

Anthony John ABBOTT

Leader of the Opposition 1 December 2009 -



- Anthony (Tony) Abbott became the 32nd Leader of the Opposition on 1 December 2009 after the Liberal leadership was declared vacant. He defeated Malcolm Turnbull by 42 votes to 41.
- Member of the Liberal Party of Australia since 1994.
- Member of the House of Representatives for Warringah, NSW 1994-. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs 1996–98. Minister for Employment Services 1998–2001. Minister for Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business 2001. Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations 2001–03. Minister for Health and Ageing 2003–07. Leader of the House 2001–07. Shadow Minister for Families, Community Services, Indigenous Affairs and the Voluntary Sector 2007–08. Shadow Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs 2008–09.

As Opposition Leader

- Committed the Liberal Party to oppose the Rudd Government's Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS).
- Came close to winning the 2010 federal election, which resulted in a hung parliament. The Coalition and Labor won 72 seats each, with Labor able to form government with the support of one of the Greens and three Independent MPs.

Political life

- Introduced the Medicare Safety Net as Minister for Health, capping annual out-of-pocket medical expenses for Medicare cardholders.
- Also as Health Minister, waived his right of veto over the introduction of controversial abortion drug RU-486 and allowed a conscience vote in the federal Parliament, which voted to remove the veto right and make the drug available. Abbott voted against the drug's introduction.
- Established, in 1998, the Australians for Honest Politics Trust, which funded civil cases against Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party.



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Personal life

- Born 4 November 1957 in London, United Kingdom, to Australian parents.
- A Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University.
- Studied to become a Catholic priest at St. Patricks Seminary, Manly but did not complete his studies.
- Worked as a journalist for *The Bulletin* and *The Australian*.
- Press Secretary to Liberal Leader John Hewson 1990-93.
- Executive Director, Australians for a Constitutional Monarchy 1993-94.
- Married Margaret 'Margie' Aitkin 24 September 1988. Three daughters.

Character

Mr Abbott rarely minces his words; he is candid, provocative, and a proper conservative who does not adjust his views to account for what he judges to be the fancy of his audience...Abbott's popular image is well-established - a political bruiser of the right wing, a muscular hard-line Catholic with a tendency to let his religious views colour his political activities.

Annabel Crabb, *All aboard the 'People Skills' wild ride*, ABC Online, 1 Dec 2009

Did you know?

- Abbott was an amateur boxer during his time at Oxford.
- Abbott is a volunteer member of the NSW Rural Fire Service.
- Completed the Port Macquarie ironman triathlon event in March, 2010.

Sources

Tony Abbott MHR, Leader of the Opposition, Federal Member for Warringah
www.tonyabbott.com.au/

Duffy, M., *Latham and Abbott: The lives and rivalries of the two finest politicians of their generation*, Milsons Point, NSW: Random House Australia, 2004.

Abbott, T., *Battlelines*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2009.

Further reading

Abbott, T., *The minimal monarchy: and why it still makes sense for Australia*, Kent Town, SA: Wakefield Press, 1995.

Abbott, T., *How to win the constitutional war: and give both sides what they want*, Adelaide: Australians for Constitutional Monarchy in association with Wakefield Press, 1997.



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