



## Arthur Bruce Smith (1851-1937)

Member for Parkes (New South Wales) 1901-1919

Born at Rotherhithe in Surrey, England, Bruce Smith migrated to Melbourne, Victoria with his family in 1854. Smith studied law at the University of Melbourne and then entered Lincoln's Inn, London. He was called to the Bar in London in 1877 and on his return to Australia in the same year was admitted to the Victorian Bar. Bruce Smith moved to Sydney to practise at the Bar and was elected to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, serving as the member for Gundagai (1882-84) and Glebe (1889-94). He was Treasurer in 1891. Founder of the Victorian Employers Union and strongly anti-socialist, Smith wrote a number of works on his political philosophy.

In 1901 Bruce Smith was elected to represent the federal seat of Parkes in the House of Representatives at the first federal election. As a Free trader in the first Parliament, he did not get on with the Free trade leader George Reid, and throughout his parliamentary career, which was largely in Opposition, showed an independence of opinion which made him stand apart from party politics. He openly opposed the "White Australia" policy and immigration restrictions, denouncing the idea of "racial purity", and supported the women's movement. Smith was defeated at the election of 1919.

Smith continued his legal career while in Parliament, becoming a Queen's Counsel in 1904. He was director of a number of companies and prominent in a number of associations. He retired to his home in Bowral in 1925.

The electorate of Parkes was named after Sir Henry Parkes (1815-1896), a Premier of New South Wales and a leader of the federation movement.