



Thomas Skene (1845-1910)

Member for Grampians (Victoria) 1901-1906

Thomas Skene was born at Mount Mitchell Station, Port Phillip District, Victoria. Skene was educated in Melbourne and after an overseas tour, ran sheep stations in Victoria. Prominent in pastoral circles as a sheep breeder and property owner, Skene was a member of Portland and Stawell Shire Councils, and was active in agricultural societies, serving as President of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria 1897-99 and 1906-08. He was a strong supporter of federation.

Skene was elected to represent the federal seat of Grampians in the House of Representatives at the first federal election in 1901. A moderate Free trader, Skene initially supported the Barton Ministry but as he was unable to accept a strongly protective tariff soon joined the Free trade group. He served on the royal commission and select committee dealing with old age pensions. Skene did not contest his seat in 1906, and made an unsuccessful attempt to be elected to the Senate.

A man of great integrity, Skene was an important link between the two non-Labor groups during the tariff debate.

The electorate of Grampians was named after a local geographic feature (Grampian Mountains). The mountains were named by Major Mitchell for their resemblance to the Grampian Mountains in Scotland.