

## Francis Michael Forde

### Prime Minister of Australia 6–13 July 1945

Before his election to the Queensland state parliament in 1917 as the Member for Rockhampton, Francis Michael Forde was a schoolteacher and an electrical engineer. He became the federal Member for Capricornia in 1922 and held this seat for the Australian Labor Party (ALP) until 1946.

Forde was appointed as an honorary minister in the Labor government of James Scullin (1929–31), assisting the Minister for Trade and Customs, until February 1931 when he was appointed to that portfolio. In 1932 he was elected Deputy Leader of the ALP, a position he held until 1946. In this role he served as Deputy Leader of the Opposition from 1932 to 1941, and then Deputy Prime Minister until 1946.

When John Curtin became Prime Minister in October 1941, Forde was appointed Minister for the Army – a critical portfolio with Japan's entry into World War II. Between 1941 and 1946, Forde acted as Prime Minister on several occasions in Curtin's absence. He became Prime Minister from 6 to 13 July 1945, following the death of John Curtin. Forde contested the ALP leadership, but was defeated by Ben Chifley who became Prime Minister on 13 July.

Forde remained as Deputy Prime Minister to Chifley and Minister for the Army until November 1946. He also served as Minister for Defence between August and November 1946.

Frank Forde lost his seat in parliament in the 1946 general election and was later appointed as the Australian High Commissioner to Canada. He later served a single term in the Queensland state parliament during the 1950s.

### Records relating to Francis Forde held by the National Archives

The National Archives holds many records relating to Francis Forde's years in parliament, including the brief period he spent as Prime Minister of Australia. Forde's personal records, and a selection of records about him, are listed below.

In the tables below, reference numbers direct you to the item or series in [RecordSearch](#), the National Archives database. There you can find more information. In many cases you can view entire digitised records. The information will appear in a new browser window.

## Personal records of Francis Forde

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Family photographs and papers</u>	1890–1945	M4267
<u>Letters from Lieutenant General HG Bennett to the Hon. FM Forde</u>	1941–42	AA1974/398
<u>Framed letters patent appointing Francis Michael Forde as Minister for Defence</u>	1946	M4108

Forde also contributed to the following personal record series of John Curtin during the period he acted as Prime Minister in 1944.

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Correspondence of John Curtin as Prime Minister – alphabetical series</u>	1941–44	M1415
<u>Correspondence of John Curtin as Prime Minister – special subject series</u>	1941–44	M1416

## Other records relating to Francis Forde – in Canberra

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
<u>Photographs – JA Beasley with members of the Curtin Labor Ministry including Makin, Chifley, Collings, Forde and others</u>	1941	M1409, 12
<u>Press statements by Minister for the Army (Mr FM Forde)</u>	1942–44	A5954, 2211/1
<u>Photograph – W McKell, F Forde and John Curtin</u>	1943	M1218, 7
<u>Target for 1945 by the Rt Hon. FM Forde [Publication]</u>	1944	A5954, 1979/93
<u>Personal correspondence, Australia – Rt Hon. FM Forde</u>	1944–54	A5954, 50/8
<u>Forde Government. 6th July 1945</u>	1945	A5954, 1947/10
<u>26th Commonwealth Ministry. Forde Ministry from 6 July 1945 to 13 July 1945</u>	1945	A5447, 42
<u>Honour PC [Privy Council] The Honourable, FM Forde</u>	1945	A2926, A34
<u>Governments – Forde Ministry</u>	1945–46	A461, AZ4/1/3
<u>Press statements by Mr FM Forde</u>	1945–55	A5954, 2211/2
<u>Federal Election Campaign 1946. Mr Forde Itinerary</u>	1946	A5954, 2314/6
<u>Canada: appointment of Mr Forde as High Commissioner</u>	1946–48	A1067, IC46/64/11/1
<u>Diplomatic representatives abroad – Canada – Mr FM Forde, High Commissioner</u>	1951	A1838, 1500/2/1/2

## Other records relating to Francis Forde – Sydney

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
<u>Film of visit of Deputy PM Forde to UN Conference</u>	1945	SP1202/2

### Other records relating to Francis Forde – Melbourne

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
<u>Acting Prime Minister (Rt Hon F M Forde) - Visit to NZ</u>	1944–50	MP742/1, 217/1/9
<u>[Letter from Ninon P Haring to Mr Forde regarding the tracing of missing members of the 2/22nd Battalion AIF]</u>	1945	MP742/1, 255/15/1203

### Other records relating to Francis Forde – Australian War Memorial

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
<u>[Department of Information – Broadcasting Division] Talks by The Hon. FM Forde [transcripts]</u>	1941	AWM80, 1/170
<u>[Official History, 1939–1945 War: Records of Gavan Long] Press statements by the Rt Hon. FM Forde, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Army</u>	1944–46	AWM67, 11/26A