

Earle Christmas Grafton Page

Prime Minister of Australia 7–26 April 1939

Born in the New South Wales town of Grafton in 1880, Earle Page studied medicine at Sydney University, prior to joining a medical practice in his home town in 1902. Page spent the years prior to World War I building his business and political interests around the northern rivers. He served as a doctor in the First AIF from 1916 to 1917.

Page successfully contested the seat of Cowper in the 1919 federal election as a representative of the Farmers and Settlers' Association. Along with ten other members elected on similar tickets, Page formed the Country Party in 1920 and, in 1921, emerged as its parliamentary leader. After the 1922 elections, Page used Country Party numbers to influence the governing Nationalist Party to replace its leader 'Billy' Hughes with Stanley Bruce and to accept the Country Party as its partner in a coalition government. Page became Deputy Prime Minister to Bruce, and Treasurer in the Bruce–Page government of 1923 to 1929.

Out of office through the period of James Scullin's Labor government, and during the first term of the Joseph Lyons' United Australia Party (UAP) government, Page again became Deputy Prime Minister after the 1934 election when the UAP needed Country Party support to govern. He served as Minister for Commerce, and later Minister for Health in this coalition government.

Lyons died in Office on 7 April 1939, and Page was sworn in as Prime Minister until the new UAP leader, Menzies, was selected. Menzies became Prime Minister on 26 April 1939. Differences between Page and Menzies saw the Country party excluded from Menzies' first government, and Page's subsequent stepdown from Country Party leadership.

Page served as Minister for Commerce (1940–41) and Minister for Health (1949–56) in the postwar Menzies government. He died in 1961.

Records about Earle Page held by the National Archives

The National Archives holds many records relating to Earle Page's long period in parliament, and especially his years as a government minister. While his period as Prime Minister was brief, he was Deputy Prime Minister for a number of years and as a consequence also served as Acting Prime Minister.

In the tables below, reference numbers direct you to the item or series in [RecordSearch](#), the National Archives database. There you can find more information. In many cases you can view entire digitised records. The information will appear in a new browser window.

Personal records of Earle Page

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
Notes of deputations to the Prime Minister	1919–29	CP362/2
Cables from the Acting Prime Minister (Dr Earle Page) to the Prime Minister (Rt Hon. Stanley Melbourne Bruce)	1923–24	CP360/10
Cables between the Prime Minister (Joseph Lyons), Dr Earle Page and others	1935–38	CP290/5
Cables to and from Sir Earle Page during his visit to London, 1941	1941	CP290/8
Speeches given by Sir Earle Page	1947–61	M4330

Other records relating to Earle Page

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
First AIF service record – Page, Earle Christmas Grafton – service number W1022	1916–23	B2455, Page ECG
Review of Federal Activities by the Acting Prime Minister, Hon. Earle Page	1923	A106, G1923/4023
Imperial and Economic Conference – Review of the Work of the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable SM Bruce by the Acting Prime Minister, the Hon. Earle Page	1923	A106, G1923/4024
Appointment of Sir Earle Page as co-opted member of War Cabinet and the Advisory War Council	1942–43	A5954, 721/19
Visit abroad – Right Hon. Sir Earle Page – Minister for Health	1951–52	A462, 114/16
Aircraft landing facilities on North Coast of NSW – Letter from Sir Earle Page	1942	A816, 6/301/412
Personal correspondence with Sir Earle Page (Shedden Collection file)	1944–63	A5954, 68/11
Right Honourable Sir Earle Page GCMG MP	1942	A2926, A25
Despatch of forces abroad. Statement by Sir Earle Page. 17 March 1940	1940	A5954, 257/7
Australian representation in United Kingdom. Sir Earle Page's mission abroad September, 1941	1941	A5954, 475/2
Statement by Sir Earle Page re modification of Ottawa Agreement, House of Representatives	1938–47	A9879, 9426
Representations by Sir Earle Page regarding Malayan campaign and his service on War Cabinet and Advisory War Council	1946	A816, 19/301/976A
Page, Sir Earle – state funeral	1961–62	A463, 1961/7617