



## James Whiteside McCay (1864-1930)

Member for Corinella (Victoria) 1901-1906

**B**orn in Ballynure, Antrim, Ireland, Jim McCay migrated with his parents to Victoria in 1865 as an infant. A brilliant student, McCay was dux of Scotch College, Melbourne, in 1880, and obtained a masters degree in Mathematics from the University of Melbourne, where he also qualified as a lawyer. McCay bought Castlemaine Grammar School in 1885, and was Principal there for a number of years. He was the member of the Victorian Legislative Assembly for Castlemaine 1895-99.

In 1901 McCay was elected as a Protectionist to represent the seat of Corinella in the House of Representatives. As Minister for Defence 1904-05 in the Reid-McLean government, he was responsible for a number of important decisions regarding the establishment of the Australian defence forces. In 1906 the seat of Corinella was eliminated in a redistribution of electorates, and McCay stood unsuccessfully for the seat of Corio (Victoria). He failed in an attempt to gain election to the Senate in 1910.

McCay had a distinguished military career. Commissioned in the 4th Battalion, Victorian Rifles in 1886, and a Lieutenant Colonel by 1900, McCay commanded the newly-created Australian Intelligence Corps 1907-13. He led the 2nd Infantry Brigade, Australian Infantry Force at the Gallipoli landing, and the 5th Division in France in 1916, then took charge of Australian base depots in England 1917-18. Lieutenant General Sir Brudenell White described McCay as "one of the greatest soldiers that ever served Australia ... greater even than Monash". McCay was knighted in 1918 (KCMG) and 1919 (KBE).

The electorate of Corinella was named after an original settlement in the division. Corinella is an Aboriginal word meaning 'home of the kangaroo'.