

THE TRAILBLAZERS



Following Millicent Preston Stanley's election in 1925, over the next 50 years there were only three women elected to the Legislative Assembly and 12 appointed (or indirectly elected) to the Legislative Council. In all, there have been 123 women who have served as members of this Parliament (from 1925-2016). They are joined by parliamentary officers and staff, working behind the scenes to support the institution. All are trailblazers in their own right, proving the ability of women to fulfil careers in politics and to contribute to the governance of the State. Here we feature just some of their stories.

CATHERINE ELIZABETH GREEN LABOR MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (1931 - 1932)



Catherine Green became one of the first women to serve as a member of the Legislative Council, following her appointment by Premier Jack Lang on 23 November 1931. She was one of 25 members appointed to vote for the Council's abolition.

In an interview with the *Labour Daily* she said "I am naturally very proud to be one of the first two women ever appointed to the Legislative Council, but prouder still of the confidence reposed in me by the greatest statesman Australia has even known [Jack Lang]."

As a parliamentarian and a woman, she intended to use her position to highlight what she saw as important issues for women and society. "Food, clothing and shelter are not enough. Music, art and literature should be in every home...maternal care, equal guardianship of the child, equality of sex as regards wage conditions and family courts."

Catherine spoke on two Bills during her time in Parliament: the *Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill* where she sought protection for women workers, and the *Family Endowment (Amendment) Bill*.

She resigned in 1932 following a Privy Council decision that the Council could only be abolished by referendum.

ELLEN WEBSTER LABOR MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (1931 - 1934)



Ellen Webster was appointed to the Legislative Council at the same time as Catherine Green, taking her seat two days later.

A passionate community advocate, Ellen made one speech during her time in Parliament in opposition to the Farmer's Relief Bill. This Bill, she argued, would make it easier for farmers to be evicted from their land and properties; a very real concern for many during the depression.

On 22 April 1934, Ellen suddenly lost her seat due to the reconstitution of the Legislative Council, which relegated her to an unwinnable position. She told the *Daily Telegraph*: "I've been dumped, but I can still raise a smile. The result was a shock, as the Women's Organising Committee was assured I would be on the ticket so that Labor Women would have a representative in the new House."

She attempted to seek a seat left vacant by the death of another member in June 1934, but was unsuccessful.

MARY QUIRK
LABOR
MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (1939 - 1950)



Mary Quirk was the second woman elected to the Legislative Assembly, more than ten years after Millicent Preston Stanley's term ended in 1927. Mary was elected to the seat of Balmain in 1939 following the death of her husband, who was the member at the time.

Her election caused a stir on par with the reaction that had greeted Millicent. On the day she entered the Chamber in February 1939, the galleries were crowded with women eager to see her sworn in. Mary later commented that "a lot of people told me that I only got in on a sympathy vote...but at the next election they stood by me."

Her inaugural speech focused on the Child Welfare Bill, and she spoke keenly of the need for the Government to support and care for all children, regardless of whether they were in state care. This, she said, could be achieved through the provision of more relief to working families.

Mary served as the member for Balmain for 11 years, before being defeated in the Labor Party preselection in 1950.

LILLIAN FOWLER
LABOR
MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (1939 - 1950)



Lillian Fowler entered the NSW Parliament having already blazed a trail through local government. In 1929 she became the first woman to be elected an alderman in NSW and the first to be elected Mayor in Australia (1938). She was also one of the first women to be appointed as a Justice of the Peace (1921).

A formidable political and social force, in 1944 she became the third woman elected to the Legislative Assembly. In her inaugural speech, Lillian spoke of the role of elected representatives, lamenting the rise of bureaucrats and state government commissions and boards. She championed local governments for their provision of services to their residents. Perhaps because of her role as Mayor, she opposed local government amalgamations and

the removal of services provided by the local government to state government. Similarly, she was opposed to State government ceding its role and authority to the Commonwealth.

Among the causes Lillian championed were changes to public health laws, child welfare and the land settlement schemes. Her 1944 amendment to the Lunacy Act famously secured the release of Boyd Sinclair, who had been committed to the Morisset criminal asylum in 1936 and held without trial.

GERTRUDE MELVILLE
LABOR
MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (1952 - 1958)



In September 1952, Gertrude Melville became the first woman 'elected' to the Legislative Council, to fill a casual vacancy. A self-proclaimed "staunch advocate of women's rights", she committed herself to being a "parliamentary spokesperson for the women" and fought for housing, hospitals, child welfare and equal pay. Her passion and poise earned her the title 'the grand old lady of the Labor Party'.

"I hope it will be realised that more women should join me in this Chamber," she said in her inaugural speech. "I was a little afraid that a woman's entry would be resented, but soon discovered that my fears were groundless. I am very thankful for the warm welcome that I have received from both sides...and particularly from the Honourable members opposite."

Prior to entering Parliament, Gertrude had been an alderman (1944-1948) and Mayor of the Cabramatta and Canley Vale Municipal Council (1945-1948). Interestingly, she had previously attempted to gain a seat in the Legislative Assembly, but was defeated for the seat of the Eastern Suburbs by five candidates, one of them being Millicent Preston Stanley.

EDNA ROPER
LABOR
MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (1958 - 1978)



Edna Roper was 'elected' to the Legislative Council at a joint sitting of both Houses in November 1957 and took her seat in April 1958. She was the only female member in the Council until 1959, when she was joined by Anne Press.

In her inaugural speech, she proclaimed: "to me the defence of women against subordinating laws and customs is not mere feminism, but a national political responsibility. I see no reason why women should continue to be second class citizens and the last vestiges of sex discrimination should be retained. A new era should be inaugurated in which the men and women enjoy complete equality." In 1962, Edna opened 'National Pay Week' in Sydney, advocating for equal pay.

During her time in Parliament, she also became a member of the Select Committee on Violent Sex Crimes in NSW (1968-1969); the first woman to be appointed as Temporary Chairman of Committees in 1973; and was in the same year named Woman of the Year by the International Women's Day Committee. In 1976 she became the first woman to be Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council.

EILEEN (MABEL) FURLEY
LIBERAL
MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (1962 - 1978)



Before entering politics, Eileen Furley had earned a reputation as an able and committed community leader. During World War II, she took on active roles as the officer in charge of sugar rationing (1942-1945), as Honorary Secretary of the Women in War Work Council (1942-1966) and as a member of the National Council of Women from 1941.

In 1961 she became the first woman in NSW to gain Liberal preselection for the Federal Senate, but was unsuccessful in winning a seat. The following year, however, she won the Liberal Party's nomination to fill a casual vacancy in the NSW Legislative Council.

Mabel, as she preferred to be known, was particularly concerned about "the deterioration of the morals and behaviour of young people," so much so that she made it the focus of her inaugural speech. "When considering youth delinquency," she said, "none of us should overlook the fact that in our community today there is no person under the age of 45 years who can remember what it is like to have lived in a world at peace."

In 1968, Mabel established and later chaired a Select Committee on Violent Sex Crimes, to which four of the Legislative Council's six female members were appointed. The committee dealt with issues including mass rape offences and how such acts might be reduced. The committee has been credited with "lifting the lid on subjects rarely discussed at the time."

MARY MEILLON
LIBERAL
MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, MURRAY (1973 - 1980)



Mary Meillon was the first woman in the Legislative Assembly in 20 years; a remarkable fact considering the path laid out by Millicent Preston Stanley and Lillian Fowler. Mary was also one of the first members to win a country electorate for the Liberal Party, taking up the seat of Murray following the death of her father, who had been the local member. A much-loved community figure, Mary held the seat until her death just a few years later in 1980. She was the only woman parliamentarian in the Legislative Assembly until Rosemary Foot (Liberal) won the seat of Vaucluse in 1978.

In the Sydney Morning Herald in 1973 Mary declared "if a woman wanted to carry banners and did not interfere with anyone else's rights, she should be allowed to do so. But if a woman wanted to stay at home she should be allowed this right also."

As a parliamentarian, she committed herself to many issues affecting country people including agriculture, water resources, salinity and pollution in the Murray basin.

ELISABETH KIRKBY
AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS
MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (1981 - 1998)



Elisabeth Kirkby OAM, representing the Australian Democrats, was the first woman from a minor political party to be elected to the NSW Parliament. Between 1988 and 1998, she was also the first woman leader of a state political party with parliamentary representation. At the time she retired in 1998, Elisabeth was the longest serving Australian Democrat in Australian politics.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Elisabeth held the balance of power in the Legislative Council. She used this remarkable position to influence the Government's industrial relations laws, and forced the Government to reverse its attempt to abolish Aboriginal land rights. A supporter of LGBTI rights, she introduced a bill to amend the De Facto Relationships Act.

Elisabeth also introduced a number of procedural reforms that bolstered the effectiveness of the Council as a House of Review.

Upon her retirement in 1998, Dr Marlene Goldsmith MLC said: "When I first began to work in politics...there was a widespread belief that women did not have the stamina...it is difficult to imagine anyone who has done more single-handedly to dispel this myth than the Hon. Elisabeth Kirkby."

In 2014, Elisabeth earned a PhD from the University of Sydney at the age of 93, becoming Australia's oldest graduate. Her thesis was entitled 'Will we ever learn from history? The impact of economic orthodoxy on unemployment during the great depression in Australia.'

JANICE CROSIO
LABOR
MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, FAIRFIELD (1981 - 1988), SMITHFIELD (1988-1990)



The Hon Janice Crosio AM, MBE holds the distinction of being the first woman appointed as a Minister in the NSW Parliament, serving as the Minister for Natural Resources from 1984-1986. She also held portfolios as the Minister for Local Government (1986-1988), Minister for Water Resources (1986-1988) and Assistant Minister for Transport. From 1993-1996, she served as Parliamentary Secretary.

Janice was also the first woman in Australia to hold positions in all three levels of Government. She was an alderman, Deputy Mayor and then Mayor at Fairfield City Council, before embarking on her career in state politics. After leaving the NSW Parliament, she went on to successfully contest the Federal seat of Prospect, in Sydney's west, which she held from 1990 until her retirement in 2004. Between 2001 and 2004, she was the Chief Opposition Whip in the House of Representatives.

Janice was recognised many times over for her remarkable career and her contribution to NSW and Australia. In 1977 she received the Queen's Jubilee Medal and in 1978 was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire for services to local government and the community. In 1980, she was awarded a Knight of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic, for services to the Italian community and in 2005 she was awarded the Order of Australia for her pioneering of women's participation in politics.

ROSEMARY FOOT
LIBERAL
MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, VAUCLUSE (1978 - 1986)



Rosemary Foot AO was the first woman to hold a leadership position for a major political party. At the time she became Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party in 1983, it was the most senior position ever held by a woman in the Legislative Assembly of NSW.

Interestingly, Rosemary is the great granddaughter of Sir John See; a former NSW Premier who successfully introduced the Women's Franchise Act 1902. Following through with this significant legacy, as a parliamentarian she advocated for the rights of permanent part-time workers; a commitment that was reflected in her position as Shadow Minister for Employment, Consumer Affairs and Women's Interests.

Her service to the Parliament and the community was recognised in 1999, when she was awarded an Officer of the Order of Australia in the General Division for her contribution to community health, visual arts, issues of women's interest and politics.

JUDY JAKINS
NATIONALS
MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (1984 - 1991)



Judy Jakins AM was the first woman elected to represent the Nationals in NSW, holding a seat in the Legislative Council from 1984-1991. A life-long advocate for communities in the far west, she used her inaugural speech to draw attention to the difficulties faced by women in country NSW when it came to participating in politics.

“It is very difficult for a woman in the country to have a full-time career in politics because of geographical reasons,” she said. “City women are able to be at home with their families every night. It would be unusual in our party to find a female candidate who was willing to abandon her responsibilities in this regard until her children had grown up.”

During her time in Parliament, Judy was a driving force behind the formation of the Isolated Children’s Parent’s Association, which was formed to help remote families struggling to educate their children. She was also the founding chair of the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Dubbo. After leaving Parliament, she continued to work for the community through a position on Dubbo City Council from 1991-1995.

WENDY MACHIN
NATIONALS
MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, GLOUCESTER (1985 - 1988), MANNING (1988-1991), PORT MACQUARIE (1991-1996)



Wendy Machin was the first Nationals woman elected to the Legislative Assembly. As the first woman in her party to serve as Chair of Committees (Deputy Speaker), she was also the first woman to preside over the Legislative Assembly (1989-1993). She broke ground as the first woman in the National Party to hold a Ministry: Consumer Affairs Minister (1993-1995), Minister Assisting the Minister for Roads (1993-1995) and Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport (1993-1995).

At 24, Wendy was the youngest person elected as an independent alderman on North Sydney Municipal Council from 1983-1985.

Following her resignation she continued to be active in the community and in business: as President of the Save the Children Fund (1996-2000); a Board member (2005-2008), President (2008-2014) and currently Director of the NRMA; a member of the Migration and Refugee Review Tribunal (2004-2008) and Deputy Chair of the Australian Republican Movement (1998-2000). Wendy currently chairs the Australasian New Car Assessment Programme, the Customer Owned Banking Association, the NSW Government Crown Holiday Parks Trust, and is on the board of Destination NSW.

In a 2011 interview, she said “being a woman in some very blokey environments means you have to believe in yourself and occasionally be prepared to dive in the ‘deep end.’”

ANNE COHEN
LIBERAL
MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, MINCHINBURY (1998 - 1991), BADGERYS CREEK (1991-1995)



Anne Cohen was elected to Parliament in 1988 and was the first woman from the Liberal Party to serve as chairperson of the parliamentary committee on road safety: “The Staysafe Committee.” She was also the first woman from the Liberal Party to serve as Minister in the Legislative Assembly, where she held the positions of Chief Secretary and Minister for Administrative Services from 1991 to 1995.

During her time in office, Anne was a vocal advocate for reducing instances of underage drinking and driving while under the effects of alcohol. She was also heavily involved with communication networks and infrastructure projects; especially the choice of the site of the Badgerys Creek Airport. As Chief Secretary of NSW, Anne was responsible for the appointment of an independent board to oversee the selection of the casino process and to approve the board’s selection of the successful tender. She strongly promoted interest in Western Sydney and in particular her own electorate of Badgerys Creek.

KERRY CHIKAROVSKI
LIBERAL
MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, LANE COVE (1991 - 2003)



Kerry Chikarovski was the first Minister for The Status of Women when the portfolio was created in 1993, and set about implementing the Working for Women policy. “I wanted to put issues affecting women – from childcare to health – at the top of the Government’s agenda,” she said. “It worked.”

With her dual responsibilities as Minister for Industrial Relations, Kerry oversaw the development and introduction of flexible working conditions for the public sector and the implementation of mentoring programs to encourage women to seek careers at the highest level of the NSW public service.

In 1994, Kerry was elected Deputy Leader of the NSW Liberal Party and in 1998 became its Leader: the first woman in NSW to sit at the head of a major political party. As Opposition Leader, she led the Liberals at the 1999 election against Premier Bob Carr. She was also the Shadow Minister for the Arts, Ethnic Affairs and Women.

“Politics is a funny game,” she has said. “We all bring to the job a certain passion – a passion to change the world in even the smallest possible way.”

VIRGINIA CHADWICK
LIBERAL
MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (1978-1999)



The late Hon. Virginia Chadwick AO was the first woman in NSW to serve as a Presiding Officer of the Parliament, performing the role of President of the Legislative Council from 1998 until 1999. The President presides over the Legislative Council; maintaining order and applying and interpreting the practices and procedures of the House.

Virginia’s nomination to the position was secured by the Leader of the Opposition, who said: “It is a laudable achievement for a person who has accomplished many firsts and a most appropriate next step in a challenging and outstanding career.”

Throughout her career in politics, Virginia celebrated a number of other ‘firsts’: she was the first woman to serve as Opposition Whip in 1984 and the first Liberal woman to be appointed as a Minister in the Greiner Government in 1988, as Minister for Family and Community Services. Other portfolios held by Virginia included: the Hunter and Women (1988-1990); Education (1990-1995) – another first; and Tourism (1993-1995).

After resigning from the Parliament, Virginia continued to champion important causes and became the first woman to Chair the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (1999-2007).

LINDA BURNEY
LABOR
MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, CANTERBURY (2003 - 2016)



Linda Burney broke significant ground as the first Aboriginal person to be elected to the NSW Parliament. Reflecting on her achievements, she has said “I have been heartened to help create some change for our State’s First Peoples. I was enormously proud to have been a part of the Government in this State that recognised First Peoples in the New South Wales Constitution.”

A passionate advocate for Aboriginal issues in the community, Linda held a number of ministerial positions including Minister for Fair Trading, Minister for Volunteering, Minister for Youth, Minister for Women and Minister for Community Services. She served as Deputy Leader of the Opposition from 2011 until her resignation in 2016.

Linda achieved another significant cultural and political milestone when she successfully contested the Federal seat of Barton in the 2016 election; she is the first Aboriginal woman to hold a seat in the House of Representatives. In her valedictory speech in the NSW Legislative Assembly she declared “it is the moral responsibility of us all in this building to leave this state a better place for our service. I think I have done that.”

CARMEL TEBBUTT

LABOR

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (1998-2005); MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, MARRICKVILLE (2005-2015)



In 2008, the Hon Carmel Tebbutt became the first woman appointed as Deputy Premier of New South Wales. As Deputy Premier alongside Premier Kristina Keneally, she formed part of the first female-led government in Australia.

Along with this distinction were several others, with Carmel serving as a Minister in numerous portfolios from 1999 to 2011. She took particular pride in her achievements as Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister for Community Services, Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Climate Change and Environment and, finally, as Minister for Health. Prior to entering Parliament, Carmel was a councillor and Deputy Mayor on Marrickville Council.

“It has been a fabulous journey,” she remarked in her valedictory speech. “I have loved being involved in some of the big debates and policies that have shaped our State. I have got enormous satisfaction from making a difference to people’s lives. I believe deeply in the value of public service and that politics is an honourable profession.”

KRISTINA KENEALLY

LABOR

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, HEFFRON (2003-2012)



The Hon Kristina Keneally was the 42nd Premier of New South Wales and the first and only woman to hold the office.

Kristina’s election as Leader of the NSW Labor Party and as Premier in 2009 created another milestone in Australian politics. The swearing-in of Kristina and Deputy Premier Carmel Tebbutt by Governor Marie Bashir delivered the first government in Australia headed by two women.

Kristina served as the Member for Heffron from 2003-2012. In executive government she held the portfolios of Disability Services, Ageing, Planning, Infrastructure, and Redfern Waterloo.

Kristina used her inaugural speech in 2003 to speak about her passion for social justice and her commitment to feminism. Throughout her career she advocated for victims of sexual trafficking, better funding for domestic violence services, access to affordable and reliable childcare, improved social housing and increased support for people with disabilities and their carers.

SHELLEY HANCOCK

LIBERAL

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, SOUTH COAST (2003 - Present)



The Hon Shelley Hancock MP is the first female Speaker in the history of the NSW Parliament. She was first elected Speaker on 5 May 2011 and was re-elected to the role in May 2015.

In undertaking her duties as Speaker, Shelley has supported initiatives aimed at fostering greater awareness about Parliament, and maintaining the links between the Legislative Assembly, its elected Members members and the broader community. Such activities include: serving as the Legislative Assembly’s diplomatic representative and meeting with delegations and diplomats; regularly addressing the participants in the public sector seminar program; speaking to school students and community groups; and supporting events held by charitable organisations working in the areas of childhood early intervention, mental health, and cancer

research, prevention and support.

Shelley has said: “From the outset, my intention as Speaker has been to ensure that the Government’s considerable majority does not give rise to arrogance and that members on each side treat each other fairly and with respect. The main consideration for the Speaker is to ensure the general rules of debate are observed and that a certain level of decorum applies, consistent with the respect and standards that should attach to the House and its members. Would I, the first woman elected as Speaker, be able to control debate which so quickly moves from being robust to ruthless?”

Shelley is also the first female to serve as the member for South Coast, an electorate that has existed since 1927.

GLADYS BEREJKLIAN
LIBERAL
MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, WILLOUGHBY (2003-Present)



The Hon Gladys Berejiklian was elected to the NSW Parliament on March 22, 2003 as the Member for Willoughby.

In March 2011, Gladys was appointed Minister for Transport and in March 2015 as Minister for Industrial Relations. At the same time, she became the first woman appointed Treasurer of NSW.

Since April 2014, Gladys has served as Deputy Leader of the NSW Parliamentary Liberal Party. Gladys is a Master of Commerce graduate from UNSW and prior to entering Parliament worked as a General Manager for the Commonwealth Bank. Gladys has also completed studies in Government and Public Administration (B.A., Uni. Syd).

In her inaugural speech in 2003, Gladys spoke of her lifelong connection to the Willoughby community, the pride she felt in her Armenian-Australian background and her core set of ideals that are anchored in modern liberalism. She said: “For me, the essence of liberalism is having the opportunity to pursue and achieve your life goals, irrespective of your background, and then give something back to society by ensuring that this opportunity is created for others.”

LYNN LOVELOCK
CLERK OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (2007-2011)



In 1988 Lynn Lovelock became the first woman appointed to the position of Usher of the Black Rod in NSW. She later held the position of Deputy Clerk and in 2007 became the first female Clerk of the Parliaments and Clerk of the Legislative Council. Lynn’s period of service was marked by significant developments in parliamentary law and practice. She was one of the authors of New South Wales Legislative Council Practice, a definitive record of practice and procedure in the upper house over more than 150 years.

Lynn enhanced the services already provided by parliamentary staff, implementing a vision to improve community awareness and engagement with the institution. She also strongly supported the NSW Parliament’s twinned relationships with the parliaments of the Solomon Islands and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, championing programs to foster parliamentary practice and procedure in the regions.

With the Hon Amanda Fazio, President of the Legislative Council, Lynn formed the Council’s first all-female corporate leadership team. In 2010, they worked together to authorise an inquiry into the ‘Gentrader’ transaction, despite attempts by the Parliament to prorogue and therefore suspend the committee.

RONDA MILLER
CLERK OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (2011-2016)



In 2011, the Legislative Assembly welcomed its 18th Clerk and the first woman to be appointed to the role; Ms Ronda Mary Miller. As Clerk, Ronda undertook responsibility for the procedural advice given to members, the administration of the House and the management of the Department of the Legislative Assembly. Significantly, Ronda performed these duties after commencing as Clerk at the start of the 55th Parliament, which saw an unprecedented change in membership in the Assembly since Federation: 34 new members were elected to the Assembly in 2015.

Ronda also supported the development of an expanded committee system and the establishment of statutory committees charged with overseeing independent bodies central to the system of public sector accountability. She worked closely with the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Privileges and Ethics Committee during the development of the first members’ Code of Conduct, and supported broader initiatives such as the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Association and the twinning program.

Prior to her appointment as Clerk, Ronda was also the first woman to hold the positions of Serjeant-at-Arms, Clerk Assistant (Committees) and Clerk Assistant (Table).

GABRIELLE UPTON
LIBERAL
MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, VAUCLUSE (2011-Present)



First elected to the NSW Parliament in 2011, the Hon. Gabrielle Upton was re-elected to the Legislative Assembly at the 2015 State Election and became the first woman appointed to the position of NSW Attorney General. Prior to her appointment to this significant role as chief law officer, Gabrielle held the portfolios of Minister for Sport and Recreation, followed by Minister for Family and Community Services.

In her role as Attorney, Gabrielle has drawn on her previous portfolio experience for initiatives aimed at reforming the justice system to meet the needs of children and young people. She has also spoken of the challenge of engaging with the community on complex legal policy issues to ensure she can reflect community expectations.

Gabrielle's career began as a banking and finance lawyer with legal firms Freehill, Hollingdale & Page and Philips Fox. Upon completing her MBA at the New York University's Leonard Stern School of Business, Gabrielle worked as a banker with Deutsche Bank and Toronto Dominion Bank in New York. She served as Deputy Chancellor at the University of New South Wales, Deputy Chair of the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards in Australia and as a board member of Neuroscience Research Australia. Gabrielle has a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws from the University of New South Wales, and is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

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