

Simon Findlay CREAN

Leader of the Opposition 22 November 2001 to 2 December 2003



- Simon Crean became the 27th Leader of the Opposition, replacing Kim Beazley, when the Australian Labor Party was defeated in the 2001 federal election by the Coalition Government led by Prime Minister John Howard.
- Member of the House of Representatives for Hotham (VIC) since 1990, Minister for Science and Technology 1990-91, Minister for Primary Industries and Energy 1991-93, Minister for Employment, Education and Training 1993-96, Minister for Trade 2007-10, Minister for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and Minister for Social Inclusion June-September 2010, Minister for the Arts and Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government 2010-
- Replaced as Leader of the Opposition in 2003 by Mark Latham.

As Opposition Leader

- Introduced new rules to allow Labor Party rank-and-file members to have a greater say in party decisions and to limit 'branch stacking' (the practice of signing up new members solely to win internal party branch votes).
- Condemned the Howard Government decision to commit Australian troops to the Iraq War in 2003.

Political life

- First attempted to enter federal politics in 1977 for the seat of Melbourne Ports, which had been vacated due to the retirement of his father Frank Crean. However he was defeated in the preselection ballot by Clyde Holding.
- In 1985 he was elected President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) and played a key role in negotiating the second Prices and Incomes Accord with the Hawke Labor Government. The Accord was a contract between the Labor Government and the trade union movement, under which the unions agreed to limit wage claims and in return the government pledged social wage increases, such as health care, job creation and to limit inflation.
- In 1990 elected to parliament for the seat of Hotham and was appointed immediately to the front bench.
- After the 1998 election, he was elected Deputy Leader of the Labor Party.



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Personal Life

- Born 26 February 1949 in Melbourne, Victoria.
- Educated at Middle Park Central School and Melbourne High School. Graduated from Monash University obtaining degrees in economics and law.
- Married Carole Lamb on 17 November 1973. They have two daughters.

Character

Crean has done some good things and displayed quite a lot of courage as Labor leader. An example was the way he took on the factions to get rid of dead wood from the shadow ministry and ensure the promotion of a group of very talented younger MPs. Crean has tried his heart out since taking over after the 2001 election loss. He has good reason to feel he does not deserve what is happening to him. But the unmistakable conclusion is that, in terms of gaining lost ground for Labor, his leadership has simply not worked.

Oakes, Laurie, *Power Plays: The real stories of Australian Politics*, Hachette Australia, Sydney, 2008

Did you know?

- In his 19 years as an MP he has not spent a single day on the backbench.
- On losing the Labor leadership in 2003, he became the first federal Labor leader to be replaced without contesting an election.

Sources

Simon Crean MP: Federal Member for Hotham www.simoncrean.net

Oakes, Laurie, *Power Plays: The real stories of Australian Politics*, Hachette Australia, Sydney, 2008.

Further reading

Faulkner, John & Macintyre, Stuart (eds), *True believers: the story of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW, 2001.

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

Latham, Mark, *The Latham Diaries*, Melbourne University Publishing, Carlton, Victoria, 2006.



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