

## Australia

Rice

Australia has a parliamentary system of government with several major parties. They include the Australian Labor Party (ALP), the Liberal Party (LP), the Country Party (CNT), and the National Party (NP).

In 1920, the Prime Minister of Australia was William Hughes, who had been in power starting in 1915. Before 1920, he had switched his party affiliation three times, ending up in the Nationalist party (NP) at the time our study begins. Hughes' government lasted until 1923, when he was replaced as the same Nationalist party leader by Stanley Bruce (no SOLS change). Bruce became Prime Minister through a coalition with the Australian Country Party (ACP) (minor SOLS change) and remained in office until 1929, when his party lost elections (in fact, Bruce lost his own seat in Parliament).

A new government was formed under James Scullin, the leader of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) (SOLS change). Scullin's government lasted until 1932, when the opposition parties (including the NP) merged to form a single opposition party, the United Australia Party (UAP). This party, under the leadership of Joseph Lyons, defeated the ALP in elections and formed a government (SOLS change). In 1934, the UAP entered into a coalition with the ACP (minor SOLS change). Lyons died suddenly in 1939, and the head of the ACP, Earle Page, was named acting Prime Minister while the UAP selected a new leader (no SOLS change). After three weeks, Page was replaced by the new head of the UAP, Robert Menzies. When Menzies subsequently became PM, Page refused to serve under Menzies and withdrew the ACP from the government. Menzies, thereafter, headed a UAP (now called LP) minority government that was not reliant on ACP support (minor SOLS change).

Menzies was Prime Minister when Australia entered World War II in September 1939. Following the start of the war, the ACP reentered the coalition in March 1940 (minor SOLS change coded on March 14) (see Davey 2008: 35-36; Weller 2007, 193; Sartori 2005; National Archives 2011). However, Menzies' position quickly deteriorated, and he was replaced as Arthur Fadden, the head of the ACP in August 1941 (SOLS change, though the UAP and ACP coalition continued on). Fadden was not in office for long—in October 1941, two "independent" members of Parliament who had previously supported the coalition switched their votes to support the ALP. This led to the end of the UAP/ACP coalition and Fadden's government. Without an election, John Curtin, the head of ALP, became Prime Minister (SOLS change). He remained in power until 1945.

Curtin died in July of that year, and was briefly replaced by his deputy, Francis Forde. Eight days later, on 13 July, a party ballot led to Joseph "Ben" Chifley becoming Prime Minister. As Chifley was also a member of ALP, this transition is not a SOLS change. Chifley was in office until 1949, when his party lost elections to a coalition of LIB and CNT. Robert Menzies, a member of the Liberal Party, then became Prime Minister (SOLS change). Menzies remained in office, with that coalition, until January 1966. At that point, Menzies retired and was replaced by Harold Holt, who governed over the same coalition (no SOLS change). Just short of two years later, in December 1977, Holt drowned in a boating accident. He was replaced by his deputy (and also the leader of the CNT), John McEwen. Although McEwen was a member of a different party, he is labeled as "acting" and the fact that he was only in office until the Liberal Party could vote on a new leader, and was in office for less than a month, led me to not code his time in office as a SOLS change. McEwen was replaced by the new Liberal Party leader, John Gorton

on 10 January 1968 (no SOLS change). Gorton was seen to be an assertive nationalist, who in turn alienated traditionalists (MacIntyre 2009, 231), and was ousted after a vote of no confidence in 1971. He was then replaced by William McMahon; also of the Liberal Party (no SOLS change).

In the elections of 1972, ALP won the majority of seats, and formed a government under Edward Gough Whitlam (SOLS change). Whitlam's government ended with an event known as the Dismissal (more formally called the 1975 Australian constitutional crisis). In 1975, the Australian economy was in crisis, and several senior ministers had left office due to scandals. The Senate, which was controlled by opposition leaders, refused to approve supply (or, government appropriations bills which fund all government activity), and the government fell into a deadlock. Whitlam's government attempted to hold out, but the Governor-General (who represents the Queen of England, as Australia is still a Commonwealth of the United Kingdom) John Kerr, dismissed Whitlam as Prime Minister. Kerr then appointed the leader of the Liberal Party, Malcolm Fraser, as an interim Prime Minister, with the initial goals of securing supply and calling elections (MacIntyre 2009, 241). Elections were held, and Fraser (in a coalition between LIB and CNT) won, leading him to officially become Prime Minister (SOLS change, though in this case the date of Fraser's initial assumption of office is recorded as the date of the SOLS change).

Fraser remained in office until his party lost the election of 1983. ALP, under its leader Robert James Hawke formed a new government (SOLS change). Hawke was in office until 1991, when he was replaced as party leader by Paul Keating (no SOLS change). Keating was in office until 1996, when ALP lost to the coalition of LIB and the National Party (NP). John Howard, the leader of the Liberal Party, became Prime Minister (SOLS change). Howard was in office until December 2007, when the ALP once again won the majority in elections (SOLS change). The office of Prime Minister was assumed by ALP leader Kevin Rudd. Rudd remained in office until 2010, which is outside of the domain of this study.

## Source

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