister without portfolio assisting the Prime Minister 1940
- Minister without portfolio assisting the Minister for the Interior 1940
- Unsuccessful Senate candidate 1919
- Described in the Australian Dictionary of Biography: "Grey-haired and keen-eyed, with wild eye-brows and bristling moustache above an old-fashioned stovepipe collar, Nock was widely known to farmers (the 'Cockies' Patron Saint') and sought out on agricultural issues. A vigorous and persistent advocate for rural interests, always well-armed with figures, Nock was an effective watchdog over various tariffs."



## Joseph Ignatius Langtry

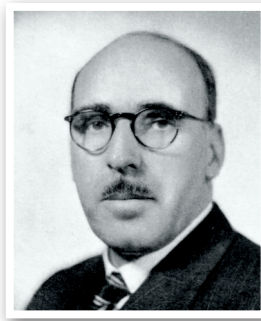
- Born 2 September 1880 in Kyabram, Victoria
- Died 30 April 1951
- Wheat farmer and hotel keeper
- Married Catherine Maloney; three sons and two daughters
- Member of Rural Industries Committee 1941-1943
- A 1949 Sydney Morning Herald article said about him: "... a cheerful soul, the life of many a party. It is not unusual for this former shearer to bring down the house at, say, a gathering of diplomats, by an impromptu turn of the type which has entertained many a shearing shed (and, it's said, held many a vote) a fervent recitation from the Bush Ballads topped off with a rough Irish jig and a husky Irish song."

#### Why is the Senate Chamber red?

As red was the traditional colour used in the British House of Lords, the same colour was used in the Senate Chamber and precincts. In the new building a distinctive shade of red more typical of the Australian landscape has been used to enhance our national identity.

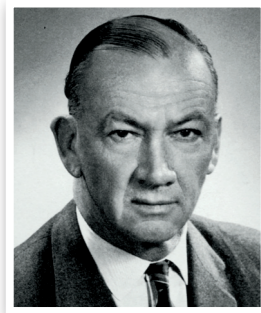
**How much did Parliament House cost to build?** The total cost of the building was almost \$1.1 billion in 1988.

**When was Parliament House, Canberra opened and by whom?** Parliament House was opened on 9th May 1988 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.



## Hugh Stevenson Robertson

- Born 18 December 1900 in Glasgow, Scotland
- Died 13 March 1987 in Canberra
- Writer, farmer and grazier
- Married Marjorie Wyllie (1926), one daughter; married Eileen McLeod (1972)
- Served in World War II (enlisted at Old Junee)
- Had distinguished career as agricultural writer, under the pen-name "Peter Snodgrass"
- General President of Farmers and Settlers' Association of NSW and Australian Wheatgrowers' Federation
- Member of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs 1952-55
- Minister for Social Services 1956-65
- Australia's first Ambassador to Ireland 1965-68
- In a condolence motion speech, National Party Leader Ian Sinclair said Robertson: "was one of those greats of the bush-a humble man, a man whose interest in the wider community, particularly in things agricultural, extended throughout his life. He was one who served his community well before he entered [Parliament]."



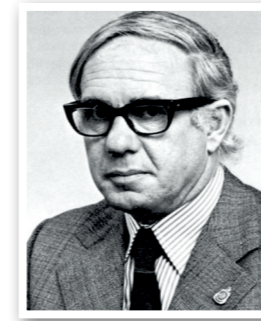
## Adam Alexander ("Bill") Armstrong, O.B.E., M.C.

- Born 1 July 1906 in East Melbourne
- Died 22 February 1982 in Deniliquin
- Grazier and consultant
- Married Marjorie Hill; three sons, one daughter
- Served in World War II (recipient of the Military Cross for gallantry in the South-West Pacific Area)
- Victoria Racing Club Official Starter 1952-69 (started 20 consecutive Melbourne Cups)
- President of Conargo Shire Council 1952-67
- Member of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs 1967-69
- Southern District Racing Association committeeman for 16 years prior to entering Parliament then served as SDRA President 1973-82
- National Country Party Leader Doug Anthony said of him during a condolence motion: "Bill Armstrong was a quiet, dignified and unassuming man. He did not command respect by demanding it. Instead he won respect from both sides of the House and in the wider community because of his sincerity, because of his clear concern for people and their problems and because he was moved by Australia's problems and wanted to play his part in trying to solve them."



## Albert Jaime Grassby, AM

- Born 12 July 1926 in Brisbane
- Died 23 April 2005 in Canberra
- Married Ellnor Louez, one daughter
- Served in World War II (British Army)
- Executive Officer, Irrigation Research and Extension Committee
- State Member for Murrumbidgee, 1965-69
- Member of the Joint Committee on Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings 1969-72
- Minister for Immigration 1972-74
- Australian Commissioner for Community Relations 1975-82
- Member of the Order of Australia 1985
- In a condolence motion speech Labor Party Leader Kim Beazley remembered him: "for his passionate advocacy of equality, difference and opportunity and for his exuberance, flamboyance and colour".



## John William Sullivan

- Born 7 February 1929 in Narrandera
- Married Mollie O'Sullivan; two sons and two daughters
- Soldier
- Served in Korea, Malaya and Vietnam
- Member of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Expenditure 1976-77
- Member of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence 1976-77
- State Member for Sturt 1981
- Mayor of Narrandera Shire Council 2007-08
- National Country Party Member for Hume, Stephen Lusher said of him: "He made a great contribution not only to his party but also to the Parliament and his electorate of Riverina. He, as much as anybody, was a victim of the redistribution which came into force prior to the last election. John Sullivan's electorate was expanded to take in the majority of the former electorate of Darling, including, of course, the great industrial city of Broken Hill. It just was not possible, despite the magnificent effort he made during that campaign and despite the number of votes that he won, to withstand the effect of the redistribution." National Party Leader Tim Fischer noting his service to three tiers of Government said: 'I think that people who provide service in all three levels of government are a special category of person and I acknowledge the contribution that they make in so doing.'



## John FitzPatrick

- Born 24 April 1915 in Broken Hill, New South Wales
- Died 28 July 1997
- Married Myrtle Creasy; one son and two daughters
- Boilermaker, Secretary of the Barrier Industrial Council (Broken Hill)
- Labor Member for Darling 1969-77
- Member of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs 1973-74
- Member of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Publications 1976-80
- Member of the Joint Standing Committee on the Northern Territory 1973-75
- Fellow Labor MP Lionel Bowen said of him in a valedictory speech: "John FitzPatrick is a delightful person and a very great friend. He is a real gentleman, yet he represents a pretty tough arena when we talk about the Barrier Industrial Council in Broken Hill. To be Secretary of it means that you have really got to have a lot of talent, ability and understanding."

**Who was Australia's first Prime Minister?** The Right Honourable Sir Edmund Barton, PC, GCMG, KC.

**Who was the first female Member of the House of Representatives?**

The Honourable Dame Enid Lyons who was elected in 1943. Dame Enid was a Tasmanian who also became the first woman Cabinet Minister in 1949 when she was appointed Vice-President of the Executive Council.

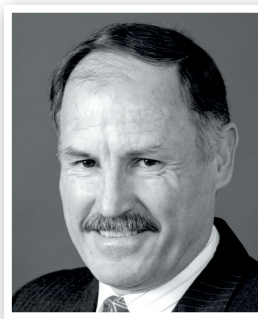
**Who was the first woman Senator?** Senator Dorothy Tangney, elected in 1943.

**Who was the first Aboriginal in Parliament?** Liberal Senator Neville Bonner, who served from 1971 until 1983.

**Ballot** – The word ballot comes from the French word ballotte meaning a little ball. In ancient Athens judges of the highest court used to give their verdicts by dropping stone or metal balls into boxes. Balls that were coloured black stood for condemnation, while white balls meant acquittal.

**Swinging Voters** – Swinging voters are in the minority. Most people tend to vote for the same party election after election but not so the swinging voters. They tend to vote for different parties at different elections.

**Donkey Voters** – Donkey voters don't seem to care about who they want elected. They just number the ballot paper from the top to the bottom.



## Noel Jeffrey Hicks

- Born 4 November 1940 in Adelaide, South Australia
- Married Joan Carter (1963); three sons and one daughter; married Anne Lyle (1991)
- Plumber; road design draughtsman
- Mayor of Broken Hill City Council 1974-75, 1976-77
- Member of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Selection 1988-98
- Member of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Televising of the House of Representatives (formerly Select Committee) 1991-96
- Member of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Privileges 1995-98
- Member of the Joint Statutory Committee on Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings 1983-98
- Member of the Joint Statutory Committee on the Australian Security Intelligence Organization 1996-98
- Member of the Joint Standing Committee on the Australian Capital Territory 1980-83
- Member of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence 1985-1987
- Member of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade 1987-98
- Member of the Joint Standing Committee on Migration 1998
- National Party Whip 1983-94; Chief National Party Whip 1994-98
- In a valedictory speech, Prime Minister John Howard said: "I do not think this Parliament in my 25 years has seen a finer winner of marginal seats than Noel Hicks. His boundaries were changed on him time without number but he still kept coming back and he turned deficits of several per cent on the old figures into very comfortable margins."



## Kay Elizabeth Hull (née McElroy)

- Born 3 February 1954 in Guyra, NSW
- Married Graeme Hull, three sons
- Small business owner and operator
- First female licensed tow truck driver in NSW
- Chair, Tourism Wagga Wagga 1992-99
- Chair, Council of Tourist Associations of New South Wales 1995-98
- Deputy Mayor of Wagga Wagga City Council 1995-98
- Member of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics, Finance and Public Administration 1998-2001;
- Member of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Publications 1998-2001, 2004-10
- Member of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs 2002-03
- Chair of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Services 2002-04
- Member of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs 2004-07
- Member of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Library 2004-05
- Member of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Selection 2006-07
- Member of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Petitions 2008
- Member of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications 2008-10
- Member of the Joint Statutory Committee on Native Title and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Fund from 2003-04
- Member of the Joint Statutory Committee on Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity 2007
- Member of the Joint Statutory Committee on Intelligence and Security 2008-10
- Member Inter-Parliamentary Union Taskforce on HIV/AIDS
- Nationals Whip 2006-10
- Board member of CanAssist
- Director of Kurrajong Waratah
- Current Member for Riverina, Michael McCormack, in his inaugural speech, said of her: "She punched way above her weight. What a fighter! What a lady! Short in stature but big in heart, Kay delivered genuine and lasting outcomes for the Riverina. She was friendly but feisty, compassionate yet controversial. Her commitment to her electorate was absolutely unconditional. The Riverina always came first. She was a shining example of what it means to be a good local member."



## Michael Francis McCormack

- Born 2 August 1964 in Wagga Wagga, NSW
- Raised on family properties at Bruce Dale and Marrar
- Educated at Saint Joseph's, Henschke Primary, St Michael's Regional High and Trinity Senior High School
- Worked as a Rugby League ground announcer at Eric Weissel Oval while still at school
- Began work as a reporter at The Daily Advertiser 1981; promoted to sub-editor 1988; acting editor 1991; editor (at 27 years of age was youngest in Australasia at the time) 1992; group editor Riverina Media Group 1996
- Started own company MSS Media Services & Solutions 2002
- Chairman, Kay Hull's Federal Election Campaign Committees 2004 and 2007
- Vice-Chairman, The Nationals' Riverina Electorate Council 2010-11
- Married Catherine Shaw in 1986; children Georgina, Alexander and Nicholas
- Spearheaded movement to save the RAAF base at Forest Hill in 1997 which resulted in the retention and expansion of the base
- Co-author of 7 local history publications as well as a business/tourism book *New South Wales: Linking Australia to the World*, 2003.
- President, St Michael's Cricket Club, Wagga Wagga 1988-92
- Secretary, Harlequins Hockey Club, Wagga Wagga 1991; awarded life membership 1996
- Coach and Manager, Henwood Park Soccer Club junior teams 2003-08
- Director, Murrumbidgee Turf Club 1994-2003
- President, Wagga Wagga Basketball Association 2009
- Honorary member of the Officer's Mess at ARTC Kapooka
- House of Representatives Standing Committees: House; Regional Australia 2010-11

**Hung Parliament** – A term used to describe a parliament in which political party, or coalition of parties has a majority in the "people's house". A parliament like this has no life because decisions can't be made – government grinds to a halt.

**Lobby** – A word to describe groups of people who feel so strongly about particular causes that they try to persuade the government to make decisions which support their causes. The word lobby not only describes the groups themselves but the tactics they use to influence powerful people and government.

I acknowledge Auspic, the Parliamentary Education Office, The Prime Minister's Office and the National Archives of Australia for some of the material used to produce this educational publication. For extra copies of this booklet or for further assistance, please feel free to contact Michael McCormack's office:

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