Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE24070747

Paterson, Marisa

(1982 -)

Born	19821106, Melbourne Victoria Australia
Occupation	Academic, Parliamentarian

Summary

Marisa Paterson was elected to the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory in 2020, after a career as an academic researcher including as Director of the Centre for Gambling Research at the Australian National University.

Details

Marisa Paterson was born in Melbourne on 6 November 1982, one of four children. She lived in Melbourne, but also spent significant time growing up in the Victorian high country near Omeo, where her mother's family were cattle farmers. Paterson has acknowledged her family's influence in fostering an early commitment to social justice and community service.

After completing secondary education, she travelled overseas for a year and worked with a volunteer organisation on aid projects in South-east Asia, India and Nepal. She graduated from Monash University with a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology and Psychology in 2004. In 2005, she moved to Canberra to undertake a Masters of Anthropology and Participatory Development at the Australian National University (ANU), with a focus on mental health and addiction research.

Paterson then moved to Darwin in the Northern Territory, and was awarded a PhD scholarship at Charles Darwin University, to study the impact of gambling on remote Aboriginal communities. She lived in the Arnhem Land community of Maningrida for 18 months and was there when the Howard government announced the establishment of the Northern Territory Emergency Response Act (also known as the 'Intervention') in August 2007. In her inaugural speech to the ACT Legislative Assembly in 2020, Paterson noted this was a pivotal period in her life.

In 2008 Paterson moved back to Canberra. She completed her PhD thesis titled: 'From card games to poker machines: Gambling in remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory' in 2014, and in that period had three children. After working in various research related roles, she became the Director of the ANU Centre for Gambling Research in 2017. In 2019 she joined the Australian Labor Party and nominated as a candidate in the electorate of Murrumbidgee in the ACT Legislative Assembly. Just prior to nominating, Paterson made a formal complaint of sexual harassment against an academic colleague from the Auckland University of Technology (AUT). Her action resulted in other complaints about AUT staff and procedures, and ultimately lead to an independent investigation. She received a formal apology from AUT in 2022.

Paterson was elected as one of five members for Murrumbidgee in October 2020. Since taking her seat in the ACT Legislative Assembly she has become the Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety and the Chair of the Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee. She has been an outspoken advocate for reducing harm associated with gambling, and successfully introduced legislation which prevents the introduction of poker machines to the ACT's Molonglo Valley district and other new development areas, as well as lobbying for other gambling reforms. She has introduced bills aimed at reshaping sexual consent laws, sentencing laws, and changing bail laws for driving offences. She has also advocated for the establishment of a specialised court to address sexual offences in the ACT. Paterson is ACT Labor's spokesperson on justice and gaming policies.

Published resources

Website
Marisa Paterson website,
https://marisapaterson.com.au

Paterson, Marisa: Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory website,
https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/members/tenth-assembly-members/murrumbidgee/paterson-marisa

Thesis
From card games to poker machines: Gambling in remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory, Fogarty, Marisa, 2014,
https://ris.cdu.edu.au/ws/portalfiles/portal/22703608/Thesis_CDU_40111_Fogarty_M.pdf

Article
ACT Assembly class of 2020: Labor's Marisa Paterson on standing up for herself and the Canberra community, 2 July 2021,
https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7107141/my-kids-would-be-proud-paterson-standing-up-for-canberra/

Marisa Paterson reaches settlement with New Zealand university, 25 August 2022,
https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-25/marisa-paterson-reaches-settlement-uat-over-sexual-harassment/101370040

Author Details
Kylie Scroope

Created 10 May 2024
Last modified