Andrew Fisher

Prime Minister of Australia 1908–09, 1910–13 and 1914–15

A former Scottish miner and union leader, Andrew Fisher entered federal politics in 1901 as the Labor Member for Wide Bay, Queensland. He was instrumental in the creation of the Labor Party in Queensland, and subsequently the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party. He served as Minister for Trade and Customs in the short-lived Watson Labor government of April–August 1904. Following the resignation of party leader John Christian Watson in 1907, Fisher was elected Leader of the Opposition. When a lack of Labor support prompted the fall of the Deakin government in 1908, Fisher became Prime Minister.

Fisher served three separate terms as Prime Minister: 13 November 1908 to 2 June 1909, 29 April 1910 to 24 June 1913 and 17 September 1914 to 27 October 1915. He was also Treasurer on each occasion.

The Labor government under Fisher was highly reformist. During Fisher's second term, Labor established the Commonwealth Bank, introduced maternity allowances and workers' compensation for Commonwealth employees, liberalised invalid and old age pensions and proposed stricter regulations for wages, working hours and employment conditions. The extensive amount of legislation passed during this time led to Fisher being hailed as a founder of the statutory structure of Australia.

Fisher's final term was served against the backdrop of World War I. Suffering ill health, he resigned as Prime Minister in October 1915, and was succeeded by his deputy, William Morris Hughes. In 1916, Fisher was appointed as Australian High Commissioner in London, a position he held for five years.

Andrew Fisher died in London on 22 October 1928, aged 66.

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Canberra

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
Political cartoons depicting Joseph Cook and others, including Andrew Fisher, Sir John Forrest, George Houstoun Reid, William Lyne and Alfred Deakin, and newspaper articles reporting on political events (personal papers of Prime Minister Joseph Cook)	1901–04	M3612, 2
Governor-General's Office – correspondence – resignation of Alfred Deakin and Andrew Fisher's assumption of the office of Prime Minister	1908–09	A6662, 1292
Fisher ministry, 1908–09 – ministerial oaths	1908	A5447, 10
Naval defence of Australia – policy of Fisher government	1909	A6661, 1325
Mr Fisher – travelling allowance paid to while Prime Minister	1910–13	A2, 1914/3183
Fisher ministry, 1910–13 – ministerial oaths	1910–13	A5447, 14
Rubber stamp of signature used by Andrew Fisher, Prime Minister of Australia	1910–15	A9342
Parliamentary question regarding expenditure involved in the establishment of the Commonwealth Bank	1912	A571, 1912/17072
Fisher ministry, 1914–15 – ministerial oaths	1910–11	A5447, 18
High Commissioner Rt Hon. Andrew Fisher	1916	A6006, 1916/7/29
Condolences – Fisher, Right Honourable Andrew	1928–29	A461, 700/1/105

Melbourne

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
Personal letter to Senator Edward Russell from Andrew Fisher	1911–15	M4124

Brisbane

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
First radio press message received in Papua – a speech by Prime Minister Fisher – typed on silk	1913	J3088, QPT114

Darwin

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
Portrait photograph – Andrew Fisher and family (Mr Fisher and wife, three boys, one girl and baby)	1901–09	M1406, 2