

# President of the Legislative Council

## History

The office of the President can be traced back to the Lord Chancellor of the House of Lords in the British Parliament. The office of the Lord Chancellor dates back to at least 1066. In order to gain the cooperation and confidence of members from both sides of the house, the President (also known as the Presiding Officer) must exercise the office with political impartiality. Some Presidents have chosen not to attend meetings of their party, despite remaining an elected member of that party.



Crest of the Legislative Council

## Role

Chosen by the members of the Legislative Council at the beginning of each four-year parliamentary term, the President of the Legislative Council has a host of duties, some of which are constitutional and some of which have evolved from the Parliament's Westminster origins and Western Australia's history.

The roles of the President include:

- upholding the traditions, powers and privileges of the Legislative Council with a major function being to regulate debate and to ensure that the proceedings are carried out in accordance with the Standing Orders and customs of the house;
- calling on MLCs who wish to speak and deciding on points of order and giving rulings when required;
- casting the deciding vote if a division (or vote) of the Legislative Council results in equal numbers;

- giving guidance to MLCs in respect of their general behaviour, language and dress;
- exercising on behalf of the Legislative Council the control of the behaviour of visitors to the public gallery in order to ensure that the proceedings are not interrupted;
- representing the Legislative Council at official functions and exercising overall responsibility for the operations of Parliament House together with the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly; and
- explaining and promoting the role and operation of the house to the public.

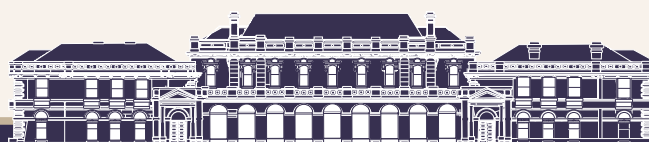


President's Chair centre of the podium

In the earlier phases of the history of the Legislative Council, when knighthoods were awarded to leading public figures, no less than 10 of the first 12 Presidents were bestowed knighthoods. In the last decade the position of President has been occupied by men who have been qualified with law, political science or educational qualifications.

In the absence of the President, the Chair of Committees performs the duties and exercises the authority of the President.

The Chair of Committees in the Legislative Council is elected by fellow members and takes the centre chair at the Clerk's Table whenever the house moves into the Committee of the Whole to consider a bill in detail.



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## The most recent Presidents of the Legislative Council of Western Australia



John Alexander  
Cowdell



Nicholas David  
Griffiths



Barry John  
House



Kate Esther  
Doust



Alanna Therese  
Clohesy

### President of the Legislative Council

**Sir Thomas Cockburn-Campbell (Baronet)**

**Sir George Shenton, Kt**

**Sir Henry Briggs, Kt**

**Sir Walter Kingsmill**

**Sir Edward Wittenoom, KCMG**

**Sir John Waters Kirwan, Kt**

**James Cornell**

**Sir Harold Seddon, Kt**

**Anthony Lloyd Loton**

**Sir Charles Latham, Kt**

**Sir Leslie Charles Diver**

**Sir Arthur Frederick Griffith**

**Clive Edward Griffiths**

**Samuel (George) Ernest Cash**

**John Alexander Cowdell**

**Nicholas David Griffiths**

**Barry John House**

**Kate Esther Doust**

**Alanna Therese Clohesy**

### Period of Office

29 December 1890 - 27 September 1892

11 October 1892 - 21 May 1906

21 June 1906 - 8 June 1919

31 July 1919 - 21 May 1922

27 July 1922 - 9 August 1926

10 August 1926 - 21 May 1946

25 July 1946 - 25 November 1946

26 November 1946 - 21 May 1954

14 June 1954 - 6 August 1958

7 August 1958 - 21 May 1960

28 July 1960 - 21 May 1974

22 May 1974 - 21 May 1977

24 May 1977 - 21 May 1997

27 May 1997 - 21 May 2001

22 May 2001 - 21 May 2005

24 May 2005 - 21 May 2009

22 May 2009 - 21 May 2017

23 May 2017 - 21 May 2021

25 May 2021 - still in office

