

PRIME FACTS

AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTERS CENTRE

51

Prime Ministers of Australia

No.	Prime Minister	Term of office	Party
1.	Edmund Barton	1.1.1901 – 24.9.1903	Protectionist Party
2.	Alfred Deakin (1 st time)	24.9.1903 – 27.4.1904	Protectionist Party
3.	John Christian Watson	27.4.1904 – 18.8.1904	Australian Labor Party
4.	George Houstoun Reid	18.8.1904 – 5.7.1905	Free Trade Party
-	Alfred Deakin (2 nd time)	5.7.1905 – 13.11.1908	Protectionist Party
5.	Andrew Fisher (1 st time)	13.11.1908 – 2.6.1909	Australian Labor Party
-	Alfred Deakin (3 rd time)	2.6.1909 – 29.4.1910	Commonwealth Liberal Party
-	Andrew Fisher (2 nd time)	29.4.1910 – 24.6.1913	Australian Labor Party
6.	Joseph Cook	24.6.1913 – 17.9.1914	Commonwealth Liberal Party
-	Andrew Fisher (3 rd time)	17.9.1914 – 27.10.1915	Australian Labor Party
7.	William Morris Hughes	27.10.1915 – 9.2.1923	Australian Labor Party (to 1916); National Labor Party (1916-17); Nationalist Party (1917-23)
8.	Stanley Melbourne Bruce	9.2.1923 – 22.10.1929	Nationalist Party
9.	James Henry Scullin	22.10.1929 – 6.1.1932	Australian Labor Party
10.	Joseph Aloysius Lyons	6.1.1932 – 7.4.1939	United Australia Party
11.	Earle Christmas Grafton Page	7.4.1939 – 26.4.1939	Country Party
12.	Robert Gordon Menzies (1 st time)	26.4.1939 – 29.8.1941	United Australia Party
13.	Arthur William Fadden	29.8.1941 – 7.10.1941	Country Party
14.	John Joseph Ambrose Curtin	7.10.1941 – 5.7.1945	Australian Labor Party
15.	Francis Michael Forde	6.7.1945 – 13.7.1945	Australian Labor Party
16.	Joseph Benedict Chifley	13.7.1945 – 19.12.1949	Australian Labor Party
-	Robert Gordon Menzies (2 nd time)	19.12.1949 – 26.1.1966	Liberal Party of Australia
17.	Harold Edward Holt	26.1.1966 – 19.12.1967	Liberal Party of Australia
18.	John McEwen	19.12.1967 – 10.1.1968	Country Party of Australia
19.	John Grey Gorton	10.1.1968 – 10.3.1971	Liberal Party of Australia
20.	William McMahon	10.3.1971 – 5.12.1972	Liberal Party of Australia
21.	Edward Gough Whitlam	5.12.1972 – 11.11.1975	Australian Labor Party
22.	John Malcolm Fraser	11.11.1975 – 11.3.1983	Liberal Party of Australia
23.	Robert James Lee (Bob) Hawke	11.3.1983 – 20.12.1991	Australian Labor Party
24.	Paul John Keating	20.12.1991 – 11.3.1996	Australian Labor Party
25.	John Winston Howard	11.3.1996 – 3.12.2007	Liberal Party of Australia
26.	Kevin Michael Rudd	3.12.2007 – 24.6.2010	Australian Labor Party
27.	Julia Eileen Gillard	24.6.2010 -	Australian Labor Party



MUSEUM
OF AUSTRALIAN
DEMOCRACY

OLD PARLIAMENT HOUSE

The Prime Minister

The Prime Minister is the head of Australia's federal government. He or she achieves this position by being the leader of the party (or coalition) with a majority of seats in the House of Representatives. The Prime Minister is always a member of this chamber.¹ The Prime Minister is appointed by the Governor-General, the official representative of the Monarch.

The office of Prime Minister was created on 1 January 1901 when the six Australian colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia joined together to become the Commonwealth of Australia. The first Governor General, the Earl of Hopetoun, appointed Edmund Barton, a leading figure in the Federation movement, to become Australia's first Prime Minister.

The office of Prime Minister is not mentioned in the Australian Constitution. Australia has a Prime Minister because the country takes much of its system of government from British tradition. The Prime Minister appoints and chairs the Cabinet, the group of ministers responsible for important government departments. All members of Cabinet, including the Prime Minister, are members of the Executive Council. The Executive Council provides advice on government decisions to the Governor-General.

Australia has had twenty six Prime Ministers. While most have only served one term, one Australian Prime Minister served twice (Menzies), and two others (Deakin and Fisher) served three separate terms.

Did you know...

Three Prime Ministers have died while in office², five more have resigned³, nine were defeated at a general election⁴, one was replaced by his own party⁵ and one was dismissed from office by the Governor-General⁶. The youngest Prime Minister, Chris Watson, became Prime Minister at the age of 37. The oldest person to become Prime Minister was John McEwen at the age of 68; however, Robert Menzies was 72 when he left office.

Five Prime Ministers were born overseas, all but one in the United Kingdom⁷. Ten have represented the Australian Labor Party⁸ and fifteen more conservative forces⁹ while one, William Morris Hughes, represented both!

¹ One Prime Minister, John Gorton, was a serving Senator when he was appointed, but he immediately resigned from the Senate and took a seat in the House of Representatives.

² Lyons, Curtin and Holt

³ Barton, Fisher, Hughes, Menzies and Gorton

⁴ Reid, Fisher, Cook, Bruce, Scullin, Chifley, McMahon, Fraser, Keating and Howard.

⁵ Bob Hawke was replaced as leader of the Labor Party by Paul Keating on 20 December 1991

⁶ Gough Whitlam, on 11 November 1975

⁷ Reid and Fisher were born in Scotland, Hughes was born in Wales, Cook was born in England and Watson was born in Chile

⁸ Watson, Fisher, Scullin, Curtin, Forde, Chifley, Whitlam, Hawke, Keating and Rudd.

⁹ Barton, Deakin, Reid, Cook, Hughes, Bruce, Lyons, Page, Menzies, Fadden, Holt, McEwen, Gorton, McMahon, Fraser and Howard

