

The Right Honourable William Morris Hughes, CH QC



The honorary degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred upon the Right Honourable William Morris Hughes by the Chancellor Sir Charles Bickerton Blackburn KCMG OBE at the ceremony of conferring of honorary degrees held on 29 August 1952 as part of the University of Sydney's Centenary celebrations.

The Right Honourable William Morris Hughes, CH QC, Hon DCL *Oxford* Hon LLD [i]Edinburgh, Glasgow, Wales & Birmingham, was Prime Minister of Australia from 1915 to 1923 and led Australia during World War I.

Sadly, Hughes died 2 months after the ceremony, on 28 October 1952, aged 90.



The Right Honourable William Morris Hughes being presented to the Chancellor Sir Charles Bickerton Blackburn for the award of an Hon LLD, *Sydney Morning Herald* photos, copies held by the University of Sydney Archives.

Citation

Presented by the Vice-Chancellor, Emeritus Professor S H Roberts:

Mr Chancellor, it is my duty and privilege to present to you William Morris Hughes, a figure unique in the history of Australia. Born in 1864 in Wales, this grand old man achieved a record which can never be equalled and which can certainly not be surpassed in the story of this continent. He was at times a student teacher, a fruit picker, a railway tally clerk, a shearer, a volunteer private in the Queensland Defence Force, a seaman, a cook and steward on coastal vessels, a Shakespearian "Super," a secondhand bookseller, an umbrella mender, and an unrivalled expert in the lesser known by-ways of the Australian language .

He has been a member of the Commonwealth Parliament since its inception in 1901, and as long ago as 1904 was Minister for External Affairs. After being Attorney-General on three occasions, he was a member of the Imperial War Cabinet, and his work as representative of Australia at the Versailles Peace Conference is a matter of history. There is no position of importance which he has not filled in the Commonwealth Parliament, and it would be temerity on the part of any presenter to sum up his work as Prime Minister of Australia and as the representative of Australia in the councils of the world.

There is no other Australian who has been so decorated abroad and who has received the freedom of so many cities in the home country. There is not a field of activity in which he has not taken a highly personal and important part. His provocative publications are part of the story of Australia. His political and personal activities place him beyond compare. He represents a place in Australia which belongs particularly to William Morris Hughes. The story of Australia since 1884 cannot be written without reference to this Welsh migrant, who came to represent in excelsis the spirit of a vibrant and ever-growing Australia.

Mr Chancellor, I present to you The Right Honourable William Morris Hughes, Privy Councillor, Companion of Honour, one of Her Majesty's Counsel.

From "The University of Sydney Centenary Celebrations August 26 - August 31, 1952" compiled by the Office of Information and Public Relations. Allan Gamble, Information and Public Relations Officer.