Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE0359

Kirner, Joan Elizabeth

(1938 - 2015)

Born	19380620, Essendon Victoria Australia
Died	20150601, Melbourne Victoria Australia
Occupation	Parliamentarian

Summary

In 1990 Joan Kirner was elected the first woman Premier for the State of Victoria. She held the position for two years but her legacy will extend for much longer. As the Premier of Victoria, Daniel Andrews said in a statement after her death:

“Through her decades of advocacy for gender equality, [Joan Kirner] fundamentally changed [The Victorian ALP] and our society. In the process, she raised a generation of Victorian Labor women – one of whom became Prime Minister…
She fought every day for fairness. Our state is stronger for her service and our lives are greater for her friendship. She was our first female Premier and because of her work, she won’t be the last.”

Details

Kirner entered the Victorian Parliament in 1982 as an MLC (ALP) for the Province of Melbourne West. Between 1985 and 1988 she was Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands. In 1988 she moved to the Lower House as the member for Williamstown and was appointed Minister for Education (1988-1990) and Minister for Ethnic Affairs (1990-1991). She served as Deputy Premier from 1989-1990 and in 1992 became the Leader of the Opposition.

Kirner resigned from parliament in 1994. That same year, she was appointed Chair of the Employment Services Regulatory Authority (which position she held until 1996), and Chair of the National Committee to Celebrate the Centenary of Federation. In May 2001, as a member of the Victorian Committee for the Centenary of Federation, she organised the Women Shaping the Nation event and presentation of the Victorian Honour Roll of women in the Victorian Parliament with 756 women present.

Kirner’s interest in social justice, equity for women, the arts and landcare was lifelong. With Moira Rayner, she co-authored the best selling *Women’s Power Handbook*, published in 1999 and illustrated by Judy Horacek. Kirner was a co-convenor of Emily’s List, a Board member of the Australian Children’s Television Foundation, and a member of the Playbox Theatre Board. She supported a variety of organisations including the Living Museum of the West, the Women’s Circus and Positive Women.

Events

2001 - 2001
Inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women

Published resources

Edited Book
Who's Who in Australia 2002, Herd, Margaret, 2002

As a woman: writing women's lives, Scutt, Jocelynne A., 1992

Living generously: women mentoring women, Scutt, Jocelynne A., 1996

Conference Paper
Economic Statement: A Statement, Victoria, 1991

A Positive Partnership: Affirmative Action in the Australian Labor Party, Australian Labor Party (Vic. Br.); Kirner, J (Joan); Douglas, Mary, 1994

"But I'm only a Mum;" "On Deleting the Word Only.", Victorian Federation of State Parents' Clubs; Kirner, Joan E, 1977

Book
Hon. Joan Kirner, Education Speeches, 1973-1984: "From Mum to Minister.", Kirner, J (Joan), [1996]

Ministerial Statement on the VCE, Kirner, J (Joan), 1989

The Women's Power Handbook, Kirner, Joan and Moira Rayner, 1999

No ordinary lives: pioneering women in Australian politics, Jenkins, Cathy, 2008

Resource Section
Women in Australia's Working History, 2003,
http://www.australianworkersheritagecentre.com.au/07_education/working_women.htm

Site Exhibition
Carrying on the Fight: Women Candidates in Victorian Parliamentary Elections, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2008,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/cws/home.html

The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia, Smart, Judith and Swain, Shurlee (eds.), 2014,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Article
Victoria's first female premier Joan Kirner dies aged 76, Dow, Aisha, 2015,
http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/victorias-first-female-premier-joan-kirner-dies-aged-76-20150601-ghefxh.html

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Digital resources



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