



William Guy Higgs (1862-1951)

Senator for Queensland 1901-1906

Member for Capricornia, Queensland 1910-1922

William Higgs was born in Wingham, New South Wales and was a printer by trade. He worked as a union official, printer and journalist in Sydney before becoming editor, in 1893, of the socialist Brisbane Worker. He was elected to the Queensland Legislative Assembly for the Labor Party in 1899, and became a strong advocate of federation.

Higgs topped the poll to represent Queensland in the Senate at the first federal election in 1901. He was one of three Queensland Labor members elected to the Senate. Higgs was a very active and vocal senator who frequently asked questions in the Senate chamber. He was Chairman of Committees 1904-06. In 1906 Higgs lost his seat owing to dissension within the Labor Party.

In 1910 Higgs was elected to the House of Representatives to represent Capricornia, a seat he held until 1922. He was Treasurer during the 1915-16 conscription debate and resigned in protest when Prime Minister Hughes ignored a decision made by the Executive Council relating to the conscription referendum. In 1920 Higgs was expelled from the Labor Party and joined the Nationalist Party. He was defeated at the 1922 election.

Higgs is one of the few men in the first Parliament who served in both houses of the Federal Parliament. He was described by the Worker (Brisbane) as a "red ragger" and "as ardent a disciple of Karl Marx as any".

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

Andrew Dawson

James George Drake

James Charles Stewart

John Ferguson

Thomas Glassey