

JT Lang and Lang Labor

Jack Lang – New South Wales and Federal politician

John Thomas (Jack) Lang (1876–1975) was a significant figure in New South Wales and Federal government and politics from the time of his election as a Political Labor Party (later Australian Labor Party) member to the NSW Legislative Assembly in 1913 until his defeat as an independent member of the House of Representatives in the general election of 1949. An attempt by him to enter the Senate as an independent at the 1951 election was unsuccessful.

NSW politics (1913–1946)

Lang was Treasurer in the NSW Labor government of 1920–21, and Premier and Treasurer of the State twice (1925–27 and 1930–32). His second term, which coincided with the worst years of the Great Depression, ended with the dismissal of his government by the State Governor. Lang's dismissal arose from his defiance of the Commonwealth Government's financial agreements legislation.

As NSW Premier and Treasurer Jack Lang's principal dealings with the Commonwealth were through bodies such as the Premiers' Conferences and the Australian Loan Council. The major correspondence series for the period of the Prime Minister's Department, the Attorney-General's Department and the Treasury also contain valuable material. Details of selected records held by the National Archives in Canberra are listed below.

Selected records containing information relating to JT Lang

Prime Minister's Department (CA 12)

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
<u>Selected records of Premiers' Conferences</u>	1901–ongoing	A90504
Report of the Resolutions, Proceedings, Debates of the Premiers' Conferences together with appendices	1918–32	A9504, Volume 3
Standing Committees of Premiers' Conferences, Proceedings of meetings held at Melbourne, June–July 1932	1932	A9504, Volume 12
<u>Files relating to Commonwealth State Conferences</u>	1914–36	CP773/1
Report of Proceedings – Premiers' Conference	1926	CP773/1, Bundle 1, Item 6

Financial Conference	1931	CP773/1, Bundle 1, Item 8
Premiers' Conference	1932	CP773/1, Bundle 2, Item 1
<u>Correspondence files</u>	1923–34	A458

Australian Loan Council (CA 502)

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Volumes of Australian Loan Council Minutes</u>	1924–28	A6002
<u>Volumes of Australian Loan Council Minutes</u>	1929–ongoing	A6001

Attorney-General's Department (CA 5)

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Correspondence files</u>	1901–ongoing	A432
<u>Correspondence files</u>	1901–ongoing	A467
<u>Bill Files (see especially the files on financial agreements legislation of 1930–1932)</u>	1901–ongoing	A2863

Department of the Treasury (CA 11)

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Correspondence files</u>	1901–76	A571

Federal politics (1946–1949)

During his single term as an independent member of the House of Representatives, Lang asked many questions of Ministers, both as questions without notice and questions on the notice paper. These are recorded in Hansard. Several of the departmental files dealing with Parliamentary Questions placed by Lang have survived, and a number may be found on the RecordSearch database. Use a keyword search on the term 'lang' to identify these files.

Lang Labor and its Parliamentary representatives

The Lang Labor Party was a faction that splintered from the Australian Labor Party (ALP) during the 1930s. The rift arose mainly from Lang's strong influence within the NSW branch of the party and the financial policy stances he took that placed him in opposition to the Scullin Federal Labor government. It was the votes of the five Lang Labor members who had defected from the ALP that brought down Scullin's government in 1931. Lang Labor was centred in NSW, and at one stage encompassed virtually the whole NSW branch of the Party. Lang Labor stood candidates in NSW for the House of Representatives at all Federal elections held during the 1930s. The party was represented by ten members in the House during this period:

- John Albert Beasley

- Joseph James Clark
- John Chambers Eldridge
- Joseph Herbert Gander
- John Smith Garden
- Rowland James
- Herbert Peter Lazzarini
- Daniel Mulcahy
- John Solomon Rosevear
- Edward John Ward

In addition, NSW Senators James Patrick Dunn and Albert Rae also joined Lang Labor for part of their terms in the Senate from 1929 to 1935.

Reference to most of these men will be found on RecordSearch by undertaking keyword searches on their surnames. Many had been previously, or subsequently became, Parliamentary members of the ALP, with Beasley and Ward becoming Ministers in the Curtin and Chifley governments, and Rosevear gaining appointment as Speaker of the House of Representatives from 1946 to 1949.

A collection of the personal papers of JA Beasley is held by the National Archives in Canberra. Relevant series from this collection are listed below.

John Albert Beasley (CP 84)

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Press and publicity photographs</u>	1922–49	M1409
<u>Albums of newspaper clippings</u>	1925–49	M1410

Other sources of information

NSW State Records has substantial holdings of records relating to Lang's governments and his years in the NSW Parliament. A finding aid to these holdings was prepared by the Office in 1976 and was included in the publication *Jack Lang*, edited by Peter Spearritt and Heather Radi (Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1977).