

PRESENTER PROFILE

Senator The Hon Eric Abetz

Coming to Tasmania with his parents and five siblings in 1961 on an assisted passage, his father worked alongside many other immigrant Tasmanians on the Hydro Schemes. Eric attended Moonah and Blackmans Bay Primary Schools, Taroona High School and Hobart Matriculation College. He then went on to study Arts and Law at the University of Tasmania.

While at University, Eric worked as a part-time taxi driver and farm hand. At University he was a member of the Student Representative Council for 5 years, president of University Liberal Club and the first Tasmanian to be president of the Australian Liberal Students' Federation and life member.



After University, Eric worked in Hobart's northern suburbs in a legal practice before entering into the firm Abetz, Curtis & Dutton which had 2 offices; one in Hobart and one in Kingston. Joining the Liberal Party in 1976, Senator Abetz became the State President in 1989, a position that he held until his appointment to the Senate on the 22nd of February, 1994 to fill a casual Senate vacancy. Since his appointment, he has been re-elected in 1998, 2004 and 2010. In 2004, he gained the highest vote of any Senate candidate, both numerically and by percentage in Tasmanian State history.

Eric has fulfilled many roles in his time in Federal Parliament, they include:

- Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence (1998 - 2001)
- Special Minister of State (2001 - 2006)
- Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation (2006 - 2007)
- Manager of Government Business in the Senate (2007)
- Shadow Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (2007 - 2009)
- Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate (2007 - 2010)
- Shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations (2009 - 2013)
- Leader of the Opposition in the Senate (2010 - 2013)
- Leader of the Government in the Senate (2013 -)
- Minister for Employment (2013 -)
- Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service (2013 -)

He has also held a number of positions on Parliamentary committees. They include:

- Chair of the Senate's Legal and Constitutional Legislation Committee
- Chair of the Joint Statutory Committee into Native Title and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Fund
- Member of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
- Member of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
- Member of the Joint Select Committee on the Republic Referendum