

# PRIME MINISTER

LABOR

LIBERAL

OTHER

OTHER

Edmund BARTON  
1 Jan 1901  
to  
24 Sep  
1903

Alfred DEAKIN  
to 27 Apr  
1904

Chris WATSON

George REID  
18 Aug 04  
to  
5 Jul 1905

Alfred DEAKIN  
to  
13 Nov  
1908

Andrew FISHER  
13 Nov 08  
to  
2 Jun 09

Alfred DEAKIN  
from  
2 Jun 09

# SA PREMIER

## 1900

Frederick HOLDER  
Resigned  
15 May  
1901  
to Federal

## 1901

## 1902

JOHN JENKINS  
to  
1 March  
1905

## 1903

## 1904

## 1905

Richard BUTLER

## 1906

Tom PRICE  
26 Jul 1905

## 1907

to  
5 Jun 1909  
Died

## 1908

## 1909

Archibald PEAKE  
from  
5 Jun 1909

**The Conference of Railway Commissioners in Adelaide** did not mention gauges. *Tasmanian News*, 27 March 1900.

**The Railway Commission** (Queensland). The Acting Railway Commissioner, J F Thallon, gave evidence that if there was any reason to make the gauge of the railways the same as New South Wales it would be on military grounds only. *Brisbane Courier* 23 June 1900.

**The Report of Mr Norman**, Chief Commissioner for existing lines (Victoria) on his recent visit to America and Europe was made available yesterday... over 100 pages...The engineer of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad ...would now not construct any new line on the 3 feet gauge. *The Age* 5 June 1900.

**Railway to Whalhalla** - narrow gauge (2 ft 6 in) railway recommended. *Age*, 21 June 1900.

**Alarm at the poor financial state** of the Northern Territory railway. *Adelaide Chronicle*, 17 November 1900.

**Mr O'Sullivan, the Minister of Works** (NSW) said that whilst in Brisbane he had an interview with Mr Leahy, Minister of Railways (Qld) with regard to the necessity of a unified railway gauge throughout Australia. It appears that the Northern State Government is building a railway about 50 miles in length from Nerang Creek to Tweed Heads. This is being constructed to the narrow gauge. Mr O'Sullivan suggested that the line should be built to 4 ft 8½ in. *The Argus* (Melbourne), 22 April 1901.

**Sir John Forrest**, speaking in regard to the railway from Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie mentioned that it should be built to the 4 ft 8½ in gauge. *South Australian Register*, 28 January 1901.

**SA elections June 1902.** The electorate sent a strong message to the Government that it was not prepared to let go of the Northern Territory.

**The South Australian Transcontinental Railway Act of 1902** authorised the Railways Commissioner to call tenders for construction of a north-south railway on the land grant arrangement.

**Transcontinental (East-West) Railway.** Sir William Lyne (NSW Premier) said he would be no party to a cheap and nasty scheme. He wanted to see a standard gauge (4 ft 8½ in) line constructed. Trains could not be run fast enough on a 3 ft 6 in line. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 March 1903.

**The South Australian Government** have appointed a Board of Commissioners to inspect the narrow-gauge railway lines of Victoria. *Geelong Advertiser*. 29 July 1903.

**The Western Australian Railway.** The final report of the board of experts recommended the adoption of the 4 ft 8½ gauge. Those experts included Henry Deane (NSW) and Alex Moncrieff (SA). *Adelaide Observer*, 8 August 1903.

**On the eve of the defeat of the Federal Government**, Sir John Forrest made a determined attempt to secure funds for the Trans-Australian Railway. The opponents of the scheme were glad of the chance to have the project encounter some setback. *Coolgardie Miner*, 23 April 1904.

**Railway Commissioners' Conference** in Melbourne. 'It is not desirable under existing conditions to incur any expenditure towards unification of the gauge between Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 May 1904.

**Adelaide meeting of businessmen.** *The Register* (Adelaide) reported on a meeting to learn of a Mr Moate who represented wealthy English 'ironmasters' interested in the north-south line. 14 December 1904

**Opposition from South Australia** to the State incurring any expenditure relating to the east-west transcontinental railway. *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 3 October 1905.

**A large attendance** at a meeting in the Adelaide Town Hall in support of the north-south line. *Observer*, 3 November 1906.

**Premier Tom Price** advised that the Commonwealth Government had failed South Australia. *Barrier Miner* 11 December 1906.

**Premier Tom Price** advised that on 23 January 1907 he had advised Mr Moate that he was not accepting the tender and returned the deposit. *Advertiser*, 26 February 1907.

**Negotiations between Moate and the Premier** with the offer to construct the transcontinental railway have plainly not been a display of friendly feeling. *South-Eastern Times*, 8 Mar 1907.

**Price and Deakin** met in Melbourne and on 13 February had reached an agreement which would require legislation to be enacted by both South Australia and Commonwealth. *Chronicle*, 16 Feb 1907.

**Sir Josiah Symon** gave an opinion that the agreement which Premier Price arranged with Prime Minister Deakin was absolutely worthless. *The Critic*, 20 March 1907. (Symon was regarded as the top legal mind in South Australia, was a Senator for SA and had been Federal Attorney General 1904-5. JLW).

**A call for a narrow-gauge connection** from Adelaide to Port Augusta by the direct route. *The Register*, 18 June 1907.

**From the Beverley Times (WA)**, 12 Oct 1907. Referring to the transcontinental railway, Sir William Lyne said that Western Australia was induced to join the Commonwealth by the price of the railway and it must be built to the broad gauge (referring to 4 ft 8½ in) because we should want to travel at some speed and carry loads too.

**Premier Tom Price** moved in the House of Assembly for the survey to proceed for the railway from Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie. *The Ballarat Star*, 31 October 1907.

**May 1908.** The South Australian Northern Territory Surrender Act was effective with Royal Assent.

**The Board of Engineers** which five years ago spent some time in making calculations as to the probable cost of constructing a transcontinental railway, have been asked to revise the estimates. *The Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 16 January 1908.

**The South Australian Minister** for the Northern Territory, Mr John Bice, would wait a reasonable time to enable the Commonwealth to come to a decision. But if it did not, South Australia would have to take other steps and the Government was determined to take such steps. *Register*, 24 March 1909.

**Mr Moncrieff** on behalf of the South Australian Government dissented regarding the gauge of the Western Australian railway. It would involve 3 breaks of gauge between Perth and Adelaide (viewed in retrospect, this was the start of South Australia's war with the Commonwealth in the form of obstruction and non-cooperation lasting nearly 50 years (JLW). *Argus*, Melbourne 11 November 1909.

**PRIME  
MINISTER**

**SA  
PREMIER**

**Alfred  
DEAKIN**  
to 29 Apr 10

**Andrew  
FISHER**  
to  
24 Jun  
1913

**Joseph  
COOK**  
to  
17 Sep 14

**Andrew  
FISHER**  
to  
27 Oct 15

**William  
Morris  
(Billy)  
HUGHES**  
to  
17 Feb  
1917

**William  
Morris  
(Billy)  
HUGHES**  
**NATIONAL  
PARTY**  
to  
9 Feb 1923

**1910**  
**Archibald  
PEAKE**  
to Jun 10

**John  
VERRAN**  
to  
17 Feb  
1912

**1912**

**1913**  
**Archibald  
PEAKE**  
(second  
term)  
to 3 Apr  
1915

**1914**

**1915**

**1916**  
**Crawford  
VAUGHAN**  
to  
14 Jul 17

**1917**

**1918**  
**Archibald  
PEAKE**  
(third term)  
to 8 Apr 20  
(died)

**1919**

**Will the Territory** be a caucus test for Labor? A uniform Railway gauge. *The Sydney Daily Telegraph*, 29 July 1910. The question revolved around the Qld scheme to connect with NT.

**Federal Parliament passes** the Northern Territory Acceptance Bill

**The Minister of Railways, Mr Billson** said to standardise the Victorian railways would cost £2 million and if it were done it would be a national matter and it would be eminently unfair to expect Victoria alone to do it. *Geelong Advertiser*, 3 September 1910.

**The Northern Territory Acceptance Act** of the Commonwealth was effective 1 January 1911.

**Transcontinental railway gauge is settled.** *The Age*, 3 April 1911.

**The decision of the Federal cabinet** to adopt the 4 ft 8½ in gauge on the projected railway from Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie is a momentous matter for South Australia. *Register*, 4 April 1911.

**An invention known as the Brennan switch** designed with the object of removing the difficulty from the work of making a uniform gauge on Australian railways. *Leader* (Melbourne) 13 May 1911.

**The Victorian Institute of Engineers.** The 4 ft 8½ in gauge is most suited for ordinary heavy traffic ...was always most suited to the military...but it might help the invader because he might easily replace the stock on that gauge whereas with the 5 ft 3 in gauge he would either have to alter the line or make new stock. *Daily Herald*, 9 September 1911.

**The turning of the first sod at Port Augusta.** 14 September 1912. (Luke).

**The Railways Commissioner in Adelaide**, giving evidence before the Break-of-Gauge Commission considered that the 5 foot 3 inch gauge was the best in the world. It would be impracticable to force a 5 foot 3 gauge on Australia. The uniform gauge for Australia was inevitable that this financial difficulty would increase with every year the work was postponed. *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 25 October 1912. (This was Alex Moncrieff, who in 1909, as Engineer-in-Chief had attempted to have the Trans-Australian railway built as a 3 ft 6 in line. This raises the question of whether it was more the South Australian Government than Moncrieff behind the 3 ft 6 in plan JLW).

**The first sod** was turned at Kalgoorlie, 12 February 1913. (Luke).

**Indignation was expressed** by the Minister of Railways that the recommendation of adoption of the 4 ft 8½ in standard gauge would cost Victoria 6 million pounds for the conversion of the lines and where was that to be found? *Age* (Melbourne), 24 April 1913.

**When the Premier' Conference** was discussing the break-of-gauge problem, Mr. Cook, the Prime Minister caused considerable astonishment by threatening to take over the state railways. *Albury Banner Express*, 10 April 1914.

**It was estimated that 3,500 to 4,000 tons** of railway material for construction of the Wilmington extension would need to be sent from Kingston to Booleroo Centre and this will require transfer from narrow gauge to broad gauge at Wolseley and transfer from broad gauge to narrow gauge at Hamley Bridge. *Daily Herald*, 21 November 1914.

**Brennan switch** for third rail. NSW Ministry approved trial at Tocumwal. *Argus*, 26 February 1915.

**Norris G Bell appointed as Commissioner**, 1 May 1915 (Luke).

**The breaks are so many interruptions** and impediments to that freedom of trade which was one of the main objects of those who accepted the Federal compact. A year or so ago most people in Australia viewed upon defence as a sort of abstract question. *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 11 May 1915.

**The Premier, Crawford Vaughan** was proposing a 4 ft 8½ in railway from Port Augusta to Terowie to Hay (NSW). *Observer*, 20 November 1915.

**Some months ago the third-rail system** was looked upon by railway engineers in connection with the proposed railway to link Queensland and New South Wales. It is proposed that the standard gauge should be carried from the MacPherson Range, right into Brisbane. Still more recently Mr. Hoyle, the New South Wales Minister for Railways, who is a strong advocate of the third-rail system, said he expected to have to fight a good deal of prejudice on the subject before the scheme was introduced. *Capricornian*

(Rockhampton), 2 Sept 1916.

**The Commissioner of Public Works** advised that the broadening of the railway line from Wolseley to Mount Gambier would be proceeded with as soon as rails had been procured, but regretted to say that he had found it very difficult to get rails. *The Express and Telegraph*, 30 August 1916.

**Mr R L Capkins, Chief Traffic Manager** of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St Paul railway system, now on a visit to Sydney, said Australia must standardise the gauge if the railways are to be efficient. *Age*, 28 September 1916.

**Uniform Railway Gauge - Mr Watt's warning.** While in Adelaide recently, Mr Watt, Minister for Works and Transport, discussed with the Premier, the need for a uniform width of track between Port Augusta and Adelaide. For the moment he said that it didn't matter if the gauge was 4 ft 8½ in or 5 ft 3 in but eventually the former would be the universal gauge. *Sun* (Sydney), 22 September 1917.

**The joining of the rails near Ooldea, 691 km from Port Augusta**, 1,001 km from Kalgoorlie, 17 October 1917 (Luke).

**First passenger train left Port Augusta** for Kalgoorlie, 22 October 1917 (Luke).

**The conference of railway engineers in Melbourne** has not yet been able to solve the break of gauge problem. *Northern Star* (Lismore), 6 September 1918. That was the entirety of their article! JLW

**At Tocumwal**, to include assessment of the Brennan switch, this week. *The Farmer and Settler* (Sydney), 20 August 1918.

**The report by the board of experts** regarding the Brennan third rail device recommended that additional experimental work should not be entertained. *Argus* (Melbourne), 11 May 1919.

**Rival Routes Adelaide to Port Augusta. Mr J G Maguire**, Railways Commissioner gave evidence to the Railways Standing Committee that there were two possible routes. One via Wilmington, and one via Port Germein. The Commissioner of the Commonwealth Railways, Mr N G Bell favoured extension of the 4 ft 8½ in gauge to Crystals Brook, where the passengers would transfer to the 5 ft 3 in gauge. *Daily Herald*, 29 July 1919.