PRIME FACTS 26
AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTERS CENTRE

Kevin Michael RUDD

Prime Minister 3 December 2007 - 24 June 2010

- Kevin Rudd became the 26th Prime Minister after the Australian Labor Party won the 2007 federal election. He replaced the Liberal Party's John Howard.
- Member of the Australian Labor Party.
- Member of the House of Representatives for Griffith (Qld) 1998-, Leader of the Opposition 2006-2007.
- Rudd's term as prime minister and leader of the Australian Labor Party ended on 24 June 2010 following a leadership challenge from his deputy, Julia Gillard**.**

Main achievements (2007-2010)

- Ratified the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change on his first day in office.
- Apologised on behalf of the parliament and the government to indigenous people removed from their families under previous policies.
- Managed the Australian economy through the Global Financial Crisis, injecting $77 billion into the Nation Building for Recovery Plan, guaranteeing bank deposits in Australian banks and other financial institutions, and playing a leading role in G20 responses to the international economic crisis.
- Withdrew Australian troops from Iraq while remaining committed to the NATO intervention in Afghanistan.
- Replaced the previous government's Work Choices policy with a new national workplace relations system overseen by Fair Work Australia, a new national workplace relations tribunal.

Personal life

- Born 21 September 1957 at Nambour, Queensland.
- Rudd's family, who were sharefarmers on a dairy farm, were forced to leave after the death of Rudd's father. Rudd was eleven at the time. For several years the family was very hard up, and at times homeless.
- Studied Asian Studies at the Australian National University, majoring in the Chinese language.
- Joined the Labor Party in 1975 after attending Young Labor meetings from his school days.

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- Worked for the Department of Foreign Affairs 1981-1988. Was posted to Stockholm and later Beijing.
- Chief of Staff to Queensland Premier Wayne Goss 1989-92, and Director-General of the Office of Cabinet in Queensland 1992-95.
- Married Thérèse Rein in 1981. Has three children – Jessica, Nicholas and Marcus.
- Deeply committed to a Christianity linked to social justice

Character

- 'Rudd describes himself as a 'very determined bastard'.'
  – Glenn Milne, *Sunday Mail*, 3/12/07
- 'Sydney 2GB's Philip Clark, Rudd's university contemporary, says he has an ambition for power that transcends any politician Clark has ever met.'
  – Paul Kelly, *Weekend Australian Magazine, 27/10/07*
- 'In politics Rudd was a surprise – beneath his smooth exterior was a pulsating energy, drive and ambition.'
  – Paul Kelly, *Weekend Australian Magazine, 27/10/07*
- 'Despite his manner, impeccable diction and unfashionable looks, Rudd makes himself available to people of all backgrounds to speak on any number of topics – perhaps a fallback to time spent working in overseas embassies, the political and public service career that followed, or simply the challenge of being a good local member.'
  – Tony Koch & Annabelle McDonald, *Weekend Australian, 2/12/06*
- 'His faith is absolutely central to everything he does… it's not a piece of political manoeuvring that he comes here. It's absolutely because he believes in God and that Christ is important to his life.'
  – Tony Koch & Annabelle McDonald, *Weekend Australian, 2/12/06*

Did you know?

- First Prime Minister to be born after the Second World War.
- Rudd has cited German pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer as a personal inspiration. Bonhoeffer was a Lutheran minister who was executed by the Nazis in 1945 for his involvement in a plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler.
- The only Prime Minister to speak fluent Chinese (Mandarin). He also speaks some Swedish.
- Rudd is a descendent of transported convict Mary Wade, who had over three hundred relatives when she died and is considered as one of Australia's 'matriarchs'.
- At the age of 15, wrote to Prime Minister Gough Whitlam asking for advice on how to become involved in a diplomatic career. Whitlam suggested Rudd learn a foreign language, which he did.
- Supports the Brisbane Lions in the Australian Football League. (Source: *Canberra Times,* 6 October 2007)
- Was present at Tiananmen Square in Beijing in 1989, shortly before the incident which saw protesters killed. (Source: *Canberra Times,* 6 October 2007)

Further reading

Macklin, Robert, *Kevin Rudd: The Biography*, Penguin, Camberwell, 2007

Stuart, Nick, *Kevin Rudd: An Unauthorised Political Biography*, Scribe, Carlton North, 2007