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Indigenous parliamentarians, federal and state: a quick guide

Hannah Gobbett

Politics and Public Administration Section

This Quick Guide provides information about Indigenous Australian federal and state parliamentarians, from the election of the first Indigenous Australian to federal Parliament—former [Senator Sir Neville Bonner](#)—until June 2015.

For the purposes of this Quick Guide, ‘Indigenous parliamentarian’ refers to a parliamentarian identifying as Indigenous or having Indigenous ancestry. This Quick Guide lists the name, party, dates in office, chamber, state/electorate and significant firsts.

The 44th Parliament currently includes three Indigenous parliamentarians—two senators and one member of the House of Representatives. [Ken Wyatt AM, MP](#) is the Member for Hasluck (WA), while the Senate includes two Indigenous women—Senators [Jacqui Lambie \(IND\)](#) and [Nova Peris \(ALP\)](#).

This information is compiled from a range of sources including the Commonwealth [Parliamentary Handbook](#), [The Biographical Dictionary of the Australian Senate](#), state parliaments, political websites and personal biographies. Where available, a hyperlink to biographies has been included.

The Parliamentary Library would appreciate receiving additional information or corrections that may assist in compiling future updates.

Abbreviations

AD	Australian Democrats	LA	Legislative Assembly
ALP	Australian Labor Party	LC	Legislative Council
CLP	Country Liberal Party	HA	House of Assembly
IND	Independent		
LIB	Liberal Party of Australia		Northern Territory, Tasmania and Queensland are unicameral Parliaments.
NP	National Party		

Indigenous federal parliamentarians

- Sir Neville Bonner (Senate, Qld, LIB; IND) was the first Indigenous member of Parliament in 1971.
- Ken Wyatt (House of Representatives, WA, LIB) is the first Indigenous member of the House of Representatives, elected in 2010.
- Nova Peris OAM (Senate, NT, ALP) is the first female Indigenous senator, elected in 2013.

Name	Party	First	Chamber	State or Electorate	From	To
Neville Bonner	LIB; IND from Feb. 1983	Indigenous member of Parliament	Senate	Queensland	*11.6.1971	4.2.1983
Aden Ridgeway	AD		Senate	New South Wales	1.7.1999	30.6.2005
Kenneth (Ken) Wyatt	LIB	Indigenous member of the House of Representatives	House	Hasluck (WA)	21.8.2010	<i>current</i>
Nova Peris, OAM	ALP	Female Indigenous senator	Senate	Northern Territory	7.9.2013	<i>current</i>
Jacqui Lambie	PUP; IND from Nov. 2014		Senate	Tasmania	1.7.2014	<i>current</i>

* Selected under [Section 15 of the Australian Constitution](#)

Source: compiled by the Parliamentary Library.

Indigenous state parliamentarians

- Hyacinth Tungutalum (Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, CLP) was the first Indigenous person elected to any state/territory parliament, in October 1974.
- Adam Giles (Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, CLP), is the first Indigenous head of government, as the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory.
- Ernie Bridge (Western Australian Legislative Assembly, ALP; IND) was the first Indigenous cabinet minister in any Australian government, as Minister for Water Resources, the North-West and Aboriginal Affairs, a position he held from July 1986 until February 1989.
- Marion Scrymgour (Northern Territory Legislative Assembly) was the first female Indigenous minister in 2003; she was later appointed as the Deputy Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, becoming (at that time) the [highest-ranked Indigenous parliamentarian](#) in Australian history.
- Cyril and Andrew Kennedy were the first brothers of Indigenous heritage to serve concurrently in any state Parliament, having both served in the Victorian Parliament from 1982 until 1992.

Key

Δ First Indigenous Parliamentarian in that state

Name	State	Party	Chamber	From	To
Linda Burney Δ	NSW	ALP	LA	22.3.2003	<i>current</i>
Eric Deeral Δ	Qld	NP	LA	7.12.1974	12.11.1977
Leeanne Enoch	Qld	ALP	LA	31.1.2015	<i>current</i>
William (Billy) Gordon	Qld	ALP; IND from Mar. 2015	LA	31.1.2015	<i>current</i>
Cyril Kennedy Δ	Vic	ALP	LC	5.5.1979	2.10.1992
David (Andrew) Kennedy	Vic	ALP	LA	3.4.1982 2.3.1985	1.3.1985 2.10.1992
Ernest (Ernie) Bridge Δ	WA	ALP; IND from Jul. 1996	LA	23.2.1980	10.2.2001
Carol Martin	WA	ALP	LA	10.2.2001	9.3.2013
Benjamin (Ben) Wyatt	WA	ALP	LA	11.3.2006	<i>current</i>
Josephine (Josie) Farrer	WA	ALP	LA	9.3.2013	<i>current</i>
Hyacinth Tungutalum Δ	NT	CLP	LA	19.10.1974	12.08.1977
Neville Perkins	NT	ALP	LA	13.08.1977	6.3.1981
Wesley Lanhupuy	NT	ALP	LA	03.12.1983	25.8.1995
Stanley Tipiloura	NT	ALP	LA	07.03.1987	20.09.1992
Maurice Rioli	NT	ALP	LA	07.11.1992	17.08.2001
John Ah Kit	NT	ALP	LA	07.10.1995	17.06.2005
Matthew Bonson	NT	ALP	LA	18.08.2001	08.08.2008
Elliot McAdam	NT	ALP	LA	18.08.2001	08.08.2008
Marion Scrymgour	NT	ALP; IND from June 2009; ALP from Aug. 2009	LA	18.08.2001	24.08.2012
Alison Anderson	NT	ALP; IND from Aug. 2009; CLP from Sept. 2011; PUP from Apr. 2014; IND from Nov. 2014.	LA	8.06.2005	<i>current</i>
Malarndirri McCarthy	NT	ALP	LA	8.06.2005	24.08.2012

Name	State	Party	Chamber	From	To
Karl Hampton	NT	ALP	LA	23.09.2006	24.08.2012
Adam Giles	NT	CLP	LA	9.8.2008	<i>current</i>
Bess Price	NT	CLP	LA	25.08.2012	<i>current</i>
Francis Kurrupuwu	NT	CLP; PUP from Sept. 2014; CLP from Sept. 2014	LA	25.08.2012	<i>current</i>
Larisa Lee	NT	CLP; PUP from May 2014; IND from Nov. 2014	LA	25.08.2012	<i>current</i>
Kenneth (Ken) Vowles	NT	ALP	LA	25.08.2012	<i>current</i>
Christopher (Chris) Bourke Δ	ACT	ALP	LA	2.6.2011	<i>current</i>
Paul Harriss Δ	Tas.	IND	LC	25.5.1996	3.2014
		LIB	HA	30.3.2014	<i>current</i>
Kathryn Hay	Tas.	ALP	HA	20.07.2002	18.3.2006

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