



Austin Chapman (1864-1926)

Member for Eden-Monaro (New South Wales) 1901-1926

Austin Chapman was born in Bong Bong, New South Wales, and was involved in auctioneering and the hotel business. He was a member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly 1894-1901 and was renowned for his hard-working efforts in his electorate, and as an enthusiastic supporter of federation.

At the first federal election in 1901 Chapman was elected to represent the federal seat of Eden-Monaro in the House of Representatives. A Protectionist and loyal supporter of the Barton government, Chapman performed the strategically important duties of Government Whip in the first House of Representatives (1901-03). He held ministerial portfolios from 1903 to 1908, and chaired a royal commission which recommended the introduction of

old-age and invalid pensions in 1906. Following a stroke in 1909, Chapman sat as a backbencher until 1923, when he again took ministerial office. Chapman took great pride in his part in introducing the penny post into Australia. He was responsible for the introduction of the standard lightweight wheat bag, which became known as the "Chapman Sack". He died in office in January 1926.

Determined to have the nation's capital in the Eden-Monaro district, and after initially supporting the sites of Dalgety and Bombala, Chapman was instrumental in securing Canberra as the site of the federal capital. He was knighted in 1924.

The electorate of Eden-Monaro was named after its locality.