

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE4213

Bryce, Quentin

(1942 -)

Born	19421223, Queensland Australia
Occupation	Academic, Barrister, Governor, Governor-General, Lawyer

Summary

On the September 5, 2008, Quentin Bryce assumed the office of Governor-General of Australia, the twenty-fifth person to hold the office, but the first woman.

The appointment was the latest in a long line of ‘firsts’ for Bryce. A graduate from the University of Queensland with degrees in arts and law, she was one of the first Queensland women to be admitted to the Queensland Bar. In 1968 she became the first woman to be a faculty member of the Law school where she had studied. In 1984 she was appointed inaugural Director of the Queensland Women’s Information Service, Office of the Status of Women, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. In the period 1993 to 1996, she was founding Chair and Chief Executive Officer of the National Childcare Accreditation Council. In 2003, she became the second woman to be appointed to the position of Governor of Queensland. She has also served as Queensland director of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. In 1989 she became the Sex Discrimination Commissioner on the commission. And she was one of the first women to serve on the National Women’s Advisory Council, established by the commonwealth government in 1978.

From country stock, raised in a series of small towns scattered around central-west Queensland, Bryce was home schooled by her mother before being packed off to board at Brisbane’s Moreton Bay College, attending the University of Queensland subsequently. At university she reacquainted herself with an architecture student, Michael Bryce, whom she had first met as a nine-year- old. They started dating and married in 1964. They now have two daughters, three sons and five grandchildren.

Of his decision to recommend Quentin Bryce to the role of Governor-General, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd in 2008 said:

It’s obvious that we needed to have a governor-general for Australia who captures the spirit of modern Australia, and the spirit of modern Australia is many things. Giving proper voice to people from the bush and the regions, giving proper voice to the rights of women, giving proper voice to the proper place of women in modern Australia and proper place to someone committed to the lives of, improving the lives for Indigenous Australians. These are all considerations in shaping my recommendation to her Majesty the Queen.

Of her own appointment as Governor-General, Quentin Bryce has remarked:

I grew up in a little bush town in Queensland of 200 people and what this day says to Australian women and to Australian girls is that you can do anything, you can be anything, and it makes my heart sing to see women in so many diverse roles across our country and Australia.

Published resources

Resource

Exclusive Interview with Quentin Bryce, O'Brien, Kerry, 2008,
<http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2008/s2372400.htm>

Quentin Bryce to become nation's first woman G-G, Robertson, Dana, 2008,
<http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2008/s2215693.htm>

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Newspaper Article

To the Manor Born, Condon, Matthew, 2008

Article

Polished Trailblazer, Murphy, Damien, 2008,
<http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/news/queensland/profile/2008/04/13/1208025027816.html?page=fullpage#contentSwap1>

Book

On the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the federal Sex Discrimination Act 1984 an address to the National Status of Women Committee by Quentin Bryce, Bryce, Quentin, 1989

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>

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

Australian Women Lawyers as Active Citizens, Trailblazing Women Lawyers Project Team, 2016,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/lawyers>

Resource Section

Law, Kerwin, Hollie and Rubenstein, Kim, 2014,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0624b.htm>

Archival resources

National Library of Australia

[\[Biographical cuttings on Quentin Bryce, chairman of the Women's Advisory Council, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals\]](#)

National Archives of Australia, Sydney Office

[Speeches by staff members, single number series](#)

Mitchell and Dixson Libraries Manuscripts Collection

[Pat Richardson scrapbooks relating to the Women's Electoral Lobby and women's events, 1977-2002](#)

Author Details

TBWL project team

Created 29 June 2009

Last modified 9 October 2025

Digital resources



Title: Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce

Type: Image

Date: 3 May, 2023