Prime Ministers of Australia

No.	Prime Minister	Term of office	Party
1.	Edmund Barton	1.1.1901 – 24.9.1903	Protectionist Party
2.	Alfred Deakin (1st time)	24.9.1903 – 27.4.1904	Protectionist Party
3.	John Christian Watson	27.4.1904 – 18.8.1904	Australian Labor Party
4.	George Houstoun Reid	18.8.1904 – 5.7.1905	Free Trade Party
-	Alfred Deakin (2nd time)	5.7.1905 – 13.11.1908	Protectionist Party
5.	Andrew Fisher (1st time)	13.11.1908 – 2.6.1909	Australian Labor Party
-	Alfred Deakin (3rd time)	2.6.1909 – 29.4.1910	Commonwealth Liberal Party
-	Andrew Fisher (2nd time)	29.4.1910 – 24.6.1913	Australian Labor Party
6.	Joseph Cook	24.6.1913 – 17.9.1914	Commonwealth Liberal Party
-	Andrew Fisher (3rd time)	17.9.1914 – 27.10.1915	Australian Labor Party
7.	William Morris Hughes	27.10.1915 – 9.2.1923	Australian Labor Party (to 1916); National Labor Party (1916-17); Nationalist Party (1917-23)
8.	Stanley Melbourne Bruce	9.2.1923 – 22.10.1929	Nationalist Party
9.	James Henry Scullin	22.10.1929 – 6.1.1932	Australian Labor Party
10.	Joseph Aloysius Lyons	6.1.1932 – 7.4.1939	United Australia Party
11.	Earle Christmas Grafton Page	7.4.1939 – 26.4.1939	Country Party
12.	Robert Gordon Menzies (1st time)	26.4.1939 – 29.8.1941	United Australia Party
13.	Arthur William Fadden	29.8.1941 – 7.10.1941	Country Party
14.	John Joseph Ambrose Curtin	7.10.1941 – 5.7.1945	Australian Labor Party
15.	Francis Michael Forde	6.7.1945 – 13.7.1945	Australian Labor Party
16.	Joseph Benedict Chifley	13.7.1945 – 19.12.1949	Australian Labor Party
-	Robert Gordon Menzies (2nd time)	19.12.1949 – 26.1.1966	Liberal Party of Australia
17.	Harold Edward Holt	26.1.1966 – 19.12.1967	Liberal Party of Australia
18.	John McEwen	19.12.1967 – 10.1.1968	Country Party of Australia
19.	John Grey Gorton	10.1.1968 – 10.3.1971	Liberal Party of Australia
20.	William McMahon	10.3.1971 – 5.12.1972	Liberal Party of Australia
21.	Edward Gough Whitlam	5.12.1972 – 11.11.1975	Australian Labor Party
22.	John Malcolm Fraser	11.11.1975 – 11.3.1983	Liberal Party of Australia
23.	Robert James Lee (Bob) Hawke	11.3.1983 – 20.12.1991	Australian Labor Party
24.	Paul John Keating	20.12.1991 – 11.3.1996	Australian Labor Party
25.	John Winston Howard	11.3.1996 – 3.12.2007	Liberal Party of Australia
26.	Kevin Michael Rudd	3.12.2007 – 24.6.2010	Australian Labor Party
27.	Julia Eileen Gillard	24.6.2010 – 27.6.2013	Australian Labor Party
-	Kevin Michael Rudd (2nd time)	27.6.2013 – 18.9.2013	Australian Labor Party
28.	Anthony John Abbott	18.9.2013 -	Liberal Party of Australia

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The Prime Minister

The Prime Minister is the head of the Australian government. He or she achieves this position by being the leader of the party (or coalition) with a majority of seats in the House of Representatives. The Prime Minister must be a member of this chamber, although on one occasion, when Senator John Gorton became Leader of the Liberal Party and Prime Minister, it was some months before he was elected to it. The Prime Minister is formally appointed by the Governor-General.

The office of Prime Minister was created on 1 January 1901 when the six Australian colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia joined together to become the Commonwealth of Australia. The first Governor-General, the Earl of Hopetoun, appointed Edmund Barton, a leading figure in the Federation movement, to become Australia's first Prime Minister.

The office of Prime Minister is not mentioned in the Australian Constitution, but is derived from constitutional convention. We have a Prime Minister because the country takes much of its system of government from the Westminster tradition, which is derived from the parliamentary practice of the United Kingdom, rather than a presidential form of government. The Prime Minister appoints and chairs the Federal Ministry, the group of ministers responsible for running government departments, and the Cabinet, composed of senior ministers. As the principal spokesperson for the government, the Prime Minister plays a key role in parliamentary and public debate, and often represents Australia overseas.

Australia has had twenty eight Prime Ministers. While most have only served one term, two Australian Prime Ministers have served twice (Menzies and Rudd), and two others (Deakin and Fisher) served three separate terms.

All ministers, including the Prime Minister, are members of the Executive Council. The Executive Council provides advice on decisions such as proclamations, regulations, ordinances and statutory appointments to the Governor-General, whose assent is required for them to gain force, just as legislation requires his agreement.

Did you know…

Three Prime Ministers have died while in office[1], five more have resigned[2], eleven were defeated at a general election[3], three were replaced by their own party[4] and one was dismissed from office by the Governor-General[5].

The youngest Prime Minister, Chris Watson, became Prime Minister at the age of 37. The oldest person to become Prime Minister was John McEwen at the age of 68; however, Robert Menzies was 72 when he left office.

Seven Prime Ministers were born overseas, all but one in the United Kingdom[6]. Eleven Prime Ministers have represented the Australian Labor Party[7] and seventeen more conservative forces[8] while one, William Morris Hughes, represented both.

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[1] Lyons, Curtin and Holt
[2] Barton, Fisher, Hughes, Menzies and Gorton
[3] Reid, Fisher, Cook, Bruce, Scullin, Chifley, McMahon, Fraser, Keating, Howard and Rudd
[4] Hawke, Rudd and Gillard
[5] Gough Whitlam, on 11 November 1975
[6] Reid and Fisher were born in Scotland, Hughes, Cook and Abbott were born in England, Watson was born in Chile and Gillard was born in Wales.
[7] Watson, Fisher, Scullin, Curtin, Forde, Chifley, Whitlam, Hawke, Keating, Rudd and Gillard
[8] Barton, Deakin, Reid, Cook, Hughes, Bruce, Lyons, Page, Menzies, Fadden, Holt, McEwen, Gorton, McMahon, Fraser, Howard and Abbott