Andrew Fisher (1862-1928)
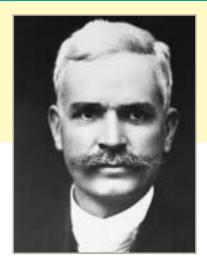
Member for Wide Bay (Queensland) 1901-1915

Born in Crosshouse, Ayrshire, Scotland, Andrew Fisher was a union representative in the local coalmines while still in his teens. In 1855 he migrated to Queensland and he worked in mines at Burrum and Gympie, where he became a leader of the union and labour movement. He was elected to the Queensland Legislative Assembly for the Labor Party in 1893, lost his seat in 1896, but regained it in 1899. He was a minister in Anderson Dawson's short-lived Labor Government in December 1899. Fisher was an active supporter of federation.

In 1901 Fisher was elected as the Labor member for Wide Bay in the House of Representatives at the first federal election. In 1904 he became the Minister for Trade and Customs in the first Federal Labor Government, and in 1907, the leader of the Labor Party. Fisher was Prime Minister and Treasurer 1908-09, 1910-13 and 1914-15. Prime Minister when World War I broke out, it was Fisher's responsibility to despatch Australian troops overseas and to provide the foundations for financing Australia's war effort. Ill health and diminishing party support led to his resignation in October 1915.

Fisher became the Australian High Commissioner in London in 1915 and as such was a member of the Dardanelles Commission, visiting Australian troops in France. He returned to Australia in 1921, when pressure was put on him to lead the Labor Party again, but in the following year returned to England where he died in 1928.

The electorate of Wide Bay was named after its locality. The Wide Bay district takes its name from the bay named by Captain Cook on May 18, 1770.