



Henry Dobson (1841-1918)

Senator for Tasmania 1901-1910

Henry Dobson was born in Hobart, Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania). He was called to the Tasmanian Bar in 1864 and became one of the colony's most respected lawyers. He was the member for Brighton in the Tasmanian House of Assembly 1891-1900, serving as Leader of the Opposition 1891-92 and Premier 1892-94. A strong supporter of federation, Dobson was a member of the Federal Council of Australasia from 1893 and represented Tasmania at the 1897-98 Australasian Federal Convention.

Dobson was elected as a Freetrader to represent Tasmania in the Senate at the first federal election in 1901. He was Temporary Chairman of Committees 1904-08 and Chairman of Committees 1908-09. He was responsible for the introduction of the first private member's bill, the Matrimonial Causes Bill, in July 1901. The Bill lapsed at the end of the parliamentary session in 1902 and was not considered further. Dobson was defeated at the election of 1910 and retired from politics.

Dobson is remembered in Tasmania for his involvement in making attendance at school five days a week compulsory and for sponsoring the introduction of kindergartens. He was well liked by his peers and community and worked hard to promote tourism in Tasmania in the early 1900s.

The state of Tasmania was also represented in the first Senate by:

John Henry Keating

John Singleton Clemons

David John O'Keefe

Cyril St.Clair Cameron

James Macfarlane