

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE1256

Burney, Linda Jean

(1957 -)

Nationality Australian

Born 1 January, 1957, Leeton New South Wales Australia

Occupation Administrator, Educator, Parliamentarian

Summary

A successful Aboriginal bureaucrat and activist, Linda Burney became the first Aboriginal person elected to the New South Wales (NSW) Parliament in 2003, and only the fourth Aboriginal woman elected anywhere in Australia. She was re-elected in 2007, 2011 and 2015. She held a range of Ministerial portfolios from 2007-2011. In 2016 she was serving as Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Parliamentary and Local Government career

Elected, Canterbury, 2003, Party: ALP

Details

Linda Jean Burney, of Wiradjuri descent, grew up in Whitton, a small farming community near Leeton. One of the 'Stolen Generation' of Aboriginal children, she first met her father when she was 28 years old.

Burney obtained her Diploma of Teaching from the then Mitchell College of Advanced Education. In 1979 she began teaching at Lethbridge Park public school in western Sydney. In the mid-1980s she became involved in the New South Wales Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) and helped set up the national body, the Australian federation of AECGs, in 1990-91. She was also instrumental in the development and implementation of the first Aboriginal education policy in Australia for the state's education department.

In the early 1990s Burney was, concurrently, president of the national body of AECGs, and chair of the New South Wales National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy Coordinating Committee. Her priorities have been early childhood education, mandatory Aboriginal studies in all schools, and the eradication of racism in education.

She has been a Member of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission National Social Justice Taskforce and an Executive Member of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation.

Since her election for Canterbury 2003 she has been a member of the Parliamentary Committee for Children and Young People 2003-04 and the Legislation Review Committee 2004.

She has two children, son Binni and daughter Willuri.

Published resources

Edited Book

The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia : Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, society and culture, Horton, David, 1994

Journal Article

Linda Burney: an interview, D'Souza, Carl, 2003

Book Section

Not just a challenge, an opportunity, Burney, Linda, 2000

Conference Paper

Keynote address: Finding the Ground Rules, Burney, Linda, 1999

Site Exhibition

Putting Skirts on the Sacred Benches: Women Candidates for the New South Wales Parliament, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2006,

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/pssb/home.html>

The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia, Smart, Judith and Swain, Shurlee (eds.), 2014,

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders>

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Author Details

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