Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE0772

Kelly, Roslyn Joan (Ros)

(1948 -)

Born	19480125, Sydney New South Wales Australia
Occupation	Parliamentarian

Summary

Ros Kelly was elected with a large majority as the first woman member of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) House of Assembly and was later elected to the House of Representatives for the electorate of Canberra (1980-1995). She was the first Labor woman federal minister in the House of Representatives and the first to give birth while holding office. A complete record of her parliamentary service, including a link to her first speech, can be found in the Parliamentary Handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia (see below).

Details

Ros Kelly was educated at St. Ursula's College, Ashbury, and obtained a BA DipEd from the University of Sydney. She worked as a high school teacher from 1969 to 1974.

She moved to Canberra in 1970 and was elected the first woman member of the ACT House of Assembly from 1974 to 1979. She also became the first woman chair of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Schools Authority from 1978 to 1979 and a foundation member of the ACT Legal Aid Commission from 1978 to 1979.

Kelly has been patron of numerous ACT sporting clubs and a member of many ACT ethnic, social and community associations.

In 1980 Kelly was elected to the federal seat of Canberra with one of the largest swings against the then Liberal government, and in 1983 she became the first federal parliamentarian to give birth while an MP. In 1987 Kelly became the first Labor woman federal minister in the House of Representatives.

As member for Canberra, Kelly was secretary of the Federal Labor Caucus from 1981 to 1987 and held office as minister for the portfolios of Defence, Science and Personnel from 1987 to 1988; Communications and Aviation Support from 1988 to 1990; Arts, Sport, Environment, Tourism and Territories from 1991 to 1993; Environment, Sport and Territories from 1993 to 1994; Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories from 1994 to 1995. She also served as Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on the Status of Women until 1994.

Kelly resigned from federal politics in 1995, and has worked as a senior executive in environmental management since that time. She is currently on the Board of Trustees of the National Breast Cancer Foundation, a trustee for the World Wide Fund for Nature and a board member of the Westpac Emergency Helicopter Service.

In 2004 Kelly was made an Officer of the Order of Australia for service to the community through promoting corporate environmental responsibility and fostering dialogue between business and conservation groups, to the Australian Parliament, and to women's health.

She has two children.

Events

1978 - 1979
Chairperson of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Schools Authority

1978 - 1979
Foundation member of the Legal Aid Commission

Published resources

Edited Book
Who's Who in Australia 2004, 2004

Who's Who of Australian Women, Lofthouse, Andrea, 1982

Who's Who in Canberra 1991, 1991

Book
Capital women : a history of the work of the National Council of Women (A.C.T.) in Canberra, 1939-1979, Stephenson, Freda, 1992

A history of Australia's capital, Canberra, Davies, E. V., 1990

Canberra 1954-1980, Sparke, Eric, 1988

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

Ros Kelly: a passionate life, Kelly, Roslyn, 2017

Kelly, the Hon. Roslyn Joan, AO,
https://handbook.aph.gov.au/parliamentarians/OH4

Resource
A brief history of the ACT ALP, 2004,
http://www.act.alp.org.au/about/history.html

Women's suffrage timeline, Sawer, Marian, 2002,
http://www.wcc2002.asn.au/suffrage.htm

Kelly, the Hon. Roslyn Joan, AO: Parliament of Australia website,
https://handbook.aph.gov.au/Parliamentarian/OH4

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Site Exhibition
From Lady Denman to Katy Gallagher: A Century of Women's Contributions to Canberra, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2013,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/ldkg

Archival resources

National Archives of Australia, National Office, Canberra
Papers of Hon Ros Kelly

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection
Papers of Ros Kelly, 1992 [manuscript]

National Library of Australia, Oral History and Folklore Collection
Ros Kelly interviewed by Mark O'Neill [sound recording]

Ros Kelly interviewed by Peter Sekuless [sound recording]

National Library of Australia
[Biographical cuttings on Roslyn Joan Kelly, politician, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals]

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Author Details
Ros Russell

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Digital resources



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