

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** PR00264

## Bligh, Anna Maria

(1960 - )

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**Born** 19600714, Warwick Queensland Australia

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**Occupation** Chief Executive Officer, Parliamentarian, State Premier

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### Summary

Anna Maria Bligh was elected as Premier of Queensland on 21 March 2009, thus becoming the first woman in Australia to be elected in her own right as Premier. She was sworn in as Premier of Queensland on 13 September 2007, following the resignation of Peter Beattie, and was then Queensland's first female Premier, a position she held until Labor's electoral defeat in 2012. She was appointed Deputy Premier of Queensland in July 2005 – the same month she celebrated 10 years as Member for South Brisbane. As Deputy Premier she was also Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure, running the \$33 billion Queensland State Budget and leading construction of the \$9 billion South-East Queensland Water Grid.

She was formerly Minister for Finance, State Development, Trade and Innovation. Prior to that she was Queensland's first female Education Minister spending almost 5 years overseeing the most significant reforms to the State's education system including the introduction of a preparatory year of schooling and requirements for all young people to be "learning or earning". During that time she also had responsibilities for the Arts portfolio, overseeing construction of the Millennium Arts Precinct. Following the election of the Beattie Labor Government in June 1998, her first ministerial responsibility was as Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care and Disability Services.

In 2017, Anna Bligh was made a Companion in the General Division of the order of Australia 'for eminent service to the Parliament of Queensland, particularly as Premier, to infrastructure development and education reform, as an advocate for the role of women in public life, and to the not for-profit sector'.

## Details

Anna Bligh grew up on the Gold Coast, attending Catholic primary schools and Miami State High School, before completing the last six months of her schooling at Nowra State High School. Prior to her election, on 15 July 1995, she worked in many community organisations and in the Queensland Public Service, in employment, training and industrial relations policy. Ms Bligh graduated with an Arts Degree from University of Queensland in 1980. Ms Bligh and her family have lived in South Brisbane for more than 20 years. She is married to Greg Withers, a senior public servant, with whom she has two sons, Joe and Oliver. Apart from spending time with her family, Ms Bligh's hobbies include running, reading, and cooking.

Parliamentary Service includes:

Premier of Queensland from 13 September 2007. Elected as Premier 21 March 2009  
Member, Standing Orders Committee from 11 October 2006  
Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure 13 September 2006 – 13 September 2007  
Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for State Development, Trade and Innovation 2 February 2006 – 13 September 2006  
Deputy Premier and Minister for Finance, Minister for State Development, Trade and Innovation 28 July 2005 – 2 February 2006  
Minister for Education and The Arts 12 February 2004 – 28 July 2005  
Minister for Education 22 February 2001 – 12 February 2004 (first woman in Queensland to become Education Minister)  
Leader of Government Parliamentary Business 22 March 2001 – 9 August 2005  
Member, Standing Orders Committee 3 May 2001 – 15 August 2006  
Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care and Minister for Disability Services 29 June 1998 – 22 February 2001  
Shadow Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care 17 December 1996 – 26 June 1998  
Member, Estimates Committee G 1997  
Shadow Minister for Public Works, Administrative Services and Public Service Matters 27 February 1996 – 17 December 1996  
Member, Estimates Committee F 1996  
Member, Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee 15 September 1995 – 2 April 1996.

Party activity includes:

Member State Administrative Committee  
Member Labor Women's Organisation  
State Conference Delegate  
Branch President, Kurilpa (1993-1995)  
Branch Secretary, Fairfield (1987-1988)  
Convenor Social Justice Policy Committee (1991-1994)  
State Council Delegate.

After her resignation from the Queensland parliament in 2012, she was appointed CEO of the YWCA NSW in 2014, then CEO of the Australian Banking Association in 2017. She retired from the Banking Association in 2025 and was appointed Chair of the Board of UNICEF Australia in June 2026.

## Published resources

### Book

Mending matters: an anthology of reflections and flights of fantasy prompted by one hundred years of women's suffrage, Lyall-Watson, Katherine, 2005

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

### Resource

Premier Anna Bligh - Biography, Queensland Government, 2009,  
<http://www.thepremier.qld.gov.au/about/bio.aspx>

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

### Site Exhibition

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

### Author Details

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