



PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY WA

AUSTRALIAN POLITICAL FIRSTS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The first Australian to be 'elected' to three parliaments was **Sir John Forrest**. He died in 1918 before he could take his seat in the House of Lords.



Image Source: [SLWA](#)

The first woman politician in Australia was **Edith Cowan** (Nationalist) in 1921.



Image Source: [SLWA](#)

Australia's first female member of parliament to be re-elected and serve for more than 10 years was **May Holman** from 1925. She was also the first woman to win a seat for the Labor Party.



Image Source: [SLWA](#)

The first woman to be suspended from an Australian parliament was **Florence Cardell-Oliver** in 1941.

S.P. BETTING CASES.
BILL LOST IN ASSEMBLY.
A Member Suspended.
The Criminal Code Amendment Bill, to amend Section 211 of the Code to provide that betting cases can only be heard by stipendiary magistrates and to facilitate the launching of prosecutions of owners of betting shops by the deletion of the words "knowingly and wilfully" from the section, was debated at length in the Legislative Assembly last night at the second reading stage, and eventually defeated. During the second reading debate Mrs. Cardell-Oliver (Nat., Subiaco) refused to withdraw certain remarks when requested to do so by the Speaker (Mr. Sleeman) and was suspended for the rest of the sitting.

Image Source: [Trove](#)

Australia's first female cabinet minister was **Florence Cardell-Oliver** (Nationalist) on 7 October 1949.



Image Source: [SLWA](#)

The first woman to take her seat in an Australian legislative council was **Ruby Hutchinson** (ALP) on 22 May 1954.



Image Source: [SLWA](#)

The first married couple to serve together in an Australian parliament was **Ruby Hutchison** and **Frederick RH Lavery** (both ALP) from 1966 to 1971.



Image Source: [SLWA](#)

The first Indigenous Australian elected to a lower house of any Australian parliament and cabinet minister was **Ernie Bridge** (ALP) in 1980.



Image Source: [SLWA](#)

The first Australian female cabinet minister to give birth whilst in office was **Yvonne Henderson** (ALP), elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1983.



Image Source: Parliament of WA

The first woman premier in Australia was **Carmen Lawrence** (ALP) from 1990 to 1993.



Image Source: [SLWA](#)

The first female Attorney General in an Australian parliament was **Cheryl Edwardes** (Liberal) in 1993.



Image Source: [Parliament of WA](#)

The first openly lesbian Australian politician was **Giz Watson** (Greens WA) who entered the Legislative Council in 1997.



Image Source: [Parliament of WA](#)

The first Indigenous woman Australian parliamentarian was **Carol Martin** (ALP) in 2001.



Image Source: [Parliament of WA](#)

The first Independent woman in Australia to be appointed to a cabinet post was **Dr Elizabeth Constable** in 2008.



Image Source: [Parliament of WA](#)

The first Green to win a Legislative Assembly seat in Australia was **Adele Carles** in 2009.



Image Source: [Parliament of WA](#)

The first gay politician to get married in Australia was **Stephen Dawson** in Canberra, 2013.



Image Source: [Parliament of WA](#)

References

D Black and H Phillips, *Biographical Register of Members of the Parliament of Western Australia, Volume Two, 1930-2010*, Western Australian Parliamentary History Project, Perth, WA, 2010.

D Black and H Phillips, *Making a Difference - A Frontier of Firsts: Women in the Western Australian Parliament 1921-2012*, Parliamentary History Project, Parliament of Western Australia, Perth, WA, 2012.

D Black and J Mandy, eds, *The Western Australian Parliamentary Handbook*. Western Australian Parliamentary History Project, Perth, WA, 2002.

Mrs Carol Anne Martin [photograph], Parliament of Western Australia, accessed 20 November 2013.

Hon Cheryl Lynn Edwardes MLA [photograph], Parliament of Western Australia, accessed 6 December 2013.

Hon. Stephen Noel Dawson MLC [photograph], Parliament of Western Australia, accessed 6 December 2013.

E Collis, *Dr Carmen Lawrence, first woman Premier of Western Australia* [photograph], State Library of Western Australia, (BA1622/102,105), 1990.

E Collis, *The press doorstep Ernie Bridge outside Parliament House* [photograph], State Library of Western Australia, (BA1622/155), 1990.

Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver [photograph], State Library of Western Australia, (BA1272/11), 193-?

Drawing of Sir John Forrest [picture], State Library of Western Australia, (BA1225/1), 1870

Hon. Dr Elizabeth Constable MLA [photograph], Parliament of Western Australia, accessed 20 November 2013.

Hon Giz Watson MLC [photograph], Parliament of Western Australia, accessed 13 November 2013.

May Holman [photograph], State Library of Western Australia, (10028B/1841), 1930.

Mrs Edith Cowan O.B.E. J.P. [photograph], State Library of Western Australia, (BA1272/14), 192-?

[Mrs Ruby Florence Hutchison, member of Western Australia Legislative Council, has started a new organisation which aims at protecting the interests of Australian consumers. Ruby at home in Perth, WA, reads mail from all over Australia welcoming the Association](#) [photograph], National Archives of Australia database, accessed 4 December 2013. (8926277), 1960.

Ms Adele Simone Carles MLA [photograph], Parliament of Western Australia, accessed 27 November 2013.

'[S.P. BETTING CASES](#)'. *The West Australian*, (11 December 1941), p. 9, Trove database, accessed 4 December, 2013.

S Watkins, Hon. FRH Lavery [photograph], State Library of Western Australia, (BA658/28), 1964.