



## John Waters Kirwan (1869-1949)

Member for Kalgoorlie (Western Australia) 1901-1903

**B**orn in Liverpool, England, John Kirwan migrated to Queensland in 1889. He worked as a journalist throughout Australia and New Zealand before moving to Kalgoorlie, Western Australia, to take up the editorship of the Western Argus and Kalgoorlie Miner in 1895.

Kirwan used his newspapers to advocate the participation of Western Australia in the federation of Australia. In 1898 the Miner was prominent in a movement to petition the Queen for separation of the Western Australian goldfields from the colony of Western Australia if that colony declined to join the federation. This petition influenced the ultimate decision of Western Australia to accept federation.

At the first federal election held in 1901 Kirwan was elected as a Freetrader to represent the electoral division of Kalgoorlie in the House of Representatives. One of the younger members of the Federal Parliament, Kirwan had no previous colonial parliamentary experience. He was defeated in the election of 1903 and returned to his editorial role.

In 1908 Kirwan was elected to the Western Australian Legislative Council as an independent and held the seat until his retirement in 1946. He fought hard for services to Western Australia and succeeded in getting the Esperance railway link completed in 1927, which he believed would secure and prolong the future of the mining industry.

Kirwan was knighted in 1930.

The electorate of Kalgoorlie was named after its locality. The settlement of Kalgoorlie was named after the Kalgoorlie Mine.