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Commonwealth Parliament from 1901 to World War I

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Politics and Public Administration Section

Executive summary

- The Commonwealth Parliament of Australia was just 13 years old when World War I broke out on 28 July 1914.
- Prior to Federation in 1901, each Australian colony had been responsible for its own defence arrangements. At Federation, section 51(vi) of the Australian Constitution gave the new Commonwealth Parliament the power to make laws with respect to ‘the naval and military defence of the Commonwealth and of the several States’. The Governor-General became Australia’s Commander-in-Chief and the states transferred their naval and military forces to the Commonwealth of Australia under the control of the Department of Defence.
- The Parliament passed Australia’s first *Defence Act* in 1903, empowering the Commonwealth Government to call up ‘unexempted’ males in times of war for home defence, but not for overseas service. When Parliament passed the *Defence Act 1909*, it paved the way for Australia’s first universal training scheme, which came into operation in 1911, requiring Australian males aged between 18 and 60 years to perform militia service within Australia and its territories.
- The development of Australia’s defence policy was conditioned by the new nation’s reliance on Britain, the substantial cost in establishing and maintaining a navy, and Britain’s desire that the colonies should provide financial support for its own navy rather than establishing separate regionally-based fleets which could weaken central control in emergencies. By 1914, Australia had established the Royal Australian Navy and developed an independent system of military training from which could be drawn a citizen army of mainly conscripted soldiers.
- Whilst the Parliament was not involved in Australia’s decision to go to war, it took an active role in shaping the new nation’s public safety and defence laws. In addition to war-related legislation, the Parliament also passed significant measures that were to have an enduring impact on Australia, including laws relating to income tax and the electoral system.
- Between Federation and the end of World War I, 270 men had served in the Commonwealth Parliament. Of these, 23 saw active service in World War I, nine of whom were members of parliament at the time of their military service.



Contents

Executive summary	1
Introduction	4
Australia before World War I	4
Australia as a nation	4
Parliament and Australia's defence.....	5
Defence Acts, 1903 and 1904.....	6
Developing an Australian defence force	7
<i>Defence Act 1909</i>	8
<i>Naval Defence Act 1910</i>	9
The eve of war	10
Parliament	11
Parties and prime ministers.....	11
Elections	12
1901.....	13
1903 to 1905	13
1906 to 1908 and the two-party system.....	14
1910 to 1913	14
1914.....	15
World War I	16
The 1914 election and the declaration of war	16
Parliament at the outbreak of war	18
The Sixth Parliament (8 October 1914 to 26 March 1917).....	19
Fisher becomes Prime Minister.....	19
Australia's engagement begins	20
War Precautions Act 1914.....	20
Gallipoli.....	22
Federal Parliamentary War Committee	23
Hughes becomes Prime Minister	23
Military Service Referendum Bill.....	24
<i>Commonwealth Electoral (War-time) Act 1917</i>	26
1917 election (5 May).....	27
The seventh Parliament (14 June 1917 to 11 November 1918).....	27
Legislative output	30
War's end	31
Conclusion	32
Appendix 1: A socio-economic profile of MPs, 1901 to 1918	34
Gender	34
Age.....	34
Place of birth	34
Education.....	35
Occupation	35

Religion	35
Remuneration.....	36
State and local government service	36
Appendix 2: War service of Commonwealth parliamentarians in the Colonial wars and World War 1	37
Table A: Statistical summaries	37
Table B: Men who were MPs at some time between 1901 and 1918, and who served in the Colonial Wars and/or World War 1	38
Table C: Men who became MPs at some time in their lives and who served in the Colonial wars and/or World War I	40
Further reading	44

Party abbreviations

ALP: Australian Labor Party
 CP: Australian Country Party
 FT: Free Trade
 IND: Independent
 IND LAB: Independent Labor
 LIB: Liberal Party
 NAT: Nationalist Party
 NAT & FARMERS: Nationalist and Farmers
 PROT: Protectionist
 UAP: United Australia Party

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Introduction

On the tenth anniversary of Australia becoming federated, federal Attorney-General William (Billy) Hughes (ALP, West Sydney, NSW) noted:

The year 1900 saw the infant Commonwealth in swaddling clothes oppressed by the politics of the parish pump—a veritable economic Tower of Babel—dependent for defence upon the motherland, and content neither to do for itself nor adequately to subsidise Great Britain to protect it. The year 1911 finds us living in another world in all or most of these matters. The Commonwealth is now a sturdy youth.¹

The Commonwealth Parliament, sitting in Melbourne in the Victorian Parliament House, had been in operation for just 13 years when World War I broke out on 28 July 1914 following the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria a month earlier. There had only been five Parliaments since the first commenced on 9 May 1901. The fifth had been prorogued on 27 June 1914 with an election not scheduled until September 1914.

In the period since Federation, Australia's population had grown from an estimated 3.80 million to 4.95 million, of which 2.58 million were males.² Half of the population lived in cities, three-quarters were born in Australia, and the majority were of English, Scottish or Irish descent. From 1900 to 1914, great progress had been made in developing Australia's agricultural and manufacturing capacities and in setting up institutions for government and social services such as the public service, defence services and a judiciary.

This research paper provides an overview of Australia as a newly emerging 'nation-state' and the evolution of the federal Parliament by tracing the seven elections held from 1901 to 1918. The focus is on leadership positions, the state of the parties and key issues facing the government and opposition, particularly as it relates to the First World War (WWI). The paper also provides a profile of the Parliament during this period, drawing out facts relating to members of Parliament (MPs) from 1914 to 18, and provides further detail of MPs who served during the war.

Australia before World War I

Australia as a nation

Historian FK Crowley asserts that Australia was a new 'state' in 1901 but it was not a 'nation-state' because Australians had had no experience of a single national government. The state governments still controlled much of what affected their everyday lives (for example, land, roads, railways and education). Loyalty was to their state, not federal, government. Parochialism predominated, aided by the concentration of the population in New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria and in the cities. People would refer to themselves as Australians in relation to Britain (for example, as Anglo-Australian or as Scottish-Australian and Britain was often referred to as 'home'). British history was taught in schools. Professional standards in education, engineering, medicine and law were determined according to British standards.³

Australia lacked its own symbols of nationhood. There was no national anthem, no national flag (until late in 1901), and no Australian honours or medals. The British national anthem was played at public gatherings, the loyal toast given, honours were conferred by Britain (the Victoria Cross was the highest war decoration), the King of England was Australia's head of state and the final court of appeal was the Privy Council in London. State governors and the Governor-General were British. As a self-governing colony in the British Empire, Australia had no national army or navy and its foreign policy was determined by Britain.⁴

1. G Souter, *Acts of Parliament: a narrative history of the Senate and House of Representatives Commonwealth of Australia*, Melbourne University Press, 1988, pp. 123–4.

2. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), '100 years of Australian lives – population', in [Reflecting a nation: stories from the 2011 Census, 2012–2013](#), cat. no. 2071.0, ABS, Canberra, 2012, accessed 26 August 2014.

3. FK Crowley, '1901–14' in FK Crowley, ed., *A new history of Australia*, Heinemann, Melbourne, 1974, pp. 260–2.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 263.

Loyalty to Britain was not just an emotion but was backed up in practice when volunteers joined Australian contingents as part of the imperial armed services fighting in the Zulu War in South Africa, in the Sudan, in the



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

A04298

Boer War in South Africa, and in the Boxer Rebellion in China. The first battalion of the Australian Commonwealth Horse, a mounted infantry unit, sailed for South Africa on 19 February 1902. In all, Australia sent eight battalions but only four arrived in time to take part.⁵ Nineteen men who served in the colonial wars had careers as Commonwealth MPs.⁶ Australia's support was not just patriotic but also of strategic importance in ensuring that Britain could keep open its trade routes via the Suez Canal and South Africa. As a result of this support, Australia's ties with the British Empire were strengthened.⁷

Defence policy was conditioned by Australia's reliance on Britain in such matters, the substantial cost in

establishing and maintaining a navy, and Britain's desire that the colonies provide financial support for its own navy rather than establishing separate regionally-based fleets which could weaken central control in emergencies.⁸ Australia did not expect to be involved in the wars of the Old World, and although it was expected Australians would volunteer to defend Britain, it was thought this was unlikely to be required because Britain 'ruled the waves'. Military conscription during peace time was not supported.⁹

Parliament and Australia's defence

Prior to Federation, each colony had been responsible for its own defence arrangements. Section 51(vi) of the Constitution gave the new Commonwealth Parliament the power to make laws with respect to the naval and military defence of the Commonwealth. On Federation, the Governor-General became Commander-in-Chief, although it was not until 1 March 1901 that the states transferred their naval and military forces to the Commonwealth of Australia and the following year were formally named the Commonwealth Naval Forces and Commonwealth Military Forces.¹⁰

The first Commonwealth Parliament was opened by His Royal Highness the Duke of Cornwall and York on 9 May 1901. On 10 May 1901, the Governor-General, Lord Hopetoun, addressed a gathering of senators and members of the first Commonwealth Parliament in the Legislative Chamber of Parliament House, Melbourne. He outlined the matters that would receive the attention of the First Parliament, including provision for its defence:

As soon as practicable after the necessary Act has been passed, means will be taken for the judicious strengthening of the Defence of the Commonwealth. Extravagant expenditure will be avoided, and reliance will be placed, to the fullest reasonable extent, in our citizen soldiery. It is confidently hoped that the services of a most able and distinguished officer will be secured for the supreme Military command.¹¹

5. G Davison, J Hirst and S Macintyre, eds, *The Oxford companion to Australian history*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1998, p. 78.
6. N Church, H Gobbett, M Lumb and R Lundie, [Commonwealth members of parliament who have served in war and conflict: colonial wars and World War I](#), Research paper series, 2013–14, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 2014, accessed 19 September 2014.
7. Crowley, '1901–14', op. cit., pp. 270–1.
8. Crowley, '1901–14', op. cit., p. 291.
9. Crowley, '1901–14', op. cit., p. 292.
10. D Stevens, [How old is Australia's Navy?](#), Royal Australian Navy website, accessed 8 August 2014.
11. [His Excellency the Governor-General's speech](#), *Votes and proceedings of the House of Representatives*, 10 May 1901, p. 12, accessed 8 August 2014.

Defence Acts, 1903 and 1904

Australia's first Defence Bill was introduced in June 1901 but it proved to be a highly controversial piece of legislation. As Minister for Defence, John Forrest (Western Australia Party, Swan, WA) oversaw the drafting of the Bill and the regulations required to incorporate the states' separate military forces. Historian Jeffrey Grey noted that, '[i]n the interests of economy Forrest was one of those who favoured a small permanent military force and a part-time militia'.¹² In his second reading speech on the Bill to the House of Representatives on 9 July 1901, Forrest reassured the Parliament that the Governor-General would be advised by the Government and by the chief command of the army and navy, noting that there was no precedent amongst former British colonies to guide Australia in making its defence arrangements. However, he said, 'I believe that public opinion is that what we have to look to for our defences in the future are the services of our citizens'.¹³

Forrest's first Defence Bill was greeted with considerable hostility in the Parliament. Some members were critical of the Bill's technical deficiencies. For example, Billy Hughes, who would become Australia's fifth Prime Minister in the midst of World War I, called it 'an *olla podrida*, a jumble of clauses and provisions extracted from the various [colonial] Defence Acts'.¹⁴ Others were opposed to the 'militarism' it represented.

The Bill was tabled for reconsideration by the Federal Military Committee in June 1901, but it lapsed and was subsequently withdrawn on 26 March 1902. According to the historian Craig Stocking, the controversy surrounding his Bill had tarnished Forrest's reputation, with Prime Minister Edmund Barton requesting that state premiers refer all defence-related inquiries to him personally rather than through Forrest's department.¹⁵ Forrest introduced a new Defence Bill on 16 July 1903, noting that he had gained more understanding of the subject in the period since the Parliament's debate of the first Defence Bill. He was hopeful that this new Bill would be passed quickly, noting that the debate over his first Bill had been exhaustive with 43 of the 75 members of the House of Representatives speaking on the matter, their speeches extending to over 205 pages of *Hansard*:

For the most part, those speeches were of a most exhaustive character—a fact which I mention simply to show that this subject has already been well discussed by honorable members. To my mind, this Bill has been better arranged than was the original measure. For the most part, what was in the old Bill is to be found in this one; but in several respects it will be found that this measure is a great improvement on the last.¹⁶

This new Bill empowered the Government to call up 'unexempted' males in times of war for home defence but not for overseas service.¹⁷ Significantly, it also brought Australia's defence units together as the Commonwealth Forces. Forrest assured members that it was:

designed to deal with the formation, control and discipline of the Defence Forces. It does not appropriate one farthing. It does not declare how much shall be spent, or the way in which the votes of Parliament shall be expended. It deals with the division of the forces into permanent troops, militia, volunteers, and reserves....

The measure recognises that the military and naval forces of the Commonwealth shall be constituted almost entirely of citizen soldiers, and that the primary duty of such forces is to defend Australia from invasion or attack. Provision is made for a permanent force, which will, under existing conditions, be only sufficient for the purpose of manning the forts and ships, working the submarine mines, and instructing the citizen forces. With the exception of this permanent force (which does not number, at present, more than 1,300 men for the whole Commonwealth), all the rest will be citizen soldiers. The citizen forces are divided into three classes, namely, militia, or partially-paid forces; volunteers, who get no pay, a capitation allowance being provided for corps purposes; and reserve forces, consisting of the members of rifle clubs and others, who may be enlisted as reservists.¹⁸

12. J Grey, *A military history of Australia*, third edn, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2008, p. 67.

13. J Forrest, 'Defence Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 9 July 1901, p. 2161, accessed 8 August 2014.

14. W Hughes, 'Second reading speech: Defence Bill 1901', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 31 July 1901, p. 3292, accessed 20 August 2014.

15. CAJ Stockings, *The making and breaking of the post-Federation Australian Army, 1901–09*, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Canberra, July 2007, pp. 31–2, accessed 20 August 2014.

16. J Forrest, 'Second reading speech: Defence Bill 1901', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 16 July 1903, p. 2269, accessed 19 September 2014.

17. Australian War Memorial (AWM), '*Conscription*', AWM website, accessed 18 September 2014.

18. Forrest, 'Second reading speech: Defence Bill 1901', op. cit., p. 2266, 2269.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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Forrest noted that the General Officer Commanding, who had assisted in drafting the Bill, disagreed with the provision that the citizen forces would not be required to serve in time of war beyond the limits of the Commonwealth, arguing that they should be able to 'send them wherever they may be required'.¹⁹ However, Forrest argued: 'I am of opinion that citizen soldiers should not be compelled to do more than protect their country from invasion and resist attacks upon it'.²⁰

The Senate proposed a large number of amendments, although most were minor changes. The main issue debated before the Bill was finally passed related to the provision for a Council of Defence, which was regarded by some as having the potential to 'interfere with the responsibility of Ministers to the Parliament'.²¹ The Defence Act 1903 finally received Assent on 22 October 1903. A second *Defence Act* was passed in 1904.²² This Act replaced the General Officer Commanding and

Naval Officer Commanding with an Inspector-General of the Military Forces and a Naval Commandant.

Developing an Australian defence force

By 1905, both Britain's and Australia's concerns about defence had sharpened: Britain was concerned about Germany's naval build up and Australia was concerned by Japan's rise and quick defeat of the Russian navy in that year. Australia had always been conscious of its geographic isolation from Britain and that it was situated in a region of very different cultures.²³ Senator Andrew Dawson, as Minister for Defence in the short-lived Watson Labor Government (27.4.1904–17.8.1904), initiated a complete reorganisation of the command and administrative system that underpinned the Commonwealth Military Forces.

The changes, implemented by Dawson's successor James Whiteside McCay, included creating a Council for Defence and Military Board designed to give the Cabinet and Parliament more direct control over the country's defence administration. According to McCay, the new arrangements were designed to:

... bring the Cabinet as a whole, which is responsible through the Minister as the Head of the Department, into more direct touch with the defence policy of Australia, and we shall also maintain a closer touch between the carrying out of that policy and the Parliament which, as the representative of the people, controls it.²⁴

Nevertheless, the attempt to provide an administrative framework for the formulation of an Australian defence policy proved to be less than effective. The Council met only twice in ten years, and it was ultimately abolished in 1918. According to Stockings, 'financial restrictions, internal bickering and personality clashes all contributed to the failure of effective administration in the post-Federation Army', compounded by clashes between imperial and Australian loyalties and between politicians and military officers.²⁵

In 1906, Prime Minister Alfred Deakin began to develop his plans to overhaul the Army as a distinctively Australian force. In December 1907, he announced a scheme of compulsory military training to the House of Representatives. After his return from the 1907 Imperial Conference,²⁶ he stated:

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. A Deakin, 'Defence Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 14 October 1903, p. 6118, accessed 19 September 2014.

22. *Defence Act 1904* (Cth), accessed 22 October 2014.

23. Crowley, '1901–14', op. cit., p. 293.

24. J McCay, 'Question: Supply', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 2 November 1904, p. 6388, accessed 20 August 2014. The Council for Defence and the Military Board became operational on 12 January 1905, both under the leadership of the Minister for Defence.

25. Stockings, op. cit., p. 45.

26. Imperial Conferences (known as Colonial Conferences until 1907) were held in 1902, 1907 and 1911 in the period before the outbreak of World War I. Attended by the leaders of the British Dominions and the United Kingdom, their aim was to coordinate policy on common interests, most notably on defence and trade policies.

... although there has been combination and reconstruction, the land and sea forces of the Commonwealth are still little more than the collective forces of the States. We now propose a new organization for the defence of Australia. Therefore, we are about to initiate a departure, contemplated at the inception of Federation, and intended to lay the foundation of our defence upon a basis as wide as the Commonwealth, without distinction of States.²⁷

He also warned, however, that 'leading nations are arming themselves with feverish haste' and that others must try to keep up. He felt it was incumbent on Australia to take greater responsibility for its defence and to play its part in the defence of the Empire, 'to be a source of strength and not of weakness'.²⁸ He went on to declare that Australia was no longer:

... outside the area of the world's conflicts. On the contrary, every decade brings us into closer and closer touch with the subjects of other peoples planted in our neighbourhood, and with the interests of other peoples more or less antagonistic to our own.²⁹



Defence Act 1909

In 1908, a new Defence Bill was introduced into the Commonwealth Parliament. While the *Defence Acts* of 1903 and 1904 had empowered the Commonwealth Government to call up unexempted males in times of war, this new Bill sought to make training and service compulsory in time of peace. According to Member for Richmond, Thomas Ewing:

This responsibility is not a small one for any Parliament to undertake. It is not a simple matter to protect any country; and the protection of any vast, half-developed territory, sparsely populated and enormously rich in proportion to the population is indeed difficult. It is more difficult here, beset as the Commonwealth is with greater dangers and difficulties in regard to the future life and preservation of white occupation, than exist in any part of the British Dominions. But Parliament has accepted the responsibility, and we have to face the problem.³⁰

During his Second Reading speech, the Minister for Defence, Joseph Cook, outlined the advantages of such a scheme:

Another advantage of a force like this would be that the men would all be recruited at one time, instead of in dribs and drabs, as they are now, under our present haphazard system. Honorable members will see at a glance what an advantage that will be to the sergeants who have to train them, and put them through their drill.

This system will also provide experienced officers and non-commissioned officers, and half the rank and file of this first fighting line will consist of experienced and mature soldiers—a matter of very great importance. The general reserve, also, will contain a very large number of officers and non-commissioned officers; and the rifle clubs of Australia will find for the first time a sound and useful place as defensive units in our army. The Bill will provide us also, if necessary—I hope we may never have to do it, but one aim of this organization will be to provide an expeditionary force for immediate despatch overseas or elsewhere whenever the Government of the day feel themselves under an obligation to send a force.³¹

The proposal for compulsory military training received bipartisan support in the Parliament, having already been endorsed by the Opposition Labor Party at its 1908 conference.³² Field Marshal Viscount Kitchener, then Commander-in-Chief of the Army in India, had also visited Australia, at the invitation of Deakin, to inspect the country's defence preparedness. Kitchener subsequently recommended a scheme of military training based on

27. A Deakin, 'Speech: Defence policy', House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 13 December 1907, p. 7509, accessed 20 August 2014.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. T Ewing, 'Second reading speech: Defence Bill', House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 29 September 1908, p. 437, accessed 20 August 2014.

31. J Cook, 'Second reading speech: Defence Bill', House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 21 September 1909, p. 3624, accessed 20 August 2014.

32. The ALP adopted the name 'Australian Labour Party' in 1908 but changed the spelling to 'Labor' in 1912. 'Labor' is used throughout this paper.

conscription.³³ The *Defence Act 1909* came into operation on 1 January 1911, requiring Australian males aged between 18 and 60 years to perform militia service within Australia and its territories.³⁴ While most politicians came to accept the need for compulsory military training, it was not supported to the same extent in the wider community.³⁵ The military college, Duntroon, was established in June 1911 to train officers needed for the scheme.³⁶

Over the next few years Australia also began increasing its naval force. In 1909 Britain aired its concerns about Germany's expanding battleship construction program. In addition, the British Committee of Imperial Defence had determined the need to maintain armoured ships in the Pacific. At the Imperial Conference in 1909 the Royal Navy advised Australia that, given Australia's isolation and remoteness from British naval strength, it could find itself in danger in the Pacific in the face of strengthened Japanese and German fleets. The British Admiralty's First Sea Lord, Sir John Fisher, concluded that Australia had to establish a permanent navy of its own with a fully-manned, self-contained fleet.³⁷

The situation was complicated by changes in Australia's prime ministers at this time. Alfred Deakin (PROT), who replaced Andrew Fisher (ALP) in June 1909, had previously proposed to establish a flotilla of submarines and destroyers, but the Admiralty advocated operating a fleet unit that would cost considerably more. The British Admiralty offered to fund the shortfall, hand over control of the Australia Station, and transfer all imperial dockyard and shore infrastructure to the Commonwealth. Deakin's cabinet gave preliminary approval to the Admiralty's scheme in September 1909 and orders were made for additional ships.³⁸ However, Fisher was returned to power seven months later. He declined the British offer in favour of a new vessel construction program as part of Australia's Fleet Unit, to be funded completely by the Commonwealth. In introducing a Bill to repeal the *Naval Loan Act 1909* that had been passed by the previous government in order to raise £3.5 million, Prime Minister Fisher stated:

The last Government entered into a naval building programme which would practically have absorbed the whole amount they were authorized by the Act to borrow; but they did not take steps to raise money under it, and, so far as I know, no negotiations to that end were entered into by my predecessor ... The objection of the Labour party to borrowing is even stronger when the borrowing is suggested for ordinary Defence purposes. We feel that the Commonwealth would not do justice to itself if its first entrance into the loan market were for the purpose of obtaining money for ordinary Defence expenditure.³⁹

Naval Defence Act 1910

In November 1910 the Commonwealth Parliament began debating the Naval Defence Bill introduced by the acting Prime Minister, Billy Hughes. In his second reading speech, Hughes noted:

The principle adopted is that of a separate naval auxiliary of the British Navy. In this curious Empire of ours, comprising a congeries of separate individual nations, each pursuing its own destiny in ways that seem more and more marvellous to outsiders as the time goes on, we have thought it possible—and this is one of the most amazing features of the situation—to create an Australian Navy which shall be under Commonwealth control, and yet shall be an integral part of the British Fleet in time of disturbance, or when an emergency shall arise. The principle is that it shall be a Commonwealth Navy, manned and officered by Australians; and that its purpose shall be to act, as it were, as a continual patrol of this great coastline of ours.⁴⁰

33. [Report on the defence of Australia by Field Marshal Viscount Kitchener, 1910](#), Prime Minister's Department, National Archives of Australia, NAA: A463, 1957/1059, accessed 16 April 2015.

34. National Archives of Australia (NAA), '[Universal military training in Australia, 1911–29](#)', *Fact sheet*, 160, NAA website, accessed 20 August 2014.

35. There were incidents of youths being prosecuted for failing to register for military training or not attending training camps. Some trade unionists distributed leaflets and newspaper protesting at their treatment and urging non-compliance with the law. FK Crowley, *op. cit.*, p.296; T Chataway, 'Paper: Compulsory training: treasonable literature', Senate, [Debates](#), 5 October 1911, p. 1088, accessed 22 January 2014.

36. Crowley, '1901–14', *op. cit.*, p. 295.

37. D Stevens, [The Australian Navy and the 1909 Imperial Conference on Defence](#), Royal Australian Navy website; D Stevens, '[How old is Australia's Navy](#)', Royal Australian Navy website, both accessed 18 September 2014.

38. The Australia Station was established by the Royal Navy in 1859 as Britain's command based on Australian waters. It included the islands of the South Pacific. See AWM, '[Australia Station](#)', AWM website, accessed 22 October 2014.

39. A Fisher, 'Naval Loan Repeal Bill', House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 22 July 1910, p. 682, accessed 18 September 2014.

40. W Hughes, 'Second reading speech: Naval Defence Bill', House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 16 November 1910, p. 6251, accessed 18 September 2014.

The *Naval Defence Act*, which was passed by Parliament on 25 November 1910, provided for the establishment of a 'reinvigorated navy' based on the Royal Navy model, including a College and training institutions, the separation of the naval forces into separate permanent and citizen forces, and a new Board of Administration.⁴¹ Finally, on 10 July 1911, the Sovereign granted the title 'Royal Australian Navy' to Australia's naval forces. In October 1913, Australia's own Fleet Unit, comprising a battle-cruiser, three light cruisers and three destroyers, steamed into Sydney Harbour to public acclaim. Meanwhile, the British Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Sir George King-Hall, hauled down the British flag of the Australia Station—the British naval command responsible for the waters surrounding the Australian continent—and passed it to the new Australian fleet unit.⁴² In just under a year Australia would be at war.⁴³

The eve of war

The volunteers who enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) in 1914 included those who had undertaken the mandated but limited military training established as a result of the 1909 legislation.⁴⁴ In addition, Australia had a navy of volunteer seamen. The federal Government wanted Australia's defences to be integrated into the overall defence of the Empire and to be consulted on matters relating especially to the Pacific region. Although Australia's views were received with some sympathy and the Government was given access to greater information, the real decision-making power remained with Britain.⁴⁵

By the time Australia entered the war it had become more unified economically. As Crowley points out:

There was a national bank, a national currency, nation-wide postal rates, cheaper telegraphic rates, a national old-age and invalid pension scheme, a maternity bonus ... the commonwealth arbitration system and the concept of a living wage. ... by 1914 the people had become accustomed to look to the national, rather than to the state governments for the attainment of some of their community goals.⁴⁶



The Commonwealth had also assumed responsibility for the administration of the Northern Territory, set up an administration in New Guinea, staked a claim to territory in Antarctica, legislated for a High Court and established a defence force. Historian Frank Welsh commented:

Government had succeeded government, observing all the democratic and parliamentary proprieties perfecting the constitutional settlement. All in all, it was an astonishing achievement, this quiet unification of a congeries of colonies into a modern state. But not yet, perhaps, in spite of the flag and the new capital under construction, a continental nation.⁴⁷

Nevertheless, at the start of WW1, Australians still saw themselves in terms of their role within the British Empire. By the end of the war, a greater sense of national distinctiveness would emerge.⁴⁸

41. Stevens, *The Australian Navy and the 1909 Imperial Conference on Defence*, op. cit., accessed 18 September 2014.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid., accessed 18 September 2014.

44. The AIF was the main expeditionary force of the Australian Army, raised by voluntary enlistment for the duration of the war.

45. Crowley, '1901–14', op. cit., p. 296.

46. Ibid., p. 309.

47. F Welsh, *Great Southern Land: a new history of Australia*, Penguin Books, Place, 2004, pp. 361–2.

48. In the case of Antarctica, Douglas Mawson, who had accompanied Ernest Shackleton on his 1907–09 expedition to the geographic South Pole, had formed the view that Australia should 'take the lead in asserting control' of the sector of Antarctica to the south of Australia. Mawson's 1911–14 Australasian Antarctic Expedition was designed to achieve that control, and was given support—in part financial—by Prime Minister Andrew Fisher. See M Kawaja and T Griffiths, "'Our great frozen neighbour': Australia and Antarctica before the Treaty, 1880–1945", in M Haward and T Griffiths, eds, *Australia and the Antarctic Treaty system: 50 years of influence*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2011, pp. 16, 18–19.

Parliament

Between 1901 and 1927 the Commonwealth Parliament did not have its own seat of government but met in Melbourne. In 1908 Canberra had been chosen as the site for the federal capital. An international competition for the design of Parliament House had been initiated but, with the outbreak of war in 1914, the Minister for Home Affairs, William Archibald (ALP, Hindmarsh, SA) announced on the first day of the new Parliament (8 October 1914) that the competition had been postponed on several grounds:

... principally because the war would prohibit competition among architects throughout the Continent of Europe, and confine the competition entirely to American and Australian professional men. Many connected with the architectural profession are now on active service and bearing arms. One of the judges is a distinguished Austrian.⁴⁹

On the outbreak of war, the Parliament was half the size it is today, comprising 75 Members of the House of Representatives and 36 Senators (see Table 1).

Table 1: representation in the House of Representatives after each election, 1901–18

Election	Parties								Total
	Gov't	ALP	Free Trade	Protectionist	Anti-Socialist	Liberal	Nationalist	Others	
1901	PROT	14	28	31				2	75
1903	PROT	23	25	26				1	75
1906	PROT	26		16	27			6	75
1910	ALP	43				31*		1	75
1913	LIB	37				38			75
1914	ALP	42				32		1	75
1917	NAT	22					53		75

*Known as Fusion in 1910.

Source: *Parliamentary Handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia*.⁵⁰

There had been five elections since Federation (1901, 1903, 1906, 1910 and 1913) with a sixth election called for 5 September 1914, and nine prime ministerships (see Table 3). Early on there had been a number of governments formed by coalitions of parties with no one party being able to govern in its own right.

Table 2: representation in the Senate after each election, 1901–1918

Date	Parties						Total
	Govt	ALP	Free Trade	Protectionist	Liberal	Nationalist	
1901	PROT	8	17	11			36
1.1.1904	PROT	14	12	8			36
1.1.1907	PROT	15	12	6			36
1.7.1910	ALP	23			13*		36
1.7.1913	LIB	29			7		36
5.9.1914	ALP	31			5		36
1.7.1917	NAT	12				24	36

*Known as Fusion in 1910.

Source: *Parliamentary Handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia*.⁵¹

Parties and prime ministers

The party system was still evolving, in particular the two-party system which was aided in its development by responsible government,⁵² simple-majority voting and state-wide Senate electorates.⁵³ From 1910 and throughout the war Australia experienced majority governments.

49. W Archibald, 'Question: Parliament House designs', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 8 October 1914, p. 29, accessed 19 August 2014.

50. Parliamentary Library, *Parliamentary handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia: 43rd Parliament*, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 2014, p. 414, accessed 19 August 2014.

51. Ibid.

52. Responsible government is the principle whereby the government is responsible to (requires the support of) the parliament which in turn is responsible or accountable to the voters. PJ Boyce, RK Forward, MNB Cribb, KW Wiltshire and DE Drinkwater, *Dictionary of Australian politics*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1980, p. 229.

53. J Rydon, *A federal legislature: the Commonwealth Parliament 1901–1980*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1986, p. 22.

The Australian Labor Party (ALP) had grown out of the trade union movement that had consolidated during the industrial unrest associated with the 1890s depression and the so-called 'Federation drought' (1895–1902). In 1914, the trade union membership of about 500,000 was approximately 12 per cent of Australia's population (4.3 million in 1911) and a powerful force at the branch level of the ALP. Labor had briefly been able to form government for several months in 1904 under John (Chris) Watson (ALP, Bland, NSW) and again for just over six months under Andrew Fisher (ALP, Wide Bay, Qld) from 1908 to 1909. It won the 1910 election under Fisher, gaining 43 seats in the House of Representatives (an absolute majority) and all 18 vacant Senate seats, giving it control of the upper house.



The conservative side of politics was initially divided over the fiscal issue of free trade versus protectionism. Elections were won and governments formed under these banners (see Table 3) until, in response to the growing power of the ALP, there was a fusion of conservative forces to form the Liberal Party in 1909. Edmund Barton (PROT, Hunter, NSW), Alfred Deakin (PROT, Ballarat, Vic.), George Reid (Free Trade, East Sydney, NSW) and Joseph Cook (Liberal, Parramatta, NSW) were the leaders of the conservative parties until the 1914 election.⁵⁴

By 1914, Australia had been led by eleven prime ministerships occupied by seven different men (Barton, Deakin, Watson, Reid, Fisher, Cook and Hughes), each of whom had led one of six different parties (Protectionist, ALP, Free Trade, Liberal, National Labor and Nationalist). Furthermore, with the exception of Barton and Hughes, each had also held the position of Leader of the Opposition as head of one of three different parties (Free Trade, ALP, Anti-Socialist, Fusion and Liberal).

Table 3: Prime Ministers and governing party, 1901–1918

Prime Minister	Governing party or parties	Period of government
Edmund Barton	Protectionist	1.1.1901 to 24.9.1903
Alfred Deakin	Protectionist	24.9.1903 to 27.4.1904
Chris Watson	ALP	27.4.1904 to 17.8.1904
George Reid	Free Trade–Protectionist	18.8.1904 to 5.7.1905
Alfred Deakin	Protectionist	5.7.1905 to 13.11.1908
Andrew Fisher	ALP	13.11.1908 to 2.6.1909
Alfred Deakin	Protectionist–Free Trade–Tariff Reform	2.6.1909 to 29.4.1910
Andrew Fisher	ALP	29.4.1910 to 24.6.1913
Joseph Cook	Liberal	24.6.1913 to 17.9.1914
Andrew Fisher	ALP	17.9.1914 to 27.10.1915
William Morris Hughes	ALP	27.10.1915 to 14.11.1916
	National Labor	14.11.1916 to 17.2.1917
	Nationalist	17.2.1917 to 9.2.1923

Source: Parliamentary Handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia.⁵⁵

Elections

Australia had seen five federal elections from Federation in 1901 to the outbreak of World War I (1901, 1903, 1906, 1910 and 1913) and another two during the war (1914 and 1917). From 1901 to 1918, the electoral system used for federal elections for both the House of Representatives and the Senate was first past the post.

54. The Australian Electoral Division of 'Ballarat' was changed to 'Ballarat' in the 1977 redistribution.

55. Parliamentary Library, [Parliamentary handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia: 43rd Parliament](#), Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 2014, p. 501, accessed 19 August 2014.

1901

The first election held on 29–30 March 1901 was largely based on state-determined electorates. In this first election the main issue was over tariffs—free trade or protection. No one party won a majority of seats in either house, but Edmund Barton and his Protectionist group were able to form government with the support of the Labor Party. The first federal parliament which opened in Melbourne on 9 May 1901 began more as ‘a body of state delegates than national legislators and it retained this character until the federal system and the growth of a Labor party created a new class of federal politician’.⁵⁶ MPs with professional backgrounds, and lawyers in particular, dominated the Parliament and the ministry.

Despite a new federal parliament, life for most people went on as usual. Customs houses, post offices and military volunteers were under new management, but the public still engaged with the same people in their daily transactions. Australians had not really expected rapid or dramatic change because the Federation had come into being peacefully and consensually, without revolution against Britain or opposition from Britain.⁵⁷

The first Parliament set about establishing an independent public service and the High Court. It introduced universal suffrage and first-past-the-post voting in Senate and House of Representatives elections; although enrolment was not made compulsory until 1911.⁵⁸ It also adopted the ‘White Australia’ policy⁵⁹, which was widely supported, and a national customs tariff.⁶⁰ However, it failed to agree on a site for the national capital or establish the Inter-state Commission or an industrial arbitration system.⁶¹ This should not be a surprise given that Parliament, new in itself, was trying to set up an infrastructure and machinery for a new sovereign nation where its component states had competing interests, not just amongst themselves but with the Commonwealth as well.

1903 to 1905

Industrial relations and arbitration replaced tariffs as the central issue in the 1903 election held on 16 December. The Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, which sought ‘the prevention and settlement of industrial disputes extending beyond the limits of any one State’,⁶² and which began its passage in the first federal Parliament meeting in Melbourne in May 1901, was to become known as ‘a wrecker of governments’.⁶³

The Bill, which initially passed the House but not the Senate, lapsed at the end of the Parliament’s first session. In 1903, Attorney-General Alfred Deakin revived the Bill, but rejected Labor’s motion to include provision for the new Conciliation and Arbitration Court to cover state railway employees.⁶⁴ Deakin warned that such a move would destroy the self-governing powers of the states.⁶⁵

Alfred Deakin succeeded Edmund Barton as prime minister at the end of September 1903. Deakin was a popular leader with both sides of politics. Furthermore, the federal system was operating smoothly. There was a common market amongst the states which had also benefited financially from the transfer of some of their responsibilities to the national government. Their position was aided by the approach of the federal

56. Crowley, ‘1901–14’, op. cit., p. 269.

57. Ibid.

58. The [Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902](#) granted the right to vote to all British subjects over the age of 21 years who had been living in Australia for at least six months. Australian women were also allowed to stand for election to federal Parliament. However, the Act disqualified indigenous people from Australia, Asia, Africa and the Pacific Islands, with the exception of Maoris, from voting, even though they were British subjects and otherwise entitled to a vote. The only exceptions were those who were entitled under section 41 of the *Australian Constitution*, who had gained a right to vote at a state level. Others disqualified were those of ‘unsound mind’ and those subject to a crime which carried a penalty of over one year in prison. See [Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act](#), Section 41, ComLaw, accessed 10 April 2015.

59. The ‘White Australia’ policy was the unofficial name of an immigration policy aimed at restricting the entry of non-Europeans into Australia. Boyce et al, op. cit., p. 285.

60. M Grattan, *Australian prime ministers*, New Holland Publishers, Chatswood, NSW, 2013, p. 32.

61. Crowley, ‘1901–14’, op. cit., p. 276.

62. A Deakin, ‘Second reading speech: Conciliation and Arbitration Bill’, House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 30 July 1903, p. 2859, accessed 22 October 2014.

63. M Kirby, ‘[Industrial conciliation and arbitration in Australia: a centenary reflection](#)’, paper presented to the Centenary Convention: Conciliation and Arbitration in Australia, Melbourne, 22 October 2004, accessed 22 October 2014.

64. See [Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904](#), accessed 22 October 2014.

65. Deakin, 30 July 1903, op. cit.

government, which was moderate in the use of its powers and did not impede the states' right to borrow funds for public infrastructure.⁶⁶

Deakin reintroduced the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, but rejected the Labor Party's proposal to extend the Court's powers to include state public servants. He argued that this was not possible according to the Constitution, saying: 'nowhere in the Constitution can honorable members discover an indication that it was the intention of its framers, or the intention of those who adopted it on the exposition of its framers, to include State servants of any class'.⁶⁷ Deakin resigned as Prime Minister when the House supported Labor's amendment to the Bill, and Chris Watson became Prime Minister leading Australia's first national Labor government. Four months later Watson also resigned when the House rejected his proposal to include a substantial measure of preference to trade unionists participating in the decisions of the Conciliation and Arbitration Court.

George Reid (who succeeded Watson as Prime Minister) and Allan McLean (PROT, Gippsland, Vic.) formed a Free Trade / Protectionist coalition government which lasted ten months, during half of which the Parliament was in recess. The Bill was reintroduced again in September 1904 and finally passed the Senate on 9 December 1904 after three years of debate. This second Parliament was to be Australia's most tumultuous, with four governments (Protectionist, ALP, Free Trade / Protectionist and Protectionist) and three different men serving as prime minister (Deakin, Watson and Reid).⁶⁸ Deakin reclaimed the prime ministership with the support of Labor in July 1905 until November 1908. He attempted to legislate for 'New Protection' whereby employers who benefited from protection against overseas competition were expected to charge reasonable prices for their goods and provide fair and reasonable wages and employment conditions for their employees. The High Court's decision on the Harvester Case in November 1907 established a minimum living wage based on 'the normal needs of the average employee, regarded as a human being living in a civilised community' and not on the employer's capacity to pay it.⁶⁹ In the end the High Court invalidated much of the New Protection legislation, but the principle of a basic wage was established and Labor came to believe that industrial justice could not be achieved through the Parliament but only through changing the Constitution. The first fully protective tariff was introduced in June 1908 after lengthy parliamentary debates, the last general debate on an issue which had dominated federal politics from the start.⁷⁰

1906 to 1908 and the two-party system

The 1906 election saw the Deakin Government reaffirmed, with only half the registered electors bothering to vote. However, Deakin was even more reliant on Labor, which had increased the number of its seats by three (to 26), because George Reid's Free Trade party gained most of the seats (27). Reid had shifted his party's policy emphasis from free trade to the promotion of private enterprise, and he attacked the socialist policies of Labor. Among other things, Watson's Labor proposed an independent Australian navy and compulsory military training.⁷¹

In November 1908, Labor withdrew its support for Deakin after the federal conference of the party decided against alliances with other political groups. This decision, coupled with Labor Leader Andrew Fisher's proposal of a federal land tax in March 1909, pushed the non-Labor forces into a single party. A fusion was negotiated between Deakin's protectionists, Joseph Cook's free traders (he had replaced Reid as leader at the end of 1908) and John Forrest's Corner group (they had left the Deakin Government in 1907 because of its reliance on Labor). This fusion forced out Fisher in May 1909 and Deakin took over as prime minister. Thus began the two-party system in national politics.⁷²

1910 to 1913

The Fusion, later Liberal, Government lasted until the election held on 13 April 1910, when it was swept away by Labor which won a clear majority in both Houses, the first time a single party had done so in national politics. By

66. Crowley, '1901–14', op. cit., pp. 276–7.

67. A Deakin, 'Conciliation and arbitration Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 19 April 1904, p. 1047, accessed 22 October 2014. His view was validated in 1906 when the High Court ruled that a state trade union representing state employees could not be registered under the *Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act*. See *Federated Amalgamated Government Railway and Tramway Service Association v New South Wales Railway Traffic Employees' Association* (1906) 4 CLR 488.

68. *Parliamentary Handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia*, op. cit., pp. 493–4.

69. Crowley, '1901–14', op. cit., p. 284.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 285.

71. D Aiton and T Lane, *The first century*, Information Australia, Melbourne, 2000, pp. 16–17.

72. Crowley, '1901–14', op. cit., pp. 288–9.

the 1913 election, there had been a redistribution of electorates and compulsory voter enrolment had been introduced in 1911. At the 1913 elections, the Liberals, led by Joseph Cook, won 38 seats to the ALP's 37 in the House of Representatives, but Labor had control of the Senate 29 to 7. Labor used its upper house majority to resurrect its proposals to extend the Commonwealth's powers in the areas of trade and commerce, the control of corporations, labour and employment, and combinations of monopolies. The proposals were put to voters in two referendums (in 1911 and 1913), and both were unsuccessful.⁷³

1914

For their part, the Liberals looked for a way out of their precarious parliamentary position. Early in 1914, Prime Minister Joseph Cook sought to bring about conditions which would enable him to request a double dissolution election from the Governor-General. The Government submitted two bills which it knew the Labor Party would reject. The Government Preference Prohibition Bill would prevent preference being given to unionists in Commonwealth work. Unsurprisingly, the Bill was rejected in the Senate for a second time on 28 May 1914 after an interval of three months from when it was first rejected. This provided the Government with a trigger for a double dissolution election under section 57 of the Constitution.⁷⁴ The second bill, the Postal Voting Restoration Bill, had amendments proposed that were not accepted by the Government.

Newly-arrived Governor-General Ronald Munro Ferguson initially looked towards Westminster practices to settle the dispute. He was inclined to call another House of Representatives election. However, this would have been to Labor's advantage as its majority in the Senate would be undisturbed. He realised that a double dissolution was the only option.⁷⁵ With Cook's agreement, he sought advice from the Chief Justice of the High Court, Samuel Griffith. Griffith, one of the drafters of the Constitution advised him that the existence of a double dissolution trigger alone did not automatically lead to the granting of such an election.⁷⁶ He further advised that while the Governor-General had the power to grant such an election, he should convince himself:

that the proposed law as to which the Houses have differed in opinion is one of such public importance that it should be referred to the electors of the Commonwealth for immediate decision by means of a complete renewal of both Houses, or that there exists such a state of practical deadlock in legislation as can only be ended in that way. As to the existence of either condition he must form his own judgment. Although he cannot act except upon advice of his Ministers, he is not bound to follow their advice but is in the position of an independent arbiter.⁷⁷

The Governor-General granted Cook his double dissolution on 4 June 1914. Political scientist John Nethercote gives credit to Cook for establishing some basic principles in the process of settling this dispute: 'In his insistence that our governance is a matter of our own constitution, not a deference to Westminster, he was a powerful and original spokesman for self-government and for responsible government in Australia.'⁷⁸

If the Liberals were frustrated by their numbers in Parliament, Labor was not without its tensions. Although it had won the 1910 election, had control of the Senate after the 1913 election and was in power in three states (NSW, Western Australia and Tasmania) at the beginning of 1914, there were tensions between the industrial and political wings of the labour movement. As historian Joan Beaumont puts it:

Essentially the question was whether Labor should use political power to improve worker conditions by 'civilising' rather than destroying capitalism? Should the workers rely on the new system of arbitration or should they pursue change through the 'direct action' of the strike, as the syndicated and anarchist elements of the movement advocated? These tensions, simmering within the labour movement in 1914, would intensify under the pressures of war.⁷⁹

73. [Parliamentary Handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia](#), op. cit., pp. 382–4, accessed 9 April 2015.

74. AN Smith, *Thirty years: the Commonwealth of Australia, 1901–1931*, Brown, Prior, 1933, p. 133.

75. JR Nethercote, '[The 1914 double dissolution](#)', *The Canberra Times*, 21 July 2014, pp. 1, 4, accessed 19 August 2014.

76. Advice from Sir Samuel Griffith to Sir Roland Munro Ferguson, quoted in A Green, '[Is the Abbott Government in a position to request a double dissolution?](#)', Antony Green's Election Blog, 4 July 2014, accessed 19 August 2014.

77. Ibid.

78. Nethercote, op. cit.

79. J Beaumont, [Going to war 1914–18: the view from the Australian Parliament](#), Vital Issues seminar, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 19 March 2014, p. 1, accessed 26 August 2014.

World War I

The 1914 election and the declaration of war

The 1914 election was announced on 26 June 1914—a double dissolution election to be held on 5 September 1914. Parliament was prorogued on 27 June, the day before the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand and dissolved on 30 July. Both parties had already formally launched their election campaigns before war broke out—Labor on 6 July and the Liberals on 15 July.

The election campaign focussed on domestic issues with neither Prime Minister Joseph Cook nor Opposition Leader Andrew Fisher mentioning the events in Europe until the end of July. Both leaders campaigned on much the same issues they had campaigned on at the 1913 election. Cook wanted to reform the Constitution to give the Commonwealth power over monopolies, introduce a uniform companies Act and set up wage fixing tribunals. He also said he wanted to introduce a new voting system—proportional representation in the Senate and preferential voting for the House of Representatives.⁸⁰ Fisher also wanted to reform the Constitution to give the Commonwealth greater power. He promised marketing agencies for primary producers, an inquiry into the prevention of diseases such as tuberculosis and help for orphans.⁸¹

On 30 July 1914, the Governor-General Munro Ferguson received the first official telegram from London warning that war was imminent. As historian Douglas Newton notes, the Governor-General of Australia at this time ‘served in practice not only as commander-in-chief of the military forces, but also as a kind of Australian foreign minister’, and all Imperial communications were sent through the vice-regal channel.⁸² The Governor-General passed a copy of the telegram to Senator Edward Millen, the Minister of Defence, who was in Sydney for a political rally in Mosman. The following evening the Governor-General telegraphed the Prime Minister in Ballarat: ‘Would it not be well, in view of latest news from Europe, that ministers should meet in order that Imperial Government may know what support to expect from Australia?’⁸³ This was an unusual step as it is not up to a governor-general to suggest that Cabinet meet. Ferguson followed up with a letter to the Prime Minister, explaining that he had suggested a Cabinet meeting because of the need for the Cook Government to ‘decide its line of action’, pointing out that Canada had already made its decision to commit to war.⁸⁴ Cook agreed and as many cabinet ministers as could headed for Melbourne even though they were out and about campaigning. Only five of the ten ministers made it to the emergency Cabinet meeting called for Monday 3 August.

The so-called ‘Warning Telegram’ was listed in Australia’s ‘General Scheme of Defence’ (1913) as the first of seven possible telegrams that Britain would forward to Australia in the event that war was imminent. Each telegram required certain actions to be taken, the first being to ‘Adopt Precautionary Stage against (Power(s))’. In reality, the ‘Warning Telegram’ received by the Governor-General did not specify the ‘Power’ (or country) to which the precautionary stage applied. Furthermore, the Governor-General’s official secretary had difficulty in deciphering the message and transcribed the word ‘adopt’ as ‘adoption (adopt?)’, thereby making the nature of the message unclear as to whether it was a request for information about the adoption of the precautionary stage or a directive to adopt it. According to Newton’s close reading of events, ‘there followed some confusion ... in Cook’s circle that lasted until Saturday’, exacerbated by the fact that the Prime Minister was campaigning in rural Victoria and his staff, based with him in Ballarat, were also unable to decipher the message because they did not have the key to the cipher with them.⁸⁵

That night both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition responded in similar terms. The Prime Minister told a meeting at Horsham in Victoria: ‘... whatever happens Australia is a part of the Empire right to the full. Remember that when the Empire is at war so is Australia at war’.⁸⁶ The Opposition Leader at Colac in Victoria said: ‘Should the worst happen, after everything has been done that honour will permit, Australians will stand beside [the mother country] to help and defend her to our last man and our last shilling.’⁸⁷

80. Aiton and Lane, *The first century*, op. cit., p. 25.

81. Ibid.

82. D Newton, *Hell-bent: Australia’s leap into the Great War*, Scribe Publications, Brunswick, Vic., 2014, p. 57.

83. Ibid., p. 116.

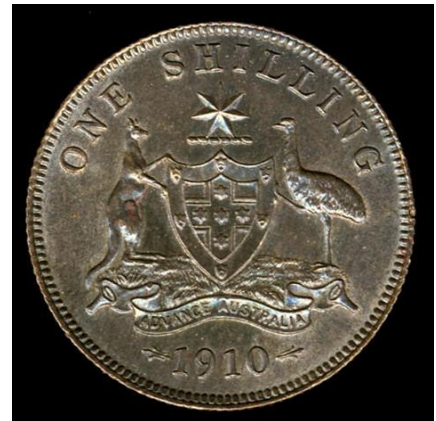
84. Ferguson cited in ibid, pp. 116–7.

85. Ibid., pp. 81, 116–7.

86. [““Grave situation.” References by Mr. Cook](#), *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 August 1914, p. 21, accessed 8 April 2015.

87. G Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, op. cit., p.138. A more detailed account of these events can be found in D Newton, op. cit.; and D Ellery, [‘Paper trail shows the stuttering steps to war’](#), *The Canberra Times*, 6 August 2014, p. 3, accessed 19 August 2014.

A few days later, on Monday 3 August, Cabinet agreed to offer the British Government two things: to put the newly-acquired Australian fleet of seven ships under control of the British Admiralty, and to send an expeditionary force of 20,000 troops overseas to wherever it was required. Furthermore, it offered to bear all associated costs. The cable was sent to London at 6.00 pm that evening, even before Britain had decided its own response to the events in Europe and some 40 hours before it actually declared war.⁸⁸ Newton says about the cable that 'In a sense, it was the birth certificate of Anzac.'⁸⁹ The Prime Minister reiterated Australia's support for Britain saying: 'If the Armageddon is to come you and I shall be in it.'⁹⁰ According to the Australian War Memorial:



The outbreak of war was greeted in Australia, as in many other places, with great public enthusiasm. In response to the overwhelming number of volunteers, the authorities set exacting physical standards for recruits.⁹¹

Labor expressed no opposition to the Government's action, having as far back as 1910 accepted that while there were advantages in being a part of the British Empire, one of the accepted disadvantages, as stated by Defence Minister George Pearce, was that Australia:

... may at any time be involved in a war in the causing of which we had no voice, and in which we have no desire to take part. But, nevertheless, by reason of the fact that we are part of the Empire, we may be called upon, willy nilly, to bear the consequences of our Imperial connexion.⁹²

Furthermore, on the evening of Sunday 2 August, both Fisher and Billy Hughes, separately, issued statements indicating that at such a time the interests of the nation were above party politics. They were responding to Liberal suggestions that Labor was 'dragging its feet' on defence and that its policy would adversely affect Australia.⁹³

It needs to be remembered that this international crisis occurred right in the middle of campaigning for Australia's first double dissolution election following a parliament in which the Government had a majority of just one seat in the lower house and the Opposition had control of the upper house. It was bound to be a hard-fought political campaign. Labor's stance could be seen as a way of neutralising defence and Home Rule for Ireland as issues of difference between the parties.⁹⁴ The issue of Home Rule had recently re-emerged. There were large public meetings supporting Home Rule in May and June 1914, which Fisher and other Labor leaders had attended, countered by anti-Home Rule demonstrations.⁹⁵ Furthermore, the Senate, where Labor had a clear majority, had passed a resolution of support (25 to 5) on 25 June 1914:

That, in view of the opinion expressed by the London *Times*, that "Nothing just now could exercise a more salutary influence," in Great Britain, "than an authoritative pronouncement by the overseas peoples upon the Irish question," and accepting that journal as interpreting correctly the feelings of an important section of the inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland, the Senate desires to reaffirm, and does hereby re-affirm, the Address to His Majesty the late King, passed on the 23rd November, 1905, as follows: - "That, in accordance with the most

88. D Newton, 'At the birth of Anzac: Labor, Andrew Fisher and Australia's offer of an expeditionary force to Britain in 1914', *Labour History*, 106, May 2014, pp. 19–41; D Newton, 'Australia's new navy quickly became theirs again', *The Drum*, 7 October 2013. All accessed 19 August 2014.

89. D Newton, 'At the birth of Anzac: Labor, Andrew Fisher and Australia's offer of an expeditionary force to Britain in 1914', op. cit., p. 20, accessed 19 August 2014.

90. G Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, op. cit., p. 138.

91. AWM, 'First World War 1914–18', AWM website, accessed 19 August 2014.

92. G Pearce, 'Second reading speech: Defence Bill', Senate, *Debates*, 18 August 1910, pp. 1671–2, accessed 19 August 2014.

93. D Newton, 'At the birth of Anzac: Labor, Andrew Fisher and Australia's offer of an expeditionary force to Britain in 1914', op. cit., p. 29.

94. Ibid. Newton also gives an account of Labor's stance on defence in the preceding years by way of explaining its position at this time.

95. Ibid., p. 29.

treasured traditions of British Government and British justice, and for the cementing of the Empire into one harmonious whole, this Senate is of opinion that Home Rule should be granted to Ireland.”⁹⁶



At midnight on Tuesday 4 August (central European time) [Wednesday 5 August in Australia], Britain’s ultimatum to Germany over its invasion of Belgium expired and therefore Britain and its Empire were at war.⁹⁷ Australia received official notification via the Governor-General just after midday.⁹⁸ At Britain’s request a small volunteer force, the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (AN&MEF), was assembled in August 1914 to invade German New Guinea and destroy German wireless stations, while New Zealand occupied the Pacific colony of German Samoa and Japan declared war on Germany. By October the Japanese naval forces had seized the German territories of Marianas, the Carolines, Marshall Islands and Palau in Micronesia.⁹⁹ Apart from removing a threat on Australia’s doorstep, the acquisition of German New Guinea fitted with Australia’s ‘shopping list of colonial conquests’ included in the 1913 ‘General Scheme of Defence’.¹⁰⁰

On an emotional level, Australia’s automatic entry to the war was accepted by the Government, the Parliament and the people, notwithstanding some dissent from the left wing of the labour movement. As Granville Ryrie (LIB/NAT, North Sydney, NSW) put it:

‘... if the Empire is at war—I do not care what the cause of the quarrel may be or who created it—we, as an integral part of the British Empire, are at war and must take our own part in it.’¹⁰¹

Britain was often referred to as the ‘Home Country’, the ‘Mother Country’ or ‘Home’ in parliamentary debates. For example, in debating the Naval Loan Bill 1909, Charles Frazer (ALP, Kalgoorlie, WA) said:

The British people are already taxed considerably over £1 a head for the naval defence of the Home Country and the oversea Dominions, while in Australia the Government refuse to add to the taxation of people for defence purposes, though they now only pay a few paltry shillings per head, and are far better able to pay than those at Home.¹⁰²

Parliament at the outbreak of war

Parliament, which had been dissolved on 30 July 1914, was generally considered irrelevant in any decision as to whether Australia would go to war or remain neutral. This arrangement was not just sentiment—it was underscored by legal and constitutional arrangements. Australia accepted the authority of the British Government and its Parliament in such matters. There was no suggestion that the external affairs power in Australia’s Constitution extended to declaring war.¹⁰³ As Jonathan Curtis in another Parliamentary Library research paper puts it:

Notwithstanding that the Australian Constitution provided that the Commonwealth Parliament could legislate with respect to both defence and external affairs (subsections 51(vi) and (xxix) respectively), and the Executive had the broader executive power of section 61, the Australian Government knew that the British Imperial Government remained responsible for the foreign policy of the empire including declarations of war and the power to enter

96. Senator Henderson, ‘Home rule for Ireland’, Senate, *Debates*, 25 June 1914, p. 2537, accessed 19 August 2014.

97. G Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, op. cit., p. 138.

98. D Newton, *At the birth of Anzac: Labor, Andrew Fisher and Australia’s offer of an expeditionary force to Britain in 1914*, op. cit., p. 26.

99. J Beaumont, *Broken nation: Australians in the Great War*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW, 2013, pp. 28–31.

100. D Newton, *At the birth of Anzac: Labor, Andrew Fisher and Australia’s offer of an expeditionary force to Britain in 1914*, op. cit., p. 34.

101. P Vincent, *My darling Mick. the life of Granville Ryrie 1865–1937*, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 1997, p. 204.

102. C Frazer, ‘Naval Loan Bill’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 2 December 1909, p. 6785, accessed 19 August 2014.

103. G Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, op. cit., p. 138.

treaties. This reflected the legal status of all of Britain's self-governing colonies, which also went to war: Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa and remained the case in Australia until the enactment of the *Statute of Westminster (Adoption) Act 1943 (Cth)*.¹⁰⁴

The Government's role was to decide the nature and extent of Australia's involvement in the war. It did this without consulting Parliament, notwithstanding that it was dissolved at the time. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, on 14 January 1902, Prime Minister Edmund Barton had informed the Parliament that the Government, without Parliament's knowledge or approval, had agreed to a request from Britain on 21 December 1901 that it send a contingent of 1,000 troops to the Boer War. He explained:

Had this request for troops come to the Government while Parliament was sitting no action would have been taken without a full opportunity for discussion; though the Government certainly would not have refused—it would have agreed to send any troops, and would have submitted, if the House was not sitting, its determination to Parliament afterwards, for honorable members to take such action as they might be advised.¹⁰⁵

In 1914, some in the Opposition and the media felt that the situation was serious enough for Parliament to be recalled before the election. There were even calls for the election to be postponed because there was little public interest in it and yet it was conceded that there would be even less interest if it was held a few months later with 'the clashing of great armies and navies around us'.¹⁰⁶ On the other hand, it was felt that the election should be held as soon as possible so that MPs could meet to discuss the situation. As the writs for the election had already been issued, neither option was likely to occur. Another proposal was for the Parliament to be called together as a 'council of the nation'.¹⁰⁷

On 6 August 1914, Billy Hughes, who would become Australia's wartime Prime Minister in October 1915, proposed a novel solution: each party should agree to not oppose sitting members in order to ensure continuity of government. Parliament could then meet immediately after the election. Alternatively, the proclamation dissolving Parliament should be revoked, a highly unconstitutional procedure that Hughes argued could be validated if the British Parliament passed an Indemnity Act.¹⁰⁸

These ideas were not accepted by Cook and the election campaign continued. Labor comfortably won the election, regaining most of the seats it had lost in 1913. In the House of Representatives Labor held 42 seats to the Liberals' 32 and one Independent, and increased its majority in the Senate winning 31 seats to the Liberals' 5. Previously the difference had been 29 to 7. Voter turnout was 73.5%.¹⁰⁹

The Sixth Parliament (8 October 1914 to 26 March 1917)

Fisher becomes Prime Minister

Parliament resumed on 8 October 1914 with Fisher as Prime Minister, Hughes as his deputy and Cook as Opposition Leader. The Governor-General's speech reiterated the Government's commitment of troops to the war. It noted that the Australian Navy had been placed at the disposal of the British Admiralty and that its presence had ensured that the waters around Samoa and New Guinea had been kept clear of enemy ships. Nevertheless, it recorded the loss of the Australian submarine AE1 in that campaign. The speech also pledged a gift of £100,000 to Belgium and outlined proposed wartime measures, such as a pension scheme for Australians engaged in active service and their dependants, a uniform gauge for the railways and laws relating to trading with the enemy.¹¹⁰ Even as his Government was immersed in the war crisis, Fisher continued to hope that Labor's vision for Australia's national development and social reform would stand as a model for regenerating

104. J Curtis, *'To the last man' – Australia's entry to war in 1914*, Research paper series, 2014–15, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 2014, accessed 25 August 2014.

105. E Barton, 'Question: South African war', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 14 January 1902, p. 8741, accessed 19 August 2014.

106. *'Effect on elections. Will they be postponed'*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 August 1914, p. 10, accessed 8 April 2015.

107. Ibid.

108. J Beaumont, *'Going to war 1914–18: the view from the Australian Parliament'*, Vital issues seminar, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 19 March 2014, p. 3, accessed 26 August 2014; and G Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, op. cit., p. 138.

109. S Barber and S Johnson, *Federal election results 1901–2014*, Research paper series, 2014–15, Parliamentary Library, 17 July 2014, accessed 8 April 2015.

110. Australia, House of Representatives, *Votes and proceedings*, no. 1, 8 October 1914, p. 1.



the 'Old Land': 'It is enough for us to know that we are a progressive country ... that, taking all in all ... perhaps socially the most progressive in the world'.¹¹¹

Australia's engagement begins

The first convoy carrying troops from the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and the New Zealand Expeditionary Force (NZEAF) departed from Albany in Western Australia on 1 November 1914.

A little over a week later, on 9 November, one of the escorts, HMAS Sydney, destroyed the German cruiser SMS Emden off the Cocos (Keeling)

Islands.¹¹² Two days later the Prime Minister expressed his delight to the House. After outlining the nature of the engagement, he read out some congratulatory telegrams, including one from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and then said:

There is a host of other telegrams from within Australia and from individuals outside the Commonwealth, but I do not think I need trouble the House with them. I have only to add that I do not think there is a soul in Australia but feels very happy indeed that such an opportunity arose, and such a success has followed the first serious naval action by our own ships.¹¹³

Although Labor was in power, it was hardly united. Two strong men, Hughes from NSW and Victoria's Frank Anstey (ALP, Bourke, Vic.) were opposed on most issues relating to the war, including the gift to Belgium. Hughes' 'right-wing realism' was at odds with Anstey's 'idealistic socialism'.¹¹⁴ Whereas Hughes broadly viewed the war through the prism of good versus evil, Anstey viewed it as a war between opposing capitalists where the outcome would be 'the enslavement of labour'.¹¹⁵ Anstey was supported in his opposition to Hughes by Frank Brennan (ALP, Batman, Vic.), William Maloney (ALP, Melbourne, Vic.) and King O'Malley (ALP, Darwin, Tas.).¹¹⁶

War Precautions Act 1914

Parliament quickly enacted the [War Precautions Act 1914](#) in late October 1914.¹¹⁷ The Act enabled regulations to be made by the executive branch of government for the public safety and defence of Australia. As Hughes put it:

The Bill confers upon the Commonwealth power to make orders and regulations of a far reaching character, and, as honorable members may see in clauses 4 and 5, is mainly directed to preventing the leakage of important secrets, to secure the safety of means of communication, railways, docks, harbors, or public works, and to deal effectively with aliens, and, in certain circumstances, with naturalized persons. Its aim is to prevent the disclosure of important information, to give power to deport, and otherwise deal with aliens, to interrogate and obtain information in various ways, and to appoint officers to carry into effect any orders or regulations which may be made under the Bill.¹¹⁸

111. A Fisher, 'Question: Ministerial Statement: Paper', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 15 April 1915, p. 2369, accessed 19 January 2015; N Meaney, *Australia and world crisis, 1914–1923*, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 2009, p. 12.

112. AWM, [HMAS Sydney](#), AWM website, accessed 19 August 2014.

113. A Fisher, 'Question: Destruction of Emden by H.M.A.S. Sydney', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 11 November 1914, p. 450, accessed 19 August 2014.

114. G Souter, op. cit., p. 140.

115. Cited in I Turner, '[Anstey, Francis George \(Frank\) \(1865–1940\)](#)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, published first in hardcopy 1979, accessed 9 April 2015.

116. *Ibid.*, pp. 140–1.

117. [War Precautions Act 1914](#), ComLaw, accessed 9 April 2015.

118. W Hughes, 'Second reading speech: War Precautions Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 28 October 1914, p. 369, accessed 19 August 2014.

Whilst such legislation granting government emergency powers to provide for internal security on the home front during wartime was not remarkable, 'in practice it gave the executive extraordinary discretion and arbitrary power' over civil society.¹¹⁹ At the outbreak of war, for example, 'enemy aliens' of German or Austrian birth were required to register with the police and eventually forced into internment.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, the Opposition was prepared to trust the Government that these measures were necessary, with Cook saying:

Recognising that these drastic powers are necessary to enable those in our midst, who seek to destroy the integrity and to injure the interests of the Empire, to be dealt with, I shall give the Government cordial support in passing this and other measures having that object in view.¹²¹

Although this Bill quickly became law, another such Bill (War Precautions Bill 1915) was brought in six months later in April 1915 on the basis that the 1914 Act was found to be insufficiently detailed to cover the Government's exercise of its powers in times of war. In his second reading speech, the Assistant Minister to the Minister for the Navy, Jens Jensen (ALP, Bass, Tas.), said the Bill:

... concerns chiefly matters of detail, and is intended to fill up gaps which have been found to exist under the operation of the original Act. It makes it clear that offences against the regulations are punishable on summary conviction ... civilians who are charged under the War Precautions Act shall have the right to trial in a civil Court, a right now non-existent.¹²²

He praised manufacturers for their cooperation and for accepting the prices at which the Commonwealth had acquired goods. This legislation closely followed that which was enacted in Britain.¹²³ Opposition Leader Cook accepted the need for such 'extraordinary' powers but cautioned the Government to: 'Take your Bill; use it wisely, as no doubt you will; use it, anyhow, in the interests of the country, and for the purpose of securing the safety and the welfare of its people'.¹²⁴

He wondered if the legislation was constitutional but felt that this was not the time to test that possibility. He also sought, and received, assurance that the provisions of the Bill would be limited to the duration of the war.¹²⁵ James Mathews (ALP, Melbourne Ports, Vic.) was less accepting. He was concerned that freedom of speech would be curbed by section 4(d) of the Bill which would enable:

The Governor-General [to] make regulations for securing the public safety and the defence of the Commonwealth ... (d) to prevent the spread of false reports or reports likely to cause disaffection to His Majesty or public alarm, or to interfere with the success of His Majesty's forces by land or sea, or to prejudice His Majesty's relations with foreign powers.¹²⁶

Mathews was also concerned that the Bill prevented servicemen, who were required to have matters heard by a military court, from having the same access as civilians to the civil courts.¹²⁷ Furthermore, Charles McGrath (ALP, Ballaarat, Vic.) felt that too much power was being placed in the hands of the military.¹²⁸ Concern was also expressed that the Bill allowed the Executive to make regulations, thus bypassing Parliament.¹²⁹ It was also argued that Australia was not facing a national crisis and that 'there is no fear of invasion of Australia'.¹³⁰ Hughes

119. J Beaumont, 'Going to war 1914–18: the view from the Australian Parliament', op. cit., p. 4.

120. According to Beaumont, some 6,890 people were interned by the end of the war as a result of the legislation..

121. J Cook, 'Second reading speech: War Precautions Bill', House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 28 October 1914, p. 371, accessed 19 August 2014.

122. J Jensen, 'Second reading speech: War Precautions Bill', House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 23 April 1915, p. 2626, accessed 19 August 2014.

123. Ibid.

124. J Cook, 'Second reading speech: War Precautions Bill (No. 2)', House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 23 April 1915, p. 2628, accessed 19 August 2014.

125. Ibid.

126. J Mathews, 'Second reading speech: War Precautions Bill (No. 2)', House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 23 April 1915, p. 2629, accessed 19 August 2014.

127. Ibid.

128. C McGrath, 'Second reading speech: War Precautions Bill (No. 2)', House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 28 April 1915, p. 2671, accessed 19 August 2014.

129. E Riley, 'Second reading speech: War Precautions Bill (No. 2)', House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 28 April 1915, p. 2656, accessed 19 August 2014.

130. R Massey-Greene, 'Second reading speech: War Precautions Bill (No. 2)', House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 28 April 1915, p. 2666, accessed 19 August 2014.

contended that the current war did require such measures but that the Government would not abuse them.¹³¹ He further pointed out that in the six months since the enactment of the [War Precautions Act](#) there had not been 'one instance of an abuse of power'.¹³²

Gallipoli

While Parliament was debating these measures, Australian and New Zealand forces landed at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 as part of an Allied campaign to capture the Gallipoli peninsula. A few days later Fisher informed the House of this saying: 'news reaches us that the action is proceeding satisfactorily'. He then read out a cablegram from the Secretary of State for the Colonies: 'His Majesty's Government desire me to offer you their warmest congratulations on the splendid gallantry and magnificent achievement of your contingent in the successful progress of the operations at the Dardanelles.'¹³³

He then read out the Government's reply sent through the Governor-General:

The Government and people of Australia are deeply gratified to learn that their troops have won distinction in their first encounter with the enemy. We are confident that they will carry the King's colours to further victory.¹³⁴



Matters about Gallipoli and Egypt raised in Parliament mainly focussed on the problem of gaining information about casualties from that front and the raising of individual cases in which letters from there had taken a long time to reach their anxious relatives. For example, Arthur Rodgers (Lib, Wannon, Vic.) said:

The chief object of my rising is to make a suggestion to the Postmaster-General with regard to communications passing between Australia and the seat of war, in which we are more directly interested—Gallipoli and Egypt. I want to ask the Postmaster-General if he and his Government will take into favorable consideration the question of appointing an officer directly responsible to the Minister to look after the delivery of all correspondence and the despatch of all cable matter from the seat of war to Australia. Hansard is bristling with illustrations of the miscarriage of communications between relatives in Australia and soldiers at the front. Some have been rather heart-rending, mothers and widows having had to wait six weeks or two months to learn the fate of their relatives.¹³⁵

The landing at Gallipoli was named Anzac Day in 1916 and marked by parades, church services and ceremonies which were held in London as well as Australia. Throughout the war it would be commemorated in patriotic rallies and used as a means to raise recruiting levels.¹³⁶ It

received little attention in Parliament except when MPs raised questions about things that went awry on the day. For example, in 1916 the Minister for the Navy was asked if he had seen a press report:

... that the officers on board the transport which arrived in Sydney on Thursday last with wounded soldiers celebrated Anzac Day by sitting down to a sumptuous repast worthy of Lucullus, whilst the rank and file had stew inflicted upon them three times that day, and were given the privilege of purchasing the menu cards from the officers' mess at 6d. each.¹³⁷

131. W Hughes, 'Second reading speech: War Precautions Bill (No. 2)', House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 23 April 1915, p. 2635, accessed 19 August 2014.

132. W Hughes, 'Second reading speech: War Precautions Bill (No. 2)', House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 28 April 1915, p. 2686, accessed 19 August 2014. Add Act ref or do not hyperlink

133. Cited by A Fisher, 'Expeditionary Forces', House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 29 April 1915, p. 2724, accessed 19 August 2014.

134. Ibid.

135. A Rodgers, 'Question: Estimates, 1914–15', House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 30 June 1915, p. 4490, accessed 19 August 2014.

136. AWM, '[The Anzac Day tradition](#)', AWM website, accessed 19 August 2014.

137. R Orchard, 'Question: Food on troopships', House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 9 May 1916, p. 7694, accessed 19 August 2014.

On another occasion, James Fenton (ALP, Maribyrnong, Vic.) wanted to know why the Governor-General had left 'the saluting base at Parliament House ... before the arrival of the bulk of the returned soldiers in the Anzac Day procession.'¹³⁸

Federal Parliamentary War Committee

At the end of December 1914 after three months of managing important decisions about the war, an exhausted Fisher left for New Zealand, encouraged by Hughes, to recuperate for a month. However, he did mix recreation with some business by taking along some staff, an Opposition MP who was also a friend, and a 'young political journalist' Keith Murdoch.¹³⁹

In mid-1915, in a show of bipartisanship, the Government established an advisory body consisting of eight members and four senators, half nominated by the Government and half by the Opposition. The Federal Parliamentary War Committee focussed only on issues referred to it by the Government and dealt mainly with recruitment and matters facing returned soldiers.¹⁴⁰

Fisher wearied of Parliament and resigned on 27 October 1915 after he acceded to pressure from the Australian Workers' Union which had sought amendments to the *Arbitration Act* before Parliament adjourned. However, this meant that he would have to break an undertaking to Cook that Parliament would be adjourned on 2 September. He apologised for breaking the arrangement, resigned, and went on to become Australia's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom in early 1916.¹⁴¹

Hughes becomes Prime Minister

Hughes took over as Prime Minister, retaining the portfolio of Attorney-General and increasing the size of his ministry to nine. Senator George Pearce (ALP, WA) was his deputy. Hughes pushed on with his earlier attempts to amend the Constitution in the six areas of trade and commerce (section 51(i)), corporations (section 51(xx)), industrial matters (section 51(xxv)), and to empower the Parliament to make laws with respect to railway disputes, trusts and the nationalisation of monopolies. A polling date was set for December 1915 to hold a prices referendum. However, he was persuaded that war was not the right time to seek approval from the population for such wide-ranging powers. Instead, he sought and received agreement from the state premiers (five of whom were Labor) to refer the necessary powers from the states to the Commonwealth as allowed for under section 51(xxvii) of the Constitution. However, as Anstey predicted, the referrals were blocked by the states' conservative upper houses and never eventuated. Hughes recalled Parliament to reinstate the referendum Bills but time ran out before he departed via North America for London near the end of January 1916 leaving Pearce in charge.¹⁴² Hughes was heavily criticised within the labour movement for abandoning the prices referendum. He was called 'a doddering Tory' by *Labor Call* on 9 December 1915 and was almost censured by the Federal Labor Executive at a special meeting in January 1916.¹⁴³

Despite these failed attempts to amend the Constitution, in June 1916 the High Court dismissed a challenge to the *War Precautions Act 1914* and its regulations, thereby giving the defence powers under section 51 of the Constitution a very wide interpretation.¹⁴⁴ Hughes was away for seven months and, as Souter has observed, it was as if he had 'taken the authority of parliament with him'.¹⁴⁵ The House sat for only ten days in May and only 32 days for the whole year. In Parliament's first 15 years it had sat for an average of 88 days per year. Table 6 gives further details of the number of days the House of Representatives sat each year from 1901 to 1918.

Arriving in England on 7 March 1916, Hughes' energy captured the public imagination. His speeches were 'electrifying' and reached a wide audience as he called for increased economic pressure to be put on Germany and for there to be closer collaboration with Britain's empire countries.¹⁴⁶ He turned for advice to the

138. J Fenton, 'The Imperial Conference: Australia's representation', House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 26 April 1918, p. 4213, accessed 19 August 2014.

139. D Day, *Andrew Fisher: Prime Minister of Australia*, Fourth Estate, London, 2008, pp. 304–5.

140. Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, op. cit., p. 164.

141. *Ibid.*, pp. 142–3.

142. *Ibid.*, pp. 145–6.

143. J Beaumont, *Broken nation: Australians in the Great War*, op. cit., p. 145.

144. [Farey v Burvett](#), [1916] HCA 36, (year) 21 CLR 433, accessed 22 October 2014.

145. Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, op. cit., p. 146. The House of Representatives has only ever sat once for fewer days in a year and that was in 1937, an election year, when it sat for 29 days (House of Representatives Chamber Research Office).

146. LF Fitzhardinge, op. cit.

aforementioned Keith Murdoch who was in charge of an Australian newspaper cable service. Bypassing his High Commissioner, Fisher, Hughes dealt directly with the top echelons of the British Government and attended meetings of its Cabinet and War Committee. He also visited the Western Front in France.¹⁴⁷

Hughes returned to Australia reinforced in his conviction that military conscription was necessary if Australia and the Commonwealth were to be protected and if responsibility was to be shared equitably. He told Parliament at the end of August 1916:

In view of certain urgent and grave communications from the War Council of Great Britain, and of the present state of the war, and the duty of Australia in regard thereto, and as a result of long and earnest deliberation, the Government have arrived at the conclusion that the voluntary system of recruiting cannot be relied upon to supply that steady stream of reinforcements necessary to maintain the Australian Expeditionary Forces at their full strength.¹⁴⁸

He then went on to spell out the exact nature of the problem:

The number of reinforcements required for next month is 32,500, and subsequently 16,500 a month. The number of recruits for June was 6,375; July, 6,170; and up to 23rd August, 4,144; or a total of 16,689. The most recent list for eleven days shows the number of casualties to be 6,743. These figures speak for themselves. They show that the position which confronts the Government, the Parliament, and the people, is that while it is our clear duty to keep the number of our Forces up to their full strength, the stream of recruits under the voluntary system has fallen to less than one-third of what is necessary.¹⁴⁹

Hughes was initially inclined to bring about conscription through an Act of Parliament as had been done in Britain and New Zealand. However, he soon realised that this path might not guarantee success. There was much opposition from within his own side of politics and from the trade union movement which saw conscription as a human rights issue and as a way of reducing working conditions. Introducing conscription through regulation may also have been problematic as there was no guarantee Hughes could rely on the Executive Council and the Senate might disallow such a regulation.¹⁵⁰

Military Service Referendum Bill

This left a plebiscite as the only option.¹⁵¹ Hughes introduced the Military Service Referendum Bill on 13 September 1916 and exacerbated the split within the Labor Party which had been apparent from late 1915. Trade and Customs Minister, Frank Tudor (ALP, Yarra, Vic.), resigned the next day, with three other ministers doing likewise before the October plebiscite. The Bill finally passed Parliament on Saturday 23 September with the plebiscite to be held on 28 October 1916.

The emotive plebiscite campaign over conscription divided Australian society, with various motivations fuelling the arguments both for and against. For example, those who supported conscription claimed that it would be the most effective means of building a force large enough to quickly and decisively win the war.¹⁵² Additionally, pro-conscriptionists contended that conscription would ensure equality of sacrifice in the war effort, and cited New Zealand's introduction of conscription as a position to emulate to maintain fairness and Australia's own self-respect.¹⁵³

Regarding the anti-conscriptionist cause, their arguments included a strong aversion to citizens being forced to serve in an overseas conflict against their will and without consultation, as well as fears that conscription would lead to requirements for female, child and immigrant labour.¹⁵⁴

147. Souter, *op. cit.*, p146.

148. W Hughes, 'Question: Ministerial war policy', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 30 August 1916, p. 8402, accessed 19 August 2014.

149. *Ibid.*

150. Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

151. A plebiscite is used to decide a national question that does not affect the Constitution.

152. W Hughes, 'Speech: Ministerial war policy', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 1 September 1916, p. 8421, accessed 8 September 2014.

153. Australian Labor Party, *Report of proceedings of the special Commonwealth conference called to deal with matters arising out of the conscription issue*, Labor Call, Melbourne, 1917, p. 15 accessed; J Fowler, 'Second reading speech: Military Service Referendum Bill year', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 14 September 1916, p. 8598, accessed 8 April 2015.

154. Australian Labor Party, 'Report of proceedings of the special Commonwealth conference', *op. cit.*, p. 32; F Tudor, 'article title', *The Argus*, Melbourne, 18 December 1917, p. 8.

The question put to the people on 28 October was: ‘Are you in favour of the Government having, in this grave emergency, the same compulsory powers over citizens in regard to requiring their military service, for the term of this war, outside the Commonwealth, as it has now in regard to military service within the Commonwealth?’¹⁵⁵

The answer was ‘No’ overall, by a margin of 72,476 votes (3.22%) and ‘No’ in three states (NSW, Queensland and South Australia). Of the members of the AIF who cast formal votes, 72,399 (55.14%) voted in favour of conscription and 58,894 (44.86%) voted against it.¹⁵⁶

Table 4: Results (votes and percentage) of the 1916 Military Service plebiscite

	For		Against	
New South Wales	356,805	42.92%	474,544	57.08%
Victoria	353,930	51.88%	328,216	48.12%
Queensland	144,200	47.71%	158,051	52.29%
South Australia	87,924	42.44%	119,236	57.56%
Western Australia	94,069	69.71%	40,884	30.29%
Tasmania	48,493	56.17%	37,833	43.83%
Federal Territories	2,136	62.73%	1,269	37.27%
Total	1,087,557	48.39%	1,160,033	51.61%

Source: *Parliamentary Handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia 2014*¹⁵⁷

At the next Caucus meeting on 14 November 1916, Hughes’ leadership was challenged. His response was to demand that those who supported him to follow him out of the room. Thirteen members and 11 senators from a caucus of 64 did so. This group decided to act as a separate party (later named the National Labor Party) and to support Hughes’ new ministry. Hughes gained the support of the Liberals as long as he concentrated on the war effort. Governor-General Munro Ferguson accepted that Hughes could continue to govern and granted him a commission to form a new government.¹⁵⁸

In December 1916, a special conference of the Labor Party expelled all those who had supported conscription. In early 1917 Hughes formed a fusion/coalition with the Liberals led by Joseph Cook. Hughes needed the electoral organisation of an established party and the Liberals needed to avoid an early election as they would be hampered by the ‘No’ vote in the plebiscite. They agreed to support Hughes as Prime Minister as long as he tried to extend Parliament to October 1918 or six months after the end of the war, whichever came sooner.¹⁵⁹

Parliament resumed on 8 February 1917 and Hughes’ third ministry was sworn in on 17 February. Hughes sought to make good his undertaking to extend the life of the Parliament. This could only be done through changing the Constitution or by an amendment of the *Commonwealth Constitution Act* in the United Kingdom Parliament. The former course of action required a referendum which, given the electorate’s recent propensity to reject changes, was not considered to be a viable option.

The latter course required a resolution to be passed by both Houses before a proposed amendment could be voted on in the British Parliament.¹⁶⁰ The resolution which passed the House of Representatives on 2 March by 34 votes to 17 votes was:

Whereas, by reason of the existence of a state of war, and by reason of the immediate meeting of an Imperial Conference for the discussion of questions of paramount importance to the Commonwealth and to the British Empire, it is imperatively necessary that the forthcoming elections for both Houses of the Parliament of the Commonwealth should be postponed: And whereas, in the existing circumstances, this can only be effected by an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom: Now therefore this House resolves: That the Imperial Government be requested to provide by legislation for the extension of the duration of the present House of Representatives until the expiration of six months after the final declaration of peace, or until the 8th day of October, 1918, whichever is the shorter period, and for such provision in relation to the terms of senators and the holding of Senate elections as

155. [Parliamentary Handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia](#), op. cit., p. 404, accessed 9 April 2015.

156. Ibid.

157. [Parliamentary Handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia](#), op. cit., p. 404, accessed 8 April 2015.

158. Souter, op. cit., *Acts of Parliament*, p. 150.

159. Ibid., p. 151.

160. Unlike Australia, Britain did not have an election during the war. I White and M Durkin, *General election dates 1832–2005*, Standard note, 04512, House of Commons Library, 15 November 2007, accessed 17 April 2015.

will enable the next elections for the Senate to be held at the same time as the next general election for the House of Representatives, and consequential adjustments to be made regarding subsequent elections.¹⁶¹

However, the numbers were against Hughes in the Senate, 20 to 16. As 'luck' would have it, three of Tasmania's four Labor senators were in poor health. So, the Government sent one (Senator James Long (ALP, Tas.)) off to the Dutch East Indies on a trade mission, another (Senator James Guy, (ALP, Tas.)) reported from hospital his inability to attend Parliament, and the third (Senator Rudolph Ready, (ALP, Tas.)) tendered his resignation after being alarmed by a fainting episode in Parliament House two days earlier.

With Ready resigning at 6 pm on 1 March, Hughes immediately sought to fill the casual vacancy with someone who would support his resolution. In a series of events worthy of the script for any modern day political drama, he had his man, John Earle, former Premier of Tasmania, ready to be sworn in when the Senate met the following morning. However, two Tasmanian Liberal senators (Thomas Bakhap and John Keating), affronted by what they viewed as an attack on their state, indicated that they would vote against the resolution. Hughes' manoeuvrings had come to nought and there was no point in putting the resolution to a vote.

Commonwealth Electoral (War-time) Act 1917

With an election having been called but with Parliament yet to be dissolved, the [Commonwealth Electoral \(War-time\) Act 1917](#) was passed on 17 March.¹⁶² The Act applied specifically to elections held during the war and for six months after it had ended. All members of the forces of voting age, including munitions and other workers, and Army nurses, serving overseas at the time of an election were entitled to vote irrespective of whether or not they were enrolled. This could be in the division in which they resided, or else in the division in which their next of kin resided. Such electors would vote for either the 'Ministerialist', that is, the Government or the opposition party, rather than for a candidate. Their votes would thus be counted as a vote for the candidates (Senate) or candidate (House of Representatives) from the chosen party in the division in which they were judged to be voting. The Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition were to designate their party candidates in each division or state. This model, as Patrick Glynn MP noted in his second reading speech, was based on the Canadian system: 'As the ordinary electoral method cannot be followed, it is proposed to allow our men abroad to vote for definite groups, that is, for Ministerialists, or for Oppositionists, as they choose.'¹⁶³

Initially, the Government did not intend for the Act to cover munition workers who had been invited 'Home' by the Imperial Government because, although they were on lists, and could be regarded 'as associated with our Military Forces', they were 'so scattered about that it would be very difficult to provide machinery' to enable their vote to be registered.¹⁶⁴ People who worked on the transport ships were also to be excluded from the provisions of the Act because 'their names are not on official lists, most of them will be at sea when the vote is taken, and, in any case, their votes could not easily be allocated to particular districts'.¹⁶⁵ Munition workers who went to Britain of their own accord were also to be excluded because their names were not known.¹⁶⁶

However, the Opposition asked that Australians working in the larger munition and ship-building factories in Britain be included in the provisions of the Bill. The Opposition also sought to have the names of the candidates on the ballot paper, not just the parties ('Ministerial' or 'Opposition'), or at least have the names more readily available to each soldier than just having a list of candidates distributed amongst them. Another complicating factor was that before the split in the Labor Party in 1916, over 100,000 men had gone overseas and were unlikely to have closely followed the political situation back in Australia.¹⁶⁷ Adding to the possible confusion was the fact that there had been three changes of government, three ministries and three oppositions since the war began.

161. W Hughes, 'Postponement of parliamentary elections: Imperial Conference', House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 2 March 1917, pp. 10912–3, accessed 19 August 2014.

162. [Commonwealth Electoral \(War-time\) Act 1917](#), ComLaw, accessed 9 April 2015.

163. P Glynn, 'Second reading speech: Commonwealth Electoral (War-time) Bill', House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 14 March 1917, p. 11492, accessed 20 August 2014.

164. *Ibid.*

165. *Ibid.*

166. *Ibid.*

167. F Tudor, 'Second reading speech: Commonwealth Electoral (War-time) Bill', House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 15 March 1917, p. 11596, accessed 19 August 2014.

During debate on the Bill it was pointed out that these provisions only applied to soldiers aged 21 or older as that was the voting age at the time. As William McWilliams (NAT, Franklin, Tas.) protested: 'A young man who is old enough to fight for his country ought to be considered old enough to vote at elections for the Parliament of his country.'¹⁶⁸

The Government responded that giving all overseas soldiers the vote would involve changing the electoral law and that the extended franchise would be withdrawn at the end of the war. Minister for Home and Territories, Patrick Glynn, said: 'I think that it is better to keep the Bill strictly to its original object, which is to prevent those at the front from being deprived of their existing rights.'¹⁶⁹

The Act also prevented naturalised British subjects born in enemy territory from voting unless they had arrived in Australia from France, Italy or Denmark before those countries became part of Germany or Austria. An electoral official could check the bona fides of prospective voters by asking them: 'Are you a naturalized British subject who was born in an enemy country within the meaning of the *Commonwealth Electoral (War-time) Act 1917*?'¹⁷⁰

1917 election (5 May)

Parliament was dissolved on 26 March and elections were held on 5 May 1917. The election campaign was all about the war. Hughes campaigned for the seat of Bendigo with the slogan 'Win the War', accompanied by three Win the War Senate candidates.¹⁷¹ He railed against those who profited from the war and proposed a tax on war profits and the continuation of controls on prices. His 'populate or perish' message was largely directed at the country constituency for whom he promised a soldier settlement scheme for those returning from the war.

Frank Tudor led Labor, also pledging to win the war but without conscription. He too put forward benefit schemes for returned servicemen. The six constitutional amendments put before the people in 1913 would again be presented to them.

Hughes decided not only to move electorates, but also states, as he moved from West Sydney which was staunchly Labor to Bendigo (Victoria) which was marginally so.¹⁷² He denied there would be another referendum on conscription 'unless Australia and the Empire were threatened with disaster'.¹⁷³

Hughes' Nationalists won the election handsomely gaining 53 lower house seats to Labor's 22. They also won all 18 Senate seats up for election, which brought their total to 24 seats compared to Labor's 12.

The election also saw the end of King O'Malley's (ALP, Darwin, Tas.) parliamentary career as he was defeated, and those of two German-born MPs, George Dankel (Nationalist, Boothby, SA) and Jacob Stumm (Liberal, Lilley, Qld) who retired. Three female candidates again failed to win election, the same outcome for the female candidates at the two previous elections.¹⁷⁴

The seventh Parliament (14 June 1917 to 11 November 1918)

Parliament opened on 14 June 1917 in order to elect a new Speaker (William Johnson) and pass two supply bills. It was then prorogued until 11 July and the swearing in of 18 new senators. However, both houses met unofficially on 15 June to discuss recruitment for the war.

Hughes had sought to dispense with the Governor-General's opening speech outlining his Government's program because he was not fully ready. However, this was resisted by the Governor-General and the program was presented. A committee composed of members from both sides of politics would aid the Director-General of Recruiting to obtain the 7,000 volunteers a month who were needed to maintain Australia's five infantry divisions in the war at full strength. The income tax rate would be increased and there would be a tax on war time profits. Industrial action that would adversely affect the war effort would be prevented through

168. W McWilliams, 'Second reading speech: Commonwealth Electoral (War-time) Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 15 March 1917, p. 11570, accessed 19 August 2014.

169. P Glynn, 'Second reading speech: Commonwealth Electoral (War-time) Bill', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 15 March 1917, p. 11586, accessed 19 August 2014.

170. G Orr, B Mercurio and G Williams, eds, *Realising democracy: electoral law in Australia*, Federation Press, Annandale, NSW, 2003, pp. 94–5.

171. 'Billy Hughes, 1917', Australian federal election speeches, Museum of Australian Democracy, accessed 9 April 2015. The Win-the-War group became known as the Nationalist Party.

172. Aiton and Lane, *The first century*, op. cit., pp. 26–7.

173. Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, op. cit., p. 153.

174. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

amendments to the *Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904*. The Government's unpreparedness was exposed when the Opposition did not engage in the Address-in-Reply debate and Hughes was forced to adjourn the House for a week to work on the details of its measures.¹⁷⁵

Meanwhile, the war was taking its toll on the industrial front with a general strike over August and September involving workers from the tramways, railways, waterfront and mines, as well as civil demonstrations, such as Melbourne's food riots where crowds assembled on a daily basis to denounce profiteering while the people starved.¹⁷⁶ Dissatisfaction was expressed in an economic climate of rising prices, wage differences, war profits and high interest rates on war loans. Hughes saw the disturbance in political terms blaming it on the infiltration of the International Workers of the World (IWW)—an international revolutionary movement which opposed the war—and the Irish into Labor organisations and their unwillingness to accept their electoral defeat. Although the IWW, known as the 'Wobblies', did not pose a serious political threat in Australia, Hughes and other pro-conscriptionists had come to view their activities as subversive. In 1916, for example, twelve IWW leaders in NSW were arrested and tried for forgery, treason, felony, conspiracy and arson following a series of suspicious fires in Sydney. They were all found guilty and received prison sentences, but Hughes sought to destroy the movement entirely.¹⁷⁷ In December 1916, he introduced the Unlawful Associations Bill, declaring to Parliament that the IWW had: '... declared war upon society; upon the people of this country ... this organization holds a dagger at the heart of society ... As it seeks to destroy us, we must in self defence destroy it'.¹⁷⁸

The resulting legislation criminalised the organisation, but it did not completely destroy it. In July 1917, the Commonwealth Parliament passed amendments to the [Unlawful Associations Act 1916](#) to make it an offence to be a member of such an organisation in Australia.¹⁷⁹ At the peak of the industrial unrest in 1917, Hughes wrote to the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, expressing his views on the impact that such international movements were having on the Australian home front: 'The Irish have captured the political machinery of the Labor organisations—assisted by the Syndicalists and IWW people ... One of their archbishops—Mannix—is a Sinn Feiner'.¹⁸⁰ These sentiments may have been an exaggeration, yet they were also understandable. Just two days prior to penning his letter there had been a large demonstration outside Parliament House led by Labor supporter and suffragette, Adela Pankhurst, aiming to reduce the cost of living and free up supplies of basic food items. This was contrary to a government regulation prohibiting such demonstrations within a large area around the building, and Pankhurst was subsequently arrested.¹⁸¹

Pressure was also building on a reluctant Hughes who had made an election promise not to reconsider conscription. There had been heavy losses on the Western Front as Germany had been able to focus its forces there. This followed the October Revolution by the Bolsheviks in Russia which took it out as a force against Germany. Apart from the heavy casualties (38,000 between August and November), voluntary enlistment was well below the required 7,000 per month.¹⁸² America had adopted conscription when it entered the war in April. Canada had done so too in October by an Act of Parliament. There had even been a suggestion by Sir William Irvine (Nationalist, Flinders, Vic.) that the UK Parliament pass legislation for conscription in Australia. Hughes decided that the seriousness of the war situation warranted him breaking his promise. As Parliament was not sitting, he arranged by regulation under the [War Precautions Act 1914](#) for another plebiscite to be held on 20 December 1917.¹⁸³

This time the campaign engendered even more passion than the first with violence and heckling a common feature of many rallies on both sides. The question to be put to the people itself was criticised as being dishonest because it made no reference to compulsion. It simply asked: 'Are you in favour of the proposal of the

175. *Ibid.*, pp. 154–5.

176. J Smart, 'Feminists, food and the fair price: the cost of living demonstrations in Melbourne, August-September 1917', in J Damousi and M Lake, eds, *Gender and war: Australians at war in the twentieth century*, Carlton University Press, Melbourne, 1995, p. 274.

177. Beaumont, *Broken nation: Australians in the Great War*, op. cit., pp. 232–3.

178. W Hughes, 'Unlawful Associations Bill', House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 18 December 1916, p. 10100, accessed 22 January 2015; Beaumont, *Broken nation: Australians in the Great War*, op. cit., p. 260.

179. [Unlawful Associations Act 1916](#), ComLaw, accessed 9 April 2015.

180. Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, op. cit., p. 155. Syndicalism was a movement that advocated direct action by the working class to abolish the capitalist order and replace it with workers organised into production units. See: 'Syndicalism', [Encyclopaedia Britannica](#), (online), accessed 22 January 2015.

181. Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, op. cit., p. 156. Pankhurst was co-founder of both the Communist Party of Australia and the Australia First Movement.

182. *Ibid.*

183. *Ibid.*; [War Precautions Act 1914](#), ComLaw, accessed 9 April 2015.

Commonwealth Government for reinforcing the Australian Imperial Forces?’¹⁸⁴ Hughes gained the support of NSW Premier Holman by agreeing not to censor campaign material and undertaking to resign if the vote went against him.

Hughes disregarded the first commitment as military censors cut press reports about ‘No’ campaign speeches, especially in Queensland where the anti-conscription campaign was led by Labor Premier Tom Ryan. Reports of one speech were cut so severely that he repeated it in Parliament so that it could be published in Hansard. However, a determined Hughes went to Brisbane and had 3,300 copies of the relevant Hansard seized.¹⁸⁵

Hansard’s official record of debates in the Commonwealth Parliament during the war, although subject to oversight by military censors, was largely untouched. As is the case today, alterations were usually made by the speakers themselves or the Hansard editors. This is not to say that there were no issues of censorship.¹⁸⁶ On 2 October 1918, the House passed the following motion:

That, during the progress of the present war, Mr. Speaker be, and is hereby authorized, at his discretion, to direct the omission from *Hansard* of any remarks made in the House of Representatives in the course of debate, or in any other proceedings in the House of Representatives, to which his attention may be directed by the Law Officers of the Crown as being calculated to prejudice His Majesty’s relations with a foreign Power, or the successful prosecution of the war, or to imperil the safety of the Commonwealth.¹⁸⁷

The plebiscite resulted in an even more emphatic ‘No’ than the first one with the overall margin of 166,588 votes (7.58%), more than twice that in 1916. Furthermore, only two of the smaller states (Tasmania and Western Australia) voted ‘yes’. Of the members of the AIF who cast formal votes, 103,789 (52.5%) voted in favour of conscription and 93,910 (47.5%) voted against.¹⁸⁸ Only South Australian voters increased their vote in favour of conscription compared to the year before.

Table 5: Results (votes and percentage) of the 1917 Military Service plebiscite

State/Territory	For		Against	
New South Wales	341,256	41.16%	487,774	58.84%
Victoria	329,772	49.79%	332,490	50.21%
Queensland	132,771	44.02%	168,875	55.98%
South Australia	86,663	44.90%	106,364	55.10%
Western Australia	84,116	64.39%	46,522	35.61%
Tasmania	38,881	50.24%	38,502	49.76%
Federal Territories	1,700	58.22%	1,220	41.78%
Total	1,015,159	46.21%	1,181,747	53.79%

Source: Parliamentary Handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia 2014¹⁸⁹

Hughes tendered his resignation on 8 January 1918, but after consulting a number of people, including Opposition Leader Frank Tudor, Joseph Cook and Sir John Forrest, Governor-General Munro Ferguson swore in Hughes and his previous ministry on 10 January.¹⁹⁰

The Nationalist Party prevented Hughes from dropping Forrest and Patrick Glynn (NAT, Angas, SA) from his ministry. However, he arranged for Forrest to receive a peerage which entitled him to a seat in the House of Lords. Not to be outdone, Forrest initially threatened to sit in the Lords, the House of Representatives and in Cabinet, but ill health saw him resign from Parliament at the end of March. He died on the way to England early in September.¹⁹¹

Tudor moved a want of confidence motion against Hughes on 11 January:

184. [Parliamentary handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia](#), op. cit., p. 405, accessed 9 April 2015.

185. Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, op. cit., pp. 156–7.

186. For example, reprints of speeches by J Catts were seized from Parliament by a military officer and a police detective in February 1918. See Souter, op. cit., p. 166.

187. ‘Question: The war: House of Representatives debate’, House of Representatives, [Debates](#), 2 October 1918, p. 6560, accessed 19 August 2014.

188. [Parliamentary handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia](#), op. cit., p. 405

189. *Ibid.*

190. Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, op. cit., p. 157.

191. *Ibid.*, p. 158.



That the House protests against: (a) the repudiation of the pledges of the Prime Minister and other Ministers; (b) the political persecution of public men and other citizens and the press under the War Precautions Regulations during the recent Referendum campaign; (c) the deprivation of statutory electoral rights of Australian-born citizens by regulation behind the back of Parliament; (d) the general administration of public affairs.¹⁹²

Hughes survived the vote and set off in April for Britain and Europe forgetting to inform the Governor-General that he had appointed William Watt (Nationalist, Balacava, Vic.) as acting Prime Minister in his absence. Hughes was away from Australia for 17 months and was not in Parliament to celebrate the end of the war on 11 November 1918.¹⁹³

Legislative output

Parliament's legislative output during the war years was of necessity war-related, including passage of Supply Bills, War Precautions Bills and War Loan Bills. However, there were some Acts passed which had a more enduring impact on Australia than those which were specifically war-related. The Commonwealth entered the income tax area with the passing of the [Income Tax Assessment Act](#) and the [Income Tax Act](#) of 1915.¹⁹⁴ An organisation to manage the transcontinental railway was set up under the [Commonwealth Railways Act 1917](#).¹⁹⁵ The [Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918](#) was a major consolidation of prior legislation and introduced preferential voting for the House of Representatives. It also restored postal voting.¹⁹⁶

Table 6 shows that the House of Representatives sat for an average of 91.5 days from 1901 to 1913, compared to an average of 60.6 days during the war years. Whilst no explanation has been found in the parliamentary record as to why there were fewer sitting days during the war, possible reasons include the fact that there were two elections (1914 and 1917) and two plebiscites (1916 and 1917), and that Prime Minister Billy Hughes was away from the country for extended periods during 1916 and 1917. Some MPs visited England and Europe as civilians during the war. This included a group of six who attended the Empire Parliamentary Congress in London in 1916.

Members needed to ask the House for leave as section 38 of the Constitution stipulates: 'The place of a member shall become vacant if for two consecutive months of any session of the Parliament he, without the permission of the House, fails to attend the House.' Such leave was readily granted, especially for the nine MPs who went to war concurrent with their parliamentary terms (see Appendix 2, Table A), but also to others. On one occasion, Frank Anstey (ALP, Bourke, Vic.) was granted leave from the House for the remainder of the session to attend to 'urgent private business' and he departed for Europe in March 1918 'hurriedly and somewhat mysteriously'.¹⁹⁷

Despite reduced sitting days and absences, the Parliament managed to pass an average of 43.4 Acts during those years, compared to an average of 25.2 Acts per year in the first 13 years of the Commonwealth Parliament.

192. Australia, House of Representatives, 'Want of confidence in the Government', *Votes and Proceedings*, HVP 38, 11 January 1918, accessed 8 April 2015.

193. 'William Morris Hughes, 1915–23', Australia's Prime Ministers, Australian War Memorial, accessed 9 April 2015.

194. [Income Tax Assessment Act 1915](#) and [Income Tax Act 1915](#), ComLaw, all accessed 9 April 2015.

195. [Commonwealth Railways Act 1917](#), ComLaw, accessed 9 April 2015; Souter, op. cit., p. 164.

196. [Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918](#), ComLaw, accessed 9 April 2015. The story behind the passage of this Act, which is well told in Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, op. cit., pp. 164–6, involved the Government doing a deal with the Victorian Farmers' Union to introduce preferential voting while Hughes, who was suspicious of the system, was overseas; the introduction of the 'guillotine' to expedite the Bill in the House of Representatives; and the longest-ever speech in Parliament by Senate Opposition Leader, Senator Albert Gardiner, who spoke for 12 hours and 40 minutes in a stonewalling effort.

197. Australia, House of Representatives, 'Leave of absence to members', *Votes and Proceedings*, 44, 5 April 1918, p. 177, accessed 19 August 2014. It was understood that this was to visit his elderly mother. However, there were other reports that he was wanted by the Commonwealth police in relation to an egg being thrown at and hitting Prime Minister Billy Hughes at Warwick railway station in Queensland. See Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, op. cit., pp. 163–4; Fitzhardinge, op. cit.

Table 6: Number of Acts passed and sitting days in each year, 1901 to 1918

Year	Number of Acts passed	Number of House of Representatives sitting days
1901	17	113
1902	21	107
1903	21	78
1904	15	122
1905	26	90
1906	23	70
1907	12	97
1908	27	91
1909	29	98
1910	41	83
1911	29	61
1912	43	105
1913	24	74
Total (av./year) before war	328 (25.2)	1189 (91.5)
1914	36	61
1915	53	72
1916	41	32
1917	40	52
1918	47	86
Total (av./year) in war years	217 (43.4)	303 (60.6)
Total (av./year)	545 (30.3)	1492 (82.9)

Source: Chamber Research Office, House of Representatives.

War's end

By the end of the war 270 men had served in the Commonwealth Parliament at some point since its inception, including 90 senators, 186 members and six who served in both houses. Their broad socio-economic profile is outlined and discussed in Appendix 1.



Of these 270, 23 served in WW1, 16 of whom were MPs at some stage during the war years. Their names and those of other MPs who served in WW1 and the Colonial wars can be found in Appendix 2, Table B.

News of the end of the war reached Australia on the evening of Monday 11 November 1918. People poured onto the streets in celebration. The following afternoon the Senate, but not the House of Representatives, met to pass a motion to present an address to His Majesty the King. The address expressed 'unswerving loyalty and devotion' to the King, thanks to God, congratulations to the statesmen of the Allied powers, and gratitude to British and Allied forces for 'their stupendous efforts

and patriotic sacrifices extending over four years of unparalleled carnage':¹⁹⁸

Especially do we glory in the fact that the soldiers and sailors of Australia have, by their dauntless heroism and endurance, conspicuously assisted in re-establishing freedom and justice'. Then homage was paid to those who had

198. E Millen, 'Question: the war', Senate, *Debates*, 12 November 1918, p. 7643, accessed 19 August 2014.

died and then hope was expressed 'that the nations of the world may ere long enter into the enjoyment of an honorable and lasting peace.'¹⁹⁹

At the passing of the motion, the senators sang the National Anthem (God Save the King) and rendered three cheers. Cheers were also given for Field-Marshal Foch, for 'Our Volunteer Army' and for 'The conscript armies of our Allies'.²⁰⁰

The Senate had agreed to withhold presenting the address to the Governor-General until the House had also met and agreed to present their own address. They did this on Wednesday 13 November in a similar vein, preceded by a photograph of all members but without the presence of Hughes,²⁰¹ Cook, Anstey and five serving MPs.²⁰²

Australia as a nation was as old as many of its citizens who went to war, but Hughes' 'sturdy youth' of 1911 had grown up and shown itself to be a 'young man' ready, able and determined to take its place in the world. The last item of business before both addresses were presented to the Governor-General, was a notice of motion put by Acting Prime Minister William Watt who proposed:

That the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Australia declares that it is essential to the future safety and welfare of Australia that the captured German possessions in the Pacific, which are now occupied by the Australian and New Zealand troops, should not in any circumstances be restored to Germany, and that in the consideration and determination of proposals affecting the destination of those islands, Australia should be consulted.

Honorable Members. - Hear, hear!²⁰³

Britain's dominions had provided about a third of its fighting force. By the war's end, from a population of fewer than five million, 416,809 Australians had enlisted (about 8.4%). Of these 60,000 (14.4%) were killed and 156,000 (37.4%) were wounded or became prisoners of war.²⁰⁴ Whilst there is little dispute that the war imposed enormous costs on Australia, historians disagree about how far it yielded benefits to the young nation. Gavin Souter, for example, has remarked:

It was no exaggeration to say that the sturdy youth now taking up arms would thrive on war. Young Australian lives might be cruelly cut short on the other side of the world; but during the next four years the Commonwealth itself would flourish, its powers enhanced as a result of the national emergency.²⁰⁵

On the other hand, Joan Beaumont has stated that:

Try as I might as I wrote *Broken nation: Australians and the Great War*, I could not find much positive to say about the impact of World War I on Australian politics and society. Nor could I dispel the impression that the war left Australians inward-looking, almost xenophobic, traumatised by grief and deeply divided by the political rancour over conscription and the inequality of sacrifice.²⁰⁶

Conclusion

The period between 1901 and 1914 marked a significant period of evolution in the history of Australia's federal legislature as the Commonwealth Parliament made its mark on matters ranging from immigration, trade and industrial relations to foreign affairs and defence. In the same period, Australian federal politics evolved from volatility and shifting alliances into a two-party system characterised by Labor and non-Labor forces that continue to define Australian politics to this day.

199. Ibid.

200. A Gardiner, 'Question: George R.I.', Senate, *Debates*, 12 November 1918, p. 7647, accessed 19 August 2014.

201. Hughes returned to Australia on 23 August 1919 and to Parliament on 10 September. He received much public adulation for his strong leadership in the world arena. Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, op. cit., pp. 170–2. Hughes remained Prime Minister until February 1923 and Frank Tudor led Labor in Opposition until January 1922.

202. Speaker, 'Question: George R.I.', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 13 November 1918, p. 7779, accessed 19 August 2014.

203. W Watt, 'Question: Captured German possessions in the Pacific', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 13 November 1918, p. 7782, accessed 19 August 2014.

204. Australian War Memorial, 'First World War 1914–18', AWM website, accessed 19 August 2014.

205. Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, op. cit., p. 139.

206. Beaumont, *Going to war 1914–18: the view from the Australian Parliament*, op. cit., p. 9.

Australia entered World War 1 in the midst of a federal election campaign, and local political issues continued to dominate parliamentary debates throughout the war. The issue of military conscription was particularly contentious, splitting the Labor Party and emerging as one of the most divisive issues in Australian society. The war also took its toll on the industrial front, with a general strike in 1917 amid public concerns about rising prices, wage differences, war profits and high interest rates on war loans.

By the end of the war Australia had been a federated nation for 18 years. During this time there had been seven elections, seven parliaments, 11 prime ministerships occupied by seven different men, six parties, 11 referendum questions put on four different dates resulting in two changes to the Constitution, and two plebiscites which rejected military conscription. Parliament passed 545 acts by the end of 1918 and the House of Representatives had sat for 1,492 days. According to Souter, 'Parliament, like those of its electors in khaki, did what was required of it.'²⁰⁷

While the war had helped forge Australia as a nation, it had also thrust it onto the world stage with new responsibilities. As Senator Edward Millen (LIB, NSW) put it:

... this war, amongst other things, has made Australia a nation in a sense that it was not before. It has given us a new conception of national life; it has brought us more closely into touch with the great international movements of the world, and, to that extent, it has thrown an added responsibility upon the shoulders of our people.²⁰⁸

Senator Albert Gardiner (ALP, NSW) expressed a hope for the future:

... that we shall realize our duty of binding up our nation's wounds, and of lending a helping hand to the dependants of those who have fallen for us. I trust also that, like good sportsmen, the fight having been fought with all bitterness and intensity, we shall forget the past when peace is signed and hands are clasped in a friendship that I fervently hope will last for all time.²⁰⁹

207. Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, op. cit., p. 164.

208. E Millen, 'Question: George R.I.', Senate, [Debates](#), 12 November 1918, p. 7645, accessed 19 August 2014.

209. A Gardiner, 'Question: George R.I.', Senate, [Debates](#), 12 November 1918, p. 7647, accessed 19 August 2014.

Appendix 1: A socio-economic profile of MPs, 1901 to 1918

By the end of the war 270 men had served in the Commonwealth Parliament, including 90 senators, 186 members and six who served in both houses. The following provides an indication of the characteristics of MPs who were in Parliament during the first two decades of Federation.

Gender

Each Parliament during the 1901 to 1918 period was comprised of 75 Members and 36 Senators, all of whom were men. Even though women had been granted the vote in 1902, and four had stood for the 1903 Commonwealth election, it would not be until well into the Second World War that any entered Parliament (in 1943).²¹⁰ Nevertheless, women voters were able to influence the political landscape, particularly given that there were many more women living in urban than rural areas and a redistribution of electorates before the 1906 election had increased the number of city seats.²¹¹

Age

Historian Joan Rydon, in a study of the Commonwealth Parliament from 1901 to 1980, noted that 'the majority of members entered the Commonwealth Parliament in their thirties or forties'.²¹² Across the many Parliaments, she found that the average age for an MP was between 47 and 52. The average age in 1901 was 48.²¹³ The average age of those elected between 1901 and 1909 was 46.9 years when they were first elected compared to 45.3 years between 1910 and 1916.²¹⁴ The average age of an MP in the 43rd Parliament over 100 years later was 51.4 years.²¹⁵

The average age of the nine MPs who served in the forces simultaneously with their time in Parliament was 43 years. All retained their seats at the 1917 except for Alfred Ozanne (ALP, Corio, Vic.) who lost his seat in controversial circumstances to John Lister (NAT, Corio, Vic.).²¹⁶ James O'Loughlin (ALP, Senator for SA) continued as a senator throughout the period as he was not up for re-election.

Table 7: Age of new members of the House of Representatives

Parliament	Number of new members	Average age of new members	Age of oldest new member	Age of youngest new member
1901–1903	75	46.83	71.85	30.28
1903–1906	17	43.69	60.50	23.47
1906–1910	23	44.17	63.49	28.47
1910–1913	19	44.30	58.82	32.81
1913–1914	22	45.64	61.96	37.94
1914–1917	7	48.62	69.61	37.21
Average age		45.54	64.37	31.70

Source: Chamber Research Office, House of Representatives.

Place of birth

At Federation, almost half of MPs (48.65%) were born overseas, most in the United Kingdom. In the first decade, overseas-born MPs made up 43.8% of the Parliament. This proportion had dropped to 34.8% in the period before and during the war and continued to drop thereafter. See Table 8.

Just after the 1914 election, the Parliament was composed of between 30–40 per cent of MPs who had been born overseas. Almost all of these were from the United Kingdom. Some were from Canada and New Zealand, and one was from Chile.

210. J McCann and J Wilson, *Representation of women in Australian parliaments 2014*, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 9 July 2014, accessed 19 August 2014.

211. Rydon, *A federal legislature: the Commonwealth Parliament 1901–1980*, op. cit., p. 7.

212. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

213. *Ibid.*, pp. 47–9.

214. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

215. As at 1 June 2011.

216. A week before polling day during the 1917 election campaign, Ozanne was falsely accused of desertion in London the previous October (he was receiving medical treatment). He was heavily criticised by the Geelong Advertiser but was only able to publicly rebut the accusation the day before polling, by which time it was too late. Souter, *Acts of Parliament*, op. cit., pp. 160–1.

Table 8: Percentage of overseas-born MPs, 1901 to 1930, various periods

1901	1901–09	1910	1910–16	1920	1917–30
48.65%	43.8%	39.64%	34.8%	31.53%	17.7%

Source: J Rydon, *A federal legislature: the Commonwealth Parliament 1901–1980*.

Education

In 1901, 40.5% of MPs had been educated overseas and 2.7% had had no schooling at all.²¹⁷ Of those who were educated within Australia, the proportion of newly-elected MPs from state schools reached its height just before and during the war (1910–16). This was during the time when Labor was growing, but before the big increase in Labor Catholic members.²¹⁸ The make-up of MPs from state and Catholic schools was less and those from private schools was more than their representation in the population as a whole.²¹⁹

Table 9: Schooling of MPs educated in Australia by election period²²⁰

School	1901–09 (n=111)	1910–16 (n=44)	1917–30 (n=159)
State	35.1%	68.2%	60.5%
Roman Catholic	6.3%	11.4%	11.3%
Private	58.6%	20.4%	28.2%

Source: J Rydon, *A federal legislature: the Commonwealth Parliament 1901–1980*.

It appears that just before and during the war, newly-elected MPs were less educated than those in 1901. The proportion of newly-elected MPs with tertiary qualifications during 1910–16 was half that in 1901.²²¹

Table 10: Education level of MPs by election period

Education Level	1901–09 (n=165)	1910–16 (n=67)	1917–31 (n=149)
Primary	44.8%	47.8%	49.7%
Secondary	23.6%	35.8%	22.1%
Tertiary	31.5%	16.4%	28.2%

Source: J Rydon, *A federal legislature: the Commonwealth Parliament 1901–1980*.

Occupation

In line with the higher proportion of tertiary educated MPs in the 1901–09 period compared to the 1910–16 period, is the higher proportion of MPs who had professional qualifications, particularly in law (43.8% in 1901–09 compared to 14.5% in 1910–16). As the Labor Party grew, so too did the proportion of MPs who had been workers or union officials (21.9% in the 1901–09 period compared to 46.3% in the 1910–16 period).²²²

Table 11: Previous occupation of MPs by election period

Previous Occupation	1901–09 (n=178)	1910–16 (n=69)	1917–30 (n=159)
Primary producers	13.5%	17.4%	25.2%
Professional	43.8%	14.5%	28.9%
Business/Commercial	24.7%	21.7%	20.7%
Union and party officials	2.2%	10.1%	3.1%
Tradesmen and workers	18.7%	36.2%	22.0%

Source: J Rydon, *A federal legislature: the Commonwealth Parliament 1901–1980*.

Religion

Despite the acknowledged difficulties in obtaining and classifying data on MPs' religious orientation, Rydon discovered that, in the first decade of the Commonwealth Parliament, about 10% of MPs purported to be Roman Catholic and about 80% were Protestant. During the years just before the war and during it (1910–16), Roman Catholics accounted for about 20% of MPs and Protestants about 74% of MPs.²²³

217. J Rydon, *A Federal Legislature: the Commonwealth Parliament 1901–1980*, Oxford University Press, 1986, p. 146–7.

218. *Ibid.*, p. 149.

219. *Ibid.*, p. 150.

220. *Ibid.*, p. 148.

221. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

222. *Ibid.*, p. 168.

223. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

Table 12: Religion of MPs by period of first election

Religion	1901–09 (n=178)	1910–16 (n=68)	1917–30 (n=159)
Roman Catholic	9.5%	20.6%	19.5%
Church of England	32.6%	25.0%	23.9%
Presbyterian	18.0%	11.8%	14.5%
Methodist	11.2%	8.8%	8.8%
Other	8.4%	5.9%	3.8%
Protestant	12.9%	22.1%	18.2%
Jewish	2.2%	-	-
Nil	1.7%	1.5%	1.3%
Unknown	3.4%	4.4%	10.1%

Source: J Rydon, *A federal legislature: the Commonwealth Parliament 1901–1980*.

During the war, the proportion of MPs who were Catholic was less than in the population as a whole.²²⁴ In fact, membership of the Parliament has never reflected the ratios of religious adherence in the population as a whole.²²⁵ Before the War, a high proportion of MPs belonged to Protestant or temperance organisations.

Remuneration

According to section 48 of the Constitution, senators and members were initially entitled to ‘receive an allowance of four hundred pounds a year’. This was increased to £600 in 1907 and to £1,000 after the war in 1920.²²⁶

MPs were entitled to receive their parliamentary salary as well as their military pay because although section 44(iv) disqualifies a member holding ‘any office of profit under the Crown’, section 44 goes on to stipulate that section 44(iv) ‘does not apply ... to the receipt of pay, half pay, or a pension, by any person as an officer or member of the Queen’s navy or army, or to the receipt of pay as an officer or member of the naval or military forces of the Commonwealth by any person whose services are not wholly employed by the Commonwealth’.

State and local government service

In 1901, 79% of federal MPs had also served in their state parliaments. This is probably unsurprising because as Joan Rydon said: ‘It was perhaps a necessary condition of successful federation that a good proportion of the political leaders in all states should be keen to move to the federal sphere.’²²⁷

In the period before and during the war (1910–16) this figure dropped to 45%. About 30% of federal MPs at the time of Federation and in the 1910–16 period had had local government experience. Twenty-two per cent and 15% respectively had had both state and local government experience.²²⁸ See table 13 for details.

Table 13: Percentage of federal MPs with state and local government experience

	1901	1902–09	1910–16	1917–30
State government	79%	56%	45%	30%
Local government	30%	37%	29%	22%
State & local government	22%	18%	15%	18%

Source: J Rydon, *A Federal Legislature: the Commonwealth Parliament 1901–1980*.

224. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

225. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

226. M Healy and G Winter, *Remuneration of members of the Parliament of Australia*, (update of Background paper, 18, 2 June 1998), Research paper, 30, 1999–2000, Department of the Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 2000, p. 3, accessed 19 August 2014.

227. Rydon, *A Federal Legislature*, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

228. *Ibid.*, p. 86, 98.

Appendix 2: War service of Commonwealth parliamentarians in the Colonial wars and World War 1

A total of 125 men who became MPs at some time in their lives also served in the Colonial wars,²²⁹ the First World War, or both. Their names are listed in the tables below together with their electorate or state and their war service. The list includes those who were engaged in, or were in transit to, active service and those who fought for allied countries. Details of each man's parliamentary career and war service are presented in the Parliamentary Library's publication, *Commonwealth members of parliament who have served in war and conflict: colonial wars and World War I*.²³⁰

The list does not include reservists or members of the defence force without active service. Eight MPs (Eldred Eggins, John Latham, John McEwen, Frederick Pratten, Thomas Sheehy, Percy Spender, Cornelius Wallace and Keith Wilson) who enlisted but do not appear on the Australian War Memorial's Embarkation Roll database are also not included. However, their details can be located in Appendix 1 of the above paper.

Table A: Statistical summaries

Men who were MPs at some time in their lives and had Colonial wars and/or WW1 service	Number of MPs	Source
MPs who served in either the Colonial wars, WW1 or both	125	Table C
MPs with Colonial wars service	19*	Table C, Column A
MPs with WW1 service	119**	Table C, Column B
MPs with both Colonial wars and WW1 service	13	Table C, Columns A and B

Men who were MPs at some time between 1901 and 1918 and had Colonial wars and/or WW1 service	Number of MPs	Source
MPs who served in either the Colonial wars, WW1 or both	25	Table B
MPs who served in the Colonial wars	5***	Table B, Column A
MPs who served in both the Colonial wars and WW1	3	Table B, Columns A and B
MPs who served in WW1	23	Table B, Column B
Men with WW1 service who were MPs at some point during the WW1 period (1914-18)	16	Table B, Column C
Men who did WW1 service at the same time as they were MPs	9	Table B, Column D
Men who became MPs during WW1 but after their war service	6	Table B, Column E
Men who went to WW1 after being an MP during the war period	1	Table B, Column F

*includes 6 MPs who served in the Colonial wars only

**includes 106 MPs who served in WW1 only

***includes 2 who served in Colonial wars only

229. The Colonial Wars include the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878–1880); the Zulu War in South Africa (1879); and the Boer War in South Africa (1899–1902).

230. Church et al, *Commonwealth members of parliament who have served in war and conflict: colonial wars and World War I*, op. cit.

Table B: Men who were MPs at some time between 1901 and 1918, and who served in the Colonial Wars and/or World War 1

MPs	Electorate(s)/ State	A: Men who were MPs at some time from 1901 to 1918 and served in the Colonial Wars	B: Men who were MPs at some time from 1901 to 1918 and did World War I service	C: Men who were MPs <u>during all or part of 1914 to 1918</u> and did World War I service	D: Men who were MPs during all or part of 1914 to 1918 and did World War I service <u>concurrently with their parliamentary service</u>	E: Men who were MPs during all or part of 1914 to 1918 but <u>after</u> their World War I service	F: Men who were MPs during all or part of 1914 to 1918 but <u>before</u> their World War I service
TOTAL MPs 25		5	23	16	9	6	1
Percy Abbott (MP, Senator)	New England, NSW NSW						
William Bolton (Senator)	Vic.						
Stanley Bruce	Flinders, Vic.						
Reginald Burchell	Fremantle, WA						
Cyril Cameron (Senator)	Tas.						
George Cann	Nepean, NSW						
Edwin Corboy	Swan, WA						
Richard Crouch	Corio/Corangamite, Vic.						
William Fleming	Robertson, NSW						
Hattil Foll (Senator)	Qld						
Alfred Hampson	Bendigo, Vic.						
Edward Heitmann	Kalgoorlie, WA						
William Johnson	Robertson, NSW						
John Lister	Corio, Vic.						
James McCay	Corinella, Vic.						
David (Charles) McGrath	Ballarat, Vic.						
James O'Loghlin (Senator)	SA						
Alfred Ozanne	Corio, Vic.						
James Page	Maranoa, Qld						

MPs	Electorate(s)/ State	A: Men who were MPs at some time from 1901 to 1918 and served in the Colonial Wars	B: Men who were MPs at some time from 1901 to 1918 and did World War I service	C: Men who were MPs <u>during all or part of 1914 to 1918</u> and did World War I service	D: Men who were MPs during all or part of 1914 to 1918 and did World War I service <u>concurrently with their parliamentary service</u>	E: Men who were MPs during all or part of 1914 to 1918 but <u>after</u> their World War I service	F: Men who were MPs during all or part of 1914 to 1918 but <u>before</u> their World War I service
Ernest Roberts	Adelaide, SA						
James Rowell (Senator)	SA						
Granville Ryrie	North Sydney, NSW Werringah, NSW						
Miles Smith (Senator)	WA						
John Wilson	Corangamite, Vic.						
George Yates	Adelaide, SA						

Note: shading indicates service

Table C: Men who became MPs at some time in their lives and who served in the Colonial wars and/or World War I

MPs	Electorate(s)/State	A: Colonial wars	B: WWI
TOTAL MPs 125		19	119
Charles Abbott	Gwydir, NSW		
Joseph Abbott	New England, NSW		
Percy Abbott (MP, Senator)	New England, NSW/NSW		
Stanley Amour (Senator)	NSW		
Charles Anderson	Hume, NSW		
Hubert Anthony	Richmond, NSW		
James Arkins (Senator)	NSW		
William Ashley (Senator)	NSW		
Arthur Beck	Denison, Tas.		
Frederick Beerworth (Senator)	SA		
George Bell	Darwin, Tas.		
Archibald Blacklow	Franklin, Tas.		
Adair Blain	Northern Territory, NT		
William Bolton (Senator)	Vic.		
William Bostock	Indi, Vic.		
George Bowden	Gippsland, Vic.		
Charles Brand (Senator)	Vic.		
Wilfred Brimblecombe	Maranoa, Qld		
Geoffrey Brown	McMillan, Vic.		
Stanley Bruce [†]	Flinders, Vic.		
Reginald Burchell	Fremantle, WA		
Archie Cameron	Barker, SA		
Cyril Cameron (Senator)	Tas.		
Donald Charles Cameron	Brisbane/Lilley, Qld		
Donald James Cameron (Senator)	Vic.		
George Cann	Nepean, NSW		
Richard Casey	Corio/La Trobe, Vic.		
John (Jack) Chamberlain (Senator)	Tas.		
John Clasby	East Sydney, NSW		
Percy Coleman	Reid, NSW		
Herbert Collett (Senator)	WA		
Walter Cooper (Senator)	Qld		

MPs	Electorate(s)/State	A: Colonial wars	B: WWI
Edwin Corboy	Swan, WA		
Charles Cox (Senator)	NSW		
John Critchley (Senator)	SA		
Richard Crouch	Corio/Corangamite, Vic.		
Charles Davidson	Capricornia/Dawson, Qld		
John Dedman	Corio, Vic.		
Edmund Drake-Brockman (Senator)	WA		
Walter Duncan (Senator)	NSW		
John Duncan-Hughes (MP, Senator)	Boothby/Wakefield, SA/SA		
James Dunn (Senator)	NSW		
John Eldridge	Martin, NSW		
Harold (Pompey) Elliott (Senator)	Vic.		
James Fairbairn	Flinders, Vic.		
Alexander Finlay (Senator)	SA		
Archibald Fisker	Ballarat, Vic.		
William Fleming	Robertson, NSW		
Hattil Foll (Senator)	Qld		
George Foster (Senator)	Tas.		
Josiah Francis	Moreton, Qld		
Alexander Fraser (Senator)	Vic.		
John Gellibrand	Denison, Tas.		
William Gibbs (Senator)	NSW		
Thomas Glasgow (Senator)	Qld		
Roland Green	Richmond, NSW		
Henry Gullett	Henty, Vic.		
Leonard Hamilton	Swan/Canning, WA		
Alfred Hampson	Bendigo, Vic.		
Charles Hardy (Senator)	NSW		
John Harris (Senator)	WA		
Eric F Harrison	Bendigo, Vic.		
Eric J Harrison	Wentworth, NSW		
Charles Hawker	Wakefield, SA		
Alexander Hay	New England, NSW		
Leslie Haylen	Parkes, NSW		
Edward Heitmann	Kalgoorlie, WA		

MPs	Electorate(s)/State	A: Colonial wars	B: WWI
Albion Hendrickson (Senator)	Vic.		
Neville Howse	Calare, NSW		
Arthur Hutchin	Denison, Tas.		
John Jennings	South Sydney/Watson, NSW		
William Johnson	Robertson, NSW		
Roy Kendall (Senator)	Qld		
Wilfred Kent Hughes	Chisholm, Vic.		
Edwin Kerby	Ballarat, Vic.		
Charles Lamp (Senator)	Tas.		
Charles Latham (Senator)	WA		
George Lawson	Brisbane, Qld		
Hugh Leslie	Moore, WA		
John Lister	Corio, Vic.		
John McCallum (Senator)	NSW		
James McCay	Corinella, Vic.		
Allan MacDonald (Senator)	WA		
Allan McDonald	Corangamite, Vic.		
David (Charles) McGrath	Ballarat, Vic.		
Sydney McHugh	Wakefield, SA		
John McLeay	Boothby, SA		
Donald McLeod	Wannon, Vic.		
Walter McNicoll	Werriwa, NSW		
Walter Marks	Wentworth, NSW		
Charles Marr	Parkes, NSW		
Edward Mattner (Senator)	SA		
Arthur Morgan	Darling Downs, Qld		
Theophilus Nicholls (Senator)	SA		
Lewis Nott	Herbert, Qld/Australian Capital Territory, ACT		
James O'Loghlin (Senator)	SA		
Alfred Ozanne	Corio, Vic.		
Earle Page [†]	Cowper, NSW		
James Page	Maranoa, Qld		
Edmund Piesse (Senator)	WA		
Reginald Pollard	Ballarat/Lalor, Vic.		
George Rankin (MP, Senator)	Bendigo, Vic./Vic.		

MPs	Electorate(s)/State	A: Colonial wars	B: WWI
Albert Reid (Senator)	NSW		
Edward Riley	Cook, NSW		
Ernest Roberts	Adelaide, SA		
James Rowell (Senator)	SA		
Rupert Ryan	Flinders, Vic.		
Granville Ryrie	North Sydney, NSW/Werringah, NSW		
Burford Sampson (Senator)	Tas.		
Charles Sandford (Senator)	Vic.		
Thomas Scholfield	Wannon, Vic.		
Harrie Seward (Senator)	WA		
Wilfred Simmonds (Senator)	Qld		
Miles Smith (Senator)	WA		
William Spooner (Senator)	NSW		
Geoffrey Street	Corangamite, Vic.		
William Thompson (Senator)	Qld		
Thomas Treloar	Gwydir, NSW		
Robert Wardlaw (Senator)	Tas.		
David Watkins	Newcastle, NSW		
Thomas White (MP)	Balaclava, Vic.		
Arnold (Arthur) Wienholt	Moreton, Qld		
John Wilson	Corangamite, Vic.		
Robert Wordsworth (Senator)	Tas.		
George Yates	Adelaide, SA		

Note: shading indicates service

† Later became Prime Minister

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