

## Andrew Sharp PEACOCK

Leader of the Opposition 11 March 1983 to 5 September 1985;  
9 May 1989 to 3 April 1990



- Andrew Peacock became the 22<sup>nd</sup> Leader of the Opposition after the Fraser government was defeated by the Labor Party (led by Bob Hawke) in the March 1983 federal election. Andrew Peacock became Leader by defeating John Howard in the ballot for leadership of the party, with Howard staying on as Deputy Leader.
- In late 1985, speculation regarding a leadership challenge surfaced as Peacock's popularity had fallen and Howard's profile was on the rise. After failing to have Howard replaced as Deputy Leader, Peacock resigned on 5 September, and Howard was elected Leader.
- After Howard lost the 1987 election to Bob Hawke, Peacock was elected Deputy Leader. In May 1989, Peacock supporters launched a party room challenge against Howard, which resulted in Peacock returning to the leadership.
- Peacock resigned as Leader after failing to defeat Hawke at the 1990 election, and was replaced by John Hewson.
- Member of the House of Representatives for Kooyong (VIC) 1966-94. Peacock succeeded Sir Robert Menzies as member for Kooyong on his retirement.
- Minister for Army 1969, Minister for Territories 1972, Minister for Foreign Relations 1975-80, Minister for Industrial Relations 1980-81, Minister for Industry and Commerce 1982-83.

### As Opposition Leader

- Peacock performed better than expected in the 1984 election campaign, securing a 1.4 per cent swing from Labor to the Opposition parties and reducing the Hawke Government majority from 25 to 16 seats.
- Released the Economic Action Plan (EAP) in October 1989, which later became one of the building blocks for John Hewson's *Fightback* manifesto.

### Political life

- President of the Young Liberals in 1962 and State President of the Victorian Liberal Party. At just 26, he was the youngest person to have held the post up to that point.
- In April 1981 he resigned as Minister for Industrial Relations, claiming regular interference in his portfolio from Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser.



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## Personal life

- Born 13 February 1939, Melbourne, Victoria.
- Educated at Scotch College, Melbourne and later at the University of Melbourne where he graduated in law.
- In 1963 married Susan Rossiter, daughter of Victorian MLA John Frederick Rossiter. They had three daughters, Caroline, Ann and Jane. They divorced in 1977.
- Married Margaret Ingram in 1983. They were later divorced.
- Married Penne Korth, a former United States Ambassador to Mauritius in 2002.

## Life after politics

- Australian Ambassador to the United States 1997-2000.
- Director Orbital Engine Corp. Ltd 2001-02.
- President of Boeing Australia 2002-07.

## Character

*Peacock had no killer instinct, a fact which a politician like Paul Keating would exploit. Peacock was a good bloke and a decent man, but he had little inclination for the long hours and hard work which are companions of power. Peacock's assets were his television presence, personal charm and campaigning ability. Yet his lazy affability concealed a political time-bomb: here was a politician unable to imagine any other road to power but that which Liberal history told him was the orthodoxy – the ritual of manoeuvre, strike and challenge. Peacock was cavalier about the havoc which his ambition caused but he lacked the ruthlessness of a Fraser to a party coup of lasting success.*

Kelly, P 1992, *The end of certainty: the story of the 1980s*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, p.101.

## Did you know?

- He was appointed a Chief Grand Companion of the Order of Logohu in 2006, for the role he played in Papua New Guinea gaining independence.
- He had a well-publicised relationship with actress Shirley MacLaine.
- He has had a lifelong passion for horse racing. His first horse *Street's Image*, was bought in partnership with ex-Seeker Athol Guy.

## Sources

Carey, J & McCrae, T 1982, *Peacock MP*, Rigby Publishers, Adelaide.

Schneider, R 1981, *The colt from Kooyong: Andrew Peacock, a political biography*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1981.

## Further reading

Henderson, G 1994, *Menzies' child: the Liberal Party of Australia 1944-1994*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards.

Kelly, P 1992, *The end of certainty: the story of the 1980s*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards.



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