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Vassarotti, Rebecca

Occupation Community activist, Parliamentarian

Summary

Rebecca Vassarotti was elected as a Greens member for the seat of Kurrajong in the ACT election of October 2020 and was subsequently appointed Minister for the Environment, Parks and Land Management, Minister for Heritage, Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services and Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction. In March 2024, following a ballot of Party members, she was elected Deputy Leader of the ACT Greens. She stood in the 2024 election but was not re-elected. She returned to the Legislative Assembly in June 2026 to fill a casual vacancy.

Details

Rebecca Vassarotti was born and raised in Canberra; one of six children. Her mother Therese (née Holland) was a teacher; her father, Kevin a public servant. With Italian Irish family heritage, her maternal ancestors the Keefe and Cullen families were some of the original settlers in the ACT region. Her paternal ancestors migrated from northern Italy in the 1890s. Vassarotti's parents moved to Canberra from Sydney to work in the public service. In her inaugural speech, Vassarotti noted that "while things were far from lavish, we were never in any doubt that we were privileged and we needed to think about how we could contribute to our community." She credits her parents for fostering her sense of social justice, leadership and activism.

Educated at Saint John the Apostle Florey, Saint Francis Xavier Florey and Hawker College, Vassarotti has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology and Political Science (1994) and a Masters in Environmental Law (2000) from the Australian National University. After completing university, she worked as a graduate in the ACT public service, later being appointed Executive Director, YWCA Canberra, Deputy CEO Australian Council of Social Service and Executive Director, International Network on Hepatitis and Substance Use. She formed her own independent consultancy and served as a community member of the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal and a range of voluntary board roles including with Community Housing Canberra, the Early Morning Centre and the Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy. She was a co-founder of the Canberra Gambling Reform Alliance.

Through her work with the YWCA and organisations such as the Council of Social Service, Vassarotti became passionate about issues of social exclusion, disadvantage and marginalisation. Her belief in taking responsibility and contributing to fixing problems led her to depart from advocacy and become directly involved in political life.

First running for the Greens in 2016, Vassarotti was elected in 2020 for the seat of Kurrajong, having displaced former Liberals member Candice Burch. With six Greens winning seats, Vassarotti was appointed Minister for the Environment, Parks and Land Management, Minister for Heritage, Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services and Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction. In March 2024, following a ballot of Party members, she was elected Deputy Leader of the Greens. She stood in the 2024 election but was not re-elected. In January 2025 she joined The Benevolent Society as Acting Executive Director for Future Directions, but returned to the Legislative Assembly on 4 June 2026, filling the casual vacancy caused by the resignation of Shane Rattenbury, the former leader of the Greens.

Vassarotti has three children, twin sons and a daughter. Family is extremely important to her. She is passionate about her local community and excited about pushing herself to do new things. She loves travelling and exploring new places; karaoke, dancing and keeping fit.

Published resources

Website
Vassarotti, Rebecca: Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory website,
https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/members/tenth-assembly-members/kurrajong/vassarotti-rebecca

Rebecca Vassarotti: ACT Greens website,
https://greens.org.au/act/person/rebecca-vassarotti

Speech
Rebecca Vassarotti inaugural speech to the ACT Legislative Assembly,
https://greens.org.au/act/news/rebecca-vassarotti-inaugural-speech-act-legislative-assembly

Article
Rebecca Vassarotti Wikipedia entry,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rebecca_Vassarotti

First Sydney, then the world: How new minister Rebecca Vassarotti realised Canberra had everything she needed, White, Daniella, 28 January 2021,
https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7102475/first-sydney-then-the-world-how-new-minister-realised-canberra-had-everythin

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