

Malcolm Bligh TURNBULL

Leader of the Opposition 16 September 2008 to 1 December 2009



- Malcolm Turnbull became the 31st Leader of the Opposition after incumbent Brendan Nelson declared the leadership vacant to end speculation about the party's future. Turnbull defeated Nelson 45 votes to 41, having previously lost to him by 42 to 45 in 2007.
- Federal Treasurer of the Liberal Party 2002-03.
- Member of the House of Representatives for Wentworth, NSW since 2004.
- Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister with Special Responsibility for Water Policy 2006–07. Minister for Environment and Water Resources 2007. Shadow Treasurer 2007-08. Shadow Minister for Communications and Broadband 2010 -
- Turnbull was replaced by Tony Abbott on 1 December 2009 after the Liberal leadership was declared vacant. Turnbull defeated Joe Hockey but lost to Abbott by one vote in the second ballot.

As Opposition Leader

- Declared the Howard government's controversial 'WorkChoices' workplace relations laws 'dead'.
- Led an attack on the Rudd Government over a leaked email from the Treasury which implied preferential treatment was given to a Labor donor. The email was subsequently determined to have been faked by senior public servant Godwin Grech.
- Gave support to the Rudd Government's Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS), despite deep division within the Liberal Party on the issue. Turnbull's support for the scheme, with amendment, eventually led to his losing the leadership to Tony Abbott.

Political life

- First attempted to enter politics in 1981 when he challenged sitting Liberal member for Wentworth Peter Coleman for pre-selection. Turnbull lost by eight votes.
- As chairman of the Australian Republican Movement 1993-2000, played a very public role during the 1999 republic referendum campaign.
- Announced his retirement from politics in April 2010, but in May he announced he would stand again for Wentworth at the forthcoming federal election. At that poll he won an 11 per cent swing in his favour.



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Personal life

- Born 24 October 1954.
- Mother Coral was an ABC scriptwriter who left for the United States when Turnbull was nine. Raised by his father, who died in a light plane crash in 1982.
- Educated at Vaucluse Public School and Sydney Grammar School. Graduated from Sydney University with a bachelor of arts and law. He won a Rhodes Scholarship and completed a further law degree at Oxford.
- Worked as a journalist for *The Bulletin*, Channel 9 and the London *Sunday Times*.
- Began practicing law in 1980. His most high-profile case was his defence of former MI5 agent Peter Wright in the famous *Spycatcher* case in which he successfully blocked the British government's attempt to suppress Wright's memoirs.
- Co-founded internet company OzEmail in 1994.
- Chairman of the Australian Republican Movement 1993-2000. A delegate to the Constitutional Convention at Old Parliament House in 1998.
- Married Lucy Hughes 1980. Two children. Lucy Turnbull was the first woman Lord Mayor of Sydney from 2003-04.

Character

He is an intelligent and attractive and articulate man, who sometimes has considerable difficulty maintaining his self-control against an onslaught of unimaginable compulsive inner tensions and ineluctable ambitions. Malcolm had immense agility at composing scenarios whose common feature was the happy ending of his ruling the world, or whatever part of it was currently under consideration...He became uncommonly belligerent and histrionic, threatening vengeance on people, including occasionally himself.

Black, C., *Conrad Black: A Life in Progress*, Random House Australia, Milsons Point, NSW, 1993

Did you know?

- Turnbull's mother, Coral Lansbury, was a cousin of British actress Angela Lansbury. Turnbull is also related to early British Labour movement leader George Lansbury.
- Turnbull is the son-in-law of former Australian Attorney-General Tom Hughes.
- Turnbull's middle name, Bligh, is a family tradition, begun when an ancestor, John Turnbull, named his son William Bligh Turnbull in honour of the recently deposed Governor of New South Wales, William Bligh.

Sources

Malcolm Turnbull MP: Federal Member for Wentworth www.malcolmturnbull.com.au.

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Further reading

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