



William Morris Hughes (1862-1952)

Member for West Sydney (New South Wales) 1901-1917

Member for Bendigo (Victoria) 1917-1922

Member for North Sydney (New South Wales) 1922-1949

Member for Bradfield (New South Wales) 1949-1952

Born in Pimlico, London, England, “Billy” Hughes migrated to Queensland in 1884. After roving for a few years, Hughes settled in Sydney, where he became involved in the labour movement. He also spent a period in western New South Wales as an organiser of the Amalgamated Shearers Union and began a long association with the Waterside Workers Union. In 1894 Hughes was elected as a Labor representative to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. He qualified as a lawyer in 1903.

In 1901, Hughes was elected for the Labor Party to represent the seat of West Sydney in the House of Representatives. He subsequently represented Bendigo, Victoria (1917-22), North Sydney (1922-49) and Bradfield, New South Wales (1949-52). He was Minister for External Affairs in Watson’s first Labor Government and Attorney-General under Fisher. Hughes

became Prime Minister in 1915, and continued in office when expelled from the Australian Labor Party in 1916 as a result of his advocacy of conscription for military service. Supported by members of both houses who followed him out of the Labor Party, he governed as leader of the National Labor Party then the Nationalist Party, until 1923. During and immediately after the First World War Hughes provided a strong presence for Australia in the Imperial War Cabinet, and at peace conferences. After he ceased to be Prime Minister Hughes was minister in successive governments formed by a range of parties and coalitions, and finally became a member of the Liberal Party.

Hughes was the longest-serving member of the first Parliament. At the time of his death, in office, in 1952, he had been a member of the Commonwealth Parliament for 51 years and 7 months.

The electorate of West Sydney was named after its locality. The settlement of Sydney was named after Lord Sydney.