

### The Prime Ministers' Wives

*"A view is held, and sometimes expressed...that wives of Prime Ministers are more highly regarded and widely loved than Prime Ministers themselves, both during and after their terms of office."* - Gough Whitlam

No.	Prime Minister's wife	Unmarried name	Married to:	Children
1.	Jane BARTON	Ross	Edmund BARTON	4 sons, 2 daughters
2.	Elizabeth (Pattie) DEAKIN	Browne	Alfred DEAKIN	3 daughters
3.	Ada WATSON	Low	Chris WATSON	None <sup>1</sup>
4.	Florence (Flora) REID	Brumby	George REID	2 sons, 1 daughter
5.	Margaret FISHER	Irvine	Andrew FISHER	5 sons, 1 daughter
6.	Mary COOK	Turner	Joseph COOK	6 sons, 3 daughters
7.	Mary HUGHES	Campbell	Billy HUGHES	1 daughter <sup>2</sup>
8.	Ethel BRUCE	Anderson	Stanley BRUCE	None
9.	Sarah SCULLIN	McNamara	Jim SCULLIN	None
10.	(Dame) Enid LYONS	Burnell	Joseph LYONS	6 sons, 6 daughters
11.	Ethel PAGE	Blunt	Earle PAGE	4 sons, 1 daughter
12.	(Dame) Pattie MENZIES	Leckie	Robert MENZIES	2 sons, 1 daughter
13.	Ilma FADDEN	Thorner	Arthur FADDEN	2 sons, 2 daughters
14.	Elsie CURTIN	Needham	John CURTIN	1 son, 1 daughter
15.	Veronica (Vera) FORDE	O'Reilly	Frank FORDE	3 daughters, 1 son
16.	Elizabeth CHIFLEY	McKenzie	Ben CHIFLEY	None
17.	(Dame) Zara HOLT	Dickens	Harold HOLT	3 sons
18.	Bettina GORTON	Brown	John GORTON	2 sons, 1 daughter
19.	Sonia McMAHON	Hopkins	William McMAHON	2 daughters, 1 son
20.	Margaret WHITLAM	Dovey	Gough WHITLAM	3 sons, 1 daughter
21.	Tamara (Tamie) FRASER	Beggs	Malcolm FRASER	2 sons, 2 daughters
22.	Hazel HAWKE	Masterson	Bob HAWKE	2 sons, 2 daughters
23.	Anna (Annita) KEATING	Van Iersel	Paul KEATING	3 daughters, 1 son
24.	Janette HOWARD	Parker	John HOWARD	2 sons, 1 daughter
25.	Therese REIN	Rein	Kevin RUDD	2 sons, 1 daughter

<sup>1</sup> Chris Watson had one daughter from a later marriage.

<sup>2</sup> Billy Hughes had three sons and three daughters from a previous marriage.



## Did you know?

- Prime Minister John McEwen (1967-1968) was a widower during his period in office – his wife Anne died in early 1967. He subsequently remarried, to Mary Byrne, on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1968.
- Other Prime Ministers who were married twice include Chris Watson (to Antonia Dowlen), Billy Hughes (to Elizabeth Cutts), Sir Earle Page (to Jean Thomas), Sir John Gorton (to Nancy Home) and Bob Hawke (to Blanche d'Alpuget). All of these marriages took place after the Prime Minister had left office, except for Billy Hughes who married Elizabeth Cutts prior to his term.
- The greatest age gap between a Prime Minister and his wife is 25 years (Sir George and Lady Flora Reid).
- The longest Prime Ministerial marriage to date is that of Gough and Margaret Whitlam, who, as of 2008, have been married for 66 years.
- Five Prime Ministers' wives died before their husbands – Ada Watson, Ethel Bruce, Ethel Page, Veronica Forde and Bettina Gorton. All the remaining wives outlived their husbands.
- Three wives of Prime Ministers were Dames. Dame Pattie Menzies was created Dame Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire (GBE) in 1954 and Dame Zara Holt was made a Dame Commander of the same order in 1968. Dame Enid Lyons received the honour twice – she was appointed GBE in 1937 and Dame of the Order of Australia in 1980.
- The largest Prime Ministerial family was that of Joe and Enid Lyons, who had twelve children, eleven of whom lived to adulthood. Four Prime Ministers and their wives did not have any children, though one, Chris Watson, later fathered a daughter by his second wife. Billy Hughes had six children by his first wife Elizabeth, but only one by his second wife Mary.
- Therese Rein (2007- ) is the first wife of a Prime Minister not to take her husband's name after their marriage.

## Further reading

Langmore, Diane, *Prime Ministers Wives: The Public and Private Lives of Ten Australian Women*, South Yarra: McPhee Gribble, 1992

Lyons, Enid, *So We Take Comfort*, London: Heinemann, 1965

Hindhaugh, Christina, *It Wasn't Meant to Be Easy: Tamie Fraser in Canberra*, Melbourne: Lothian Publishing, 1986

Holt, Zara, *My Life and Harry: an Autobiography*, Melbourne: The Herald, 1968

National Archives of Australia: <http://primeministers.naa.gov.au/>

Includes information on each Prime Minister's wife.

*Mrs Prime Minister – Public Image, Private Lives* (exhibition): <http://www.oph.gov.au/mrspm/>

## Exhibition

*Mrs Prime Minister – Public Image, Private Lives* is open at Old Parliament House until 29 June 2008.

Included in the exhibition is a quilt by Dawn Fitzpatrick and Lee McGorman 'Australian Prime Ministers' Wives 1901-1975'. This quilt features images of all Prime Ministers' wives up to 1975 in chronological order, except for Mrs Ada Watson, of whom no image is known to exist.



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