

## Stanley Melbourne Bruce

### Prime Minister of Australia 1923–29

Born in Australia in 1883 and raised in Melbourne, Stanley Melbourne Bruce studied at Cambridge before settling in London in the years before World War I. During the war he served with the British Army in Egypt (where he was awarded the Military medal) and Gallipoli (where he was awarded the French Croix de Guerre). Wounded at Gallipoli in 1915 he was invalided to London. In 1917 Bruce returned to Australia to join the family importing firm of Paterson, Laing and Bruce.

Bruce entered the House of Representatives in 1918, winning a by-election for the seat of Flinders. He served as Treasurer (1921–23) in the Hughes Nationalist Government, and became prime minister in 1923 when new coalition partners, the Country Party (led by Earle Page), would not accept Hughes as Nationalist Party leader. As well as prime minister in the Bruce–Page Government, Bruce also held the portfolios of External Affairs (1923–29), Health (1927–28), and Trade and Customs (1928).

Legislation designed to return responsibility for conciliation and arbitration to the states caused the downfall of Bruce's government in 1929 when Hughes and a number of his colleagues who had defected from the Labor Party in 1917 voted with the Opposition to defeat the bills. Bruce lost his seat in the subsequent election and, although he regained it in 1931, he resigned from parliament in 1933 to take up appointment as Australian Minister (later High Commissioner) in London. As well as serving as High Commissioner from 1933 to 1945, Bruce also represented Australia at the League of Nations during the 1930s.

### Records of Stanley Melbourne Bruce held by the National Archives

The National Archives holds a comprehensive collection of records created and accumulated by Stanley Bruce. These include private records covering his personal achievements, but also records relating to his period as prime minister, minister and member of parliament, and his long period of service as High Commissioner in London. Many of these are listed in the table below. You can [search the collection](#) to find more information about these records.

## Records of Stanley Melbourne Bruce

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Folder of commissions, certificates, degrees, memberships and other official documents</u>	1906–46	A1487
<u>Parliamentary Debates (Hansards) for the Senate and House of Representatives</u>	1917–29	AA1970/67
<u>Decorations, insignia, presentations and other objects</u>	1918–57	M4254
<u>Miscellaneous official and private papers</u>	1918–67	AA1970/555
<u>Election pamphlet for Nationalist candidate Captain Bruce</u>	1919	A1495
<u>Notes of deputations to the Prime Minister</u>	1919–29	CP362/2
<u>Correspondence with Rt Hon WM Hughes, MP</u>	1921–23	A1492
<u>Books from the personal library of SM Bruce</u>	1921–62	AA1970/558
<u>Documents concerning the Hughes Cabinet</u>	1921–59	A1494
<u>Volume of press cuttings relating to Imperial and Economic conferences</u>	1923–24	A1486
<u>Negotiations between the Nationalist and Country parties</u>	1923–57	A1493
<u>Speeches and articles written by SM Bruce</u>	1923–24	A1489
<u>Speeches by the Prime Minister</u>	1923–28	CP362/3
<u>Personal papers of the Prime Minister</u>	1923–29	CP362/4
<u>Papers accumulated by SM Bruce</u>	1923–56	AA1970/559
<u>Correspondence with External Affairs Liaison Officer, London</u>	1924–30	A1420
<u>File of carbon copies of speeches on economic issues</u>	1924–66	A1490
<u>Printed copies of addresses</u>	1924–25	A1491
<u>Correspondence with Senator RV Wilson</u>	1924	A1496
<u>Correspondence with Frank Lidgett McDougall</u>	1924–29	M111
<u>Folders of annual correspondence</u>	1926–64	M104
<u>Papers relating to visit to London, USA and Canada</u>	1924–27	CP362/5
<u>Travel and appointments diaries of SM Bruce</u>	1930–40	M113
<u>Correspondence files maintained by RG Casey</u>	1925–75	M1129
<u>Binders of debt conversion notes, cables and correspondence</u>	1932–33	M110
<u>Folders of official papers and correspondence, London</u>	1932–45	M2236
<u>Correspondence with RG Casey</u>	1933–38	A1421
<u>Photograph album of Conference de Montreux 1936, Montreux Palace</u>	1936	M112
<u>Photograph album of High Commissioners for the Dominions and for India and Ambassadors to the Court of St James, London</u>	1937	M114
<u>Supplementary war files</u>	1938–43	M103
<u>Monthly war files</u>	1939–45	M100
<u>Subject index to monthly war files</u>	1939–45	M102

<u>Detailed name and subject index to monthly war files</u>	1939–41	M109
<u>Name index to monthly war files</u>	1943–45	M101
<u>Copies of Citations on Award of Honorary Degrees and Freedom of Cities</u>	1967	A1488

### **Further information**

- Research guide – Stanley Melbourne Bruce: Guide to the Archives of Australia's Prime Ministers
- The National Library of Australia also holds a collection of papers of Stanley Bruce.