

## Sir Arthur William FADDEN, PC, GCMG

Prime Minister 29 August to 7 October 1941



- Arthur Fadden became the 13th prime minister following the resignation of Sir Robert Menzies. Fadden was chosen as Menzies' successor by a meeting of the Country Party and the United Australia Party.
- Member of Country Party of Australia.
- Member of House of Representatives for seat of Darling Downs (Qld) 1937-49 and McPherson (Qld) 1950-58. Assisting Treasurer 1940, Assisting Supply and Development 1940, Minister for Air 1940, Civil Aviation 1940, Treasurer 1940-41 and 1949-58. Previously a member of the Townsville City Council 1930-32 and the Queensland Legislative Assembly for Kennedy 1932-35.
- Fadden's government lasted only 40 days. He resigned after losing a majority in the House of Representatives when two Independent members voted with the Labor Opposition. He was replaced by John Curtin.

### Main achievements (1940-1958)

- Member of the War Cabinet and Economic Cabinet 1940-41.
- Reformed the banking system, including the establishment of the Commonwealth Development Bank, the Commonwealth Banking Corporation, and the Reserve Bank 1959.
- Oversaw 11 Budgets as Treasurer 1949-58.

### Personal life

- Born 13 April 1895, Ingham, Queensland. Died 21 April 1973, Toowong, Queensland.
- Educated Walkerston State School, North Queensland. Worked in the sugar industry and was Town Clerk of Mackay in 1916. Studied accountancy by correspondence course and set up a public accountancy business which expanded through partnerships in Townsville and Brisbane.
- Married Ilma Thornber, 27 December 1916, Mackay, Queensland.

### Life after politics

- Became director of several businesses and companies.
- Wrote his memoirs



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## Character

- *Ebullient and gregarious, Fadden had liked political campaigning, thrived on repartee with hecklers, and put his case with vehemence and fluency. While never 'marked out to be an outstanding political leader', he was an exceptionally astute operator. He had the gift of friendship, and his encouragement and kindness to colleagues on both sides of the House were legendary. He relished convivial occasions, enjoyed his drink, and had a prodigious collection of stories which he told with zest and humour. (Source: Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 14, 1996, p 125)*

## Did you know?

- Fadden's nickname was 'Artie'.
- He and his family nearly drowned during the 1918 Mackay cyclone.
- Though a Country Party member, Fadden objected to attacks in 1939 on Robert Menzies by the Country Party's leader, Earle Page, and withdrew from the parliamentary party in protest.
- Fadden became Minister for Air and Minister for Civil Aviation following the death in an aircraft accident of J.V. Fairbairn, the previous Civil Aviation Minister.
- While prime minister for only 40 days, he was acting prime minister for a total of two years.
- His memoirs were published in 1969.

## Sources

Cribb, Margaret B., 'Fadden, Sir Arthur William (1894 - 1973)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 14, MUP, 1996, pp 123-126. [www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/](http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/)

National Archives of Australia: <http://primeministers.naa.gov.au>

National Museum of Australia: [www.nma.gov.au](http://www.nma.gov.au)

## Further reading

Fadden, Arthur, *They Called Me Artie: the Memoirs of Sir Arthur Fadden*, Jacaranda, Brisbane, 1969



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