

THE WAL FIFE ROOM



Small Parlour, Mount Erin,
Edmonson Street, Wagga Wagga



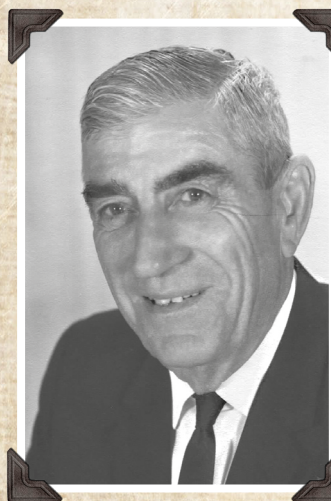
Marcia and Wal Fife at the time of
being awarded life membership of
Kurrajong Waratah, 2001

WELCOME

Welcome to my office and library, set out as it was in my home at
'Gundary' during the last twenty years of my working life.
I kept these manuscripts and publications that were around me intact
so that future generations could see how a modern office of a
Member of Parliament was maintained
at his home in 1988 and to make this material available for research.

Wal Fife

80 YEARS OF SERVICE TO WAGGA WAGGA BY CLYDE, HAROLD AND WAL FIFE



○ Clyde Fife ○



○ Harold Fife ○



○ Wal Fife ○

The two men with whom I have been most closely associated both had a strong local and social conscience.

In the second half of the twentieth century my father, my brother and I gave between us almost 80 years of service to the community.

My father Clyde Fife, was an alderman of the Wagga Wagga Council from 5th March 1949 until his death on 15th January 1971 - 22 years.

My brother Harold was elected in March 1971 to replace my father and served until 14th September 1991 - 20 years.

I first entered Parliament on 14th December 1957 and I retired on 8th February 1993 after 36 years.

HISTORY OF ROOM

For the first eight years I was a member of Parliament, from 1957, members had no office or personal staff allocated to them. The Liberal and Country Party were in Opposition and held the majority of country electorates. Members, for secretarial purposes, were allocated to amanuensis at Parliament House, Sydney, who were responsible for approximately six members of parliament. It was arranged on a bipartisan basis so it would not be unusual for an amanuensis to have three Labor members allocated to her and two Liberal and one Country Party member. In the electorate the Member of Parliament's home was their public office. Soon after the election of the New South Wales Askin/Cutler Government, members of parliament were given an electoral office and one staff member. My first electorate office was in the New South Wales Government building in Johnston Street, Wagga Wagga.

Since that time electorate offices and secretarial staff for members has grown. I always had one electoral office supplied by the Government and because of geography one was supplied at my own expense. In addition, I always maintained a private office in my home and on

retirement this became my only office.

To my knowledge, there would be few offices, besides those of Prime Ministers and Premiers that would have a collection as comprehensive as mine. I have always maintained a detailed collection both in relation to my life as a Member of Parliament as well as the portfolios I held in both the State and Australian Governments. My main collection of manuscripts is now housed in the National Library of Australia under the reference MS 7626, however prior to this, it was kept in my family home office.

When planning to leave the family farm, "Gundary" at Harefield, Marcia and I gave consideration to where my office might be maintained so that future generations could see how an office of a Member of Parliament in 1988 was planned and also to provide access to the material within for research purposes. I first offered it to Charles Sturt University and then to The Wagga Wagga City Council. Both rejected my offer on the basis of the size of the collection and not being able to accommodate it.

When I offered the collection to the Catholic School Office I was asked whether the offer could instead be directed to the Wagga Wagga

Diocese for consideration. Bishop Gerard Hanna and Mr Alan Bowyer, the Director of Schools inspected the office at 'Gundry' and Bishop Hanna agreed to take the entire collection and have it housed in the small parlour at the former Mt Erin convent. Marcia and I were overwhelmed at this generosity.

Geoff Harrison of Harrisons Joinery, Wagga Wagga fitted out my office at Gundry after we shifted there in 1988. He kindly agreed to relocate the fittings to the small parlour at Mt Erin, almost exactly as it was at 'Gundry'. The books and other paperwork have been arranged

accordingly. I have had enormous support from the members of the Advisory Committee in transferring my collection to Mt Erin and in relation to visits by the public.

Arrangements have been made so that when researching at the National Library, Canberra or at Mt Erin Wagga Wagga, researchers will be advised of the existence of the other part of my collection.

Wal Fife



Bishop Gerard Hanna accepting the complete collection of
Wal Fife's office and memorabilia, 2011.

From left: Allan Bowyer, Director of Catholic Schools office, Bishop Hanna and Wal Fife.

PRIME MINISTER MENZIES

At 17 years of age I wrote to R.G. Menzies the then leader of the Federal Opposition. I wanted to pursue my interest in politics and had opted to do so through the Liberal Party. I was seeking a position with the newly formed Federal Secretariat of the Liberal Party.

I was attending Canberra Grammar School and his office had contacted the school to make an appointment for me to see Mr Menzies. When I kept the appointment Mr Menzies said "I have invited you over today because the man who is going to set up the Secretariat is here in Canberra."

At that moment Donald Cleland came into the office. He took me aside and talked about the possibility of doing something to help me.

On the 5th January, 1948, having secured a position with the Secretariat, I took my first steps in carving out a political career for myself.

Wal Fife



R.G. Menzies arrives at Wagga Wagga airport 1961
From left: Wal Fife, Member for Wagga Wagga, David Fairbairn, Member for Farrar and Prime Minister Menzies.

WAL AND FR FRANK CARROLL

Wal Fife and Father Frank Carroll met for the first time
in Rome on 17th October, 1964.

Wal was on his way to attend a Parliamentary Association
Conference in Jamaica and called on Bishop Henschke who
was in Rome for the Vatican Council II.

The Bishop introduced Wal and Frank who had just
finished his doctorate of Cannon Law.

The two then spent the day seeing basilicas and other sites around Rome.
Soon after his return to Wagga Wagga, the then Father Carroll was appointed
Diocesan Chancellor and Director of Catholic Education in 1965 just prior to
Wal Fife's appointment as Assistant Minister for Education.



Wal Fife with Father (later Archbishop)
Frank Carroll, Rome 1964.

THE HONOURABLE WALLACE CLYDE FIFE'S PARLIAMENTARY CAREER

Parliamentary Service

State: Member for Wagga Wagga	14.12.1957 to 15.10.1975
Federal: Member for Farrer	13.12.1975 to 1.12.1983
Member for Hume	2.12.1983 to 13.3.1993

Ministerial Appointments

State: Assistant Minister for Education	13.5.1965 to 27.6.1967
Minister for Mines	27.6.1967 to 11.3.1971
Minister for Mines and Minister for Conservation	11.3.1971 to 19.6.1972
Minister for Mines, Minister for Power & Assistant Treasurer	9.6.1972 to 3.1.1975
Minister for Transport and Minister for Highways	3.1.1975 to 10.10.1975
Federal: Minister for Business AND Consumer Affairs	17.7.1977 to 8.12.1979
Minister for Education	8.12.1979 to 7.5.1982
Minister for Aviation	7.5.1982 to 11.3.1983
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister in Federal Affairs	25.8.1978 to 8.12.1979 3.11.1980 to 11.3.1983
Minister Assisting The Prime Minister in Public Service matters	7.5.1982 to 11.3.1983
Deputy leader in the House	17.8.1982 to 11.3.1983

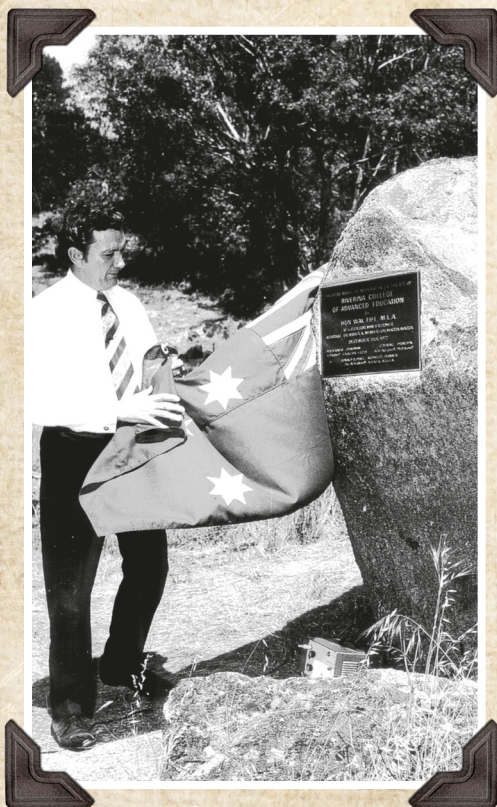
Federal Parliamentary Party Positions

Member of Opposition Shadow Ministry and	16.3.1983 to 14.12.1984 21.4.1987 to 23.5.1992
Shadow Minister for Housing and Construction	16.3.1983 to 14.12.1984
Shadow Minister for Primary Industry	1.5.1987 to 14.8.1987
Shadow Minister for Administrative Services	14.8.1987 to 11.4.1990
Shadow Minister without Portfolio	11.4.1990 to 23.5.1992
Manager of Opposition Business in the House	14.8.1987 to 23.5.1992
Deputy Leader of the Federal Liberal Party In the House of Representatives	23.5.1989 to 3.4.1990

EDUCATION FUNDING

Wal Fife was influenced regarding Government financial assistance for non-Government schools when he was fifteen and at Canberra Grammar School.

He asked his Director of Studies, the Reverend Ken Clements, where he stood on aid to independent schools. Rev Clement replied “unless it happens soon schools like this will close”. From then on Wal’s mind was made up.

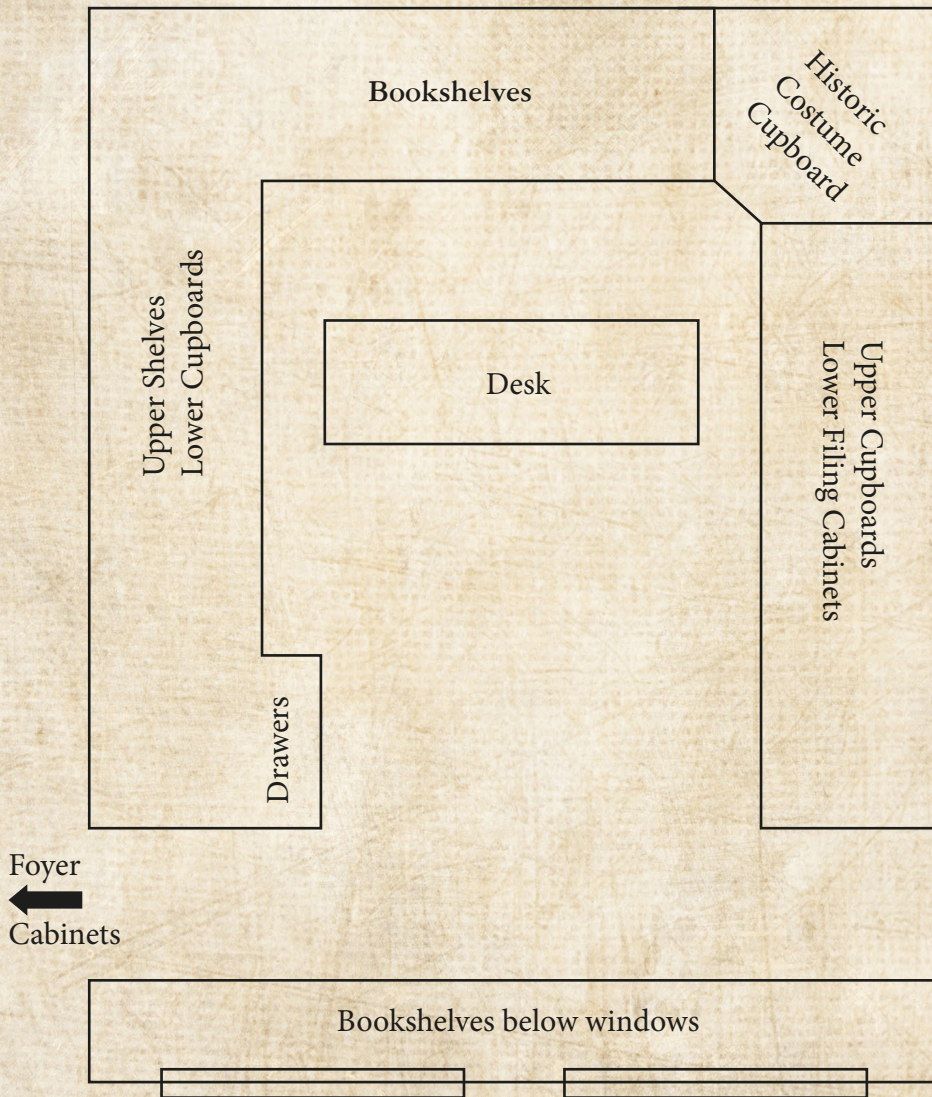


In November 1961 the Catholic Weekly reported Wal as saying at a public meeting Wagga Wagga “The Treasury provides education for 75% of students; we are concerned with the forgotten 25%”.

That was before the Liberal State Government of Robert Askin decided at the 1965 elections to subsidise interest rates on new school buildings.

Wal unveiling the plaque for the first building site of the Riverina College of Advanced Education, Boorooma Campus, 17th October, 1972.

ROOM LAYOUT



GENERAL CONTENTS OF ROOM

1. Acts of Parliament 1901 - 2000 Foyer
2. Official Hansard NSW 1957 - 1975
Commonwealth 1975 - 1993
3. Australian Dictionary of Biography
4. Newspaper clippings files in 14 volumes
5. Historical book collection.
6. Gifts, artefacts, illuminated addresses and
memorabilia associated with Wal Fife's career
7. Photographs and presentations.
8. Files, books and personal papers associated
with families researched and collected by Wal Fife
9. Research material associated with his book - Wal Fife,
A Country Liberal.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Other parts of the Wal Fife Collection:

The majority of manuscripts are held at the National Library, Canberra.

NLA reference Ms 7627 and some family material at Ms 8183,
including information regarding the First Fifes to settle in Australia.

To research the Wagga Wagga collection contact
the Advisory Committee in the first instance.

Gary Croker on 6971 2667 or Leanne Diessel on 6922 7352

Arrangements will also need to be made with the
Director of Boarding, Kildare College on 6925 3074

Wal Fife wishes to acknowledge the efforts and assistance of the
following in getting the Mt Erin rooms complete;

The Advisory Committee (see below), Bishop Hanna,
Alan Bowyer, Geoff Harrison, Leigh Collien, and
Brendan Ashby of Kildare College.

The Management Advisory committee is made up of:

Marcia and Wal Fife - Patrons

Gary Croker - Chairman

Judy Buik - Deputy Chairman

Sue Killalea

Sherry Morris

Leanne Diessel

Two representatives from Wagga Wagga and
District Historic Society - Peter Gissing and Geoff Burch

Two representatives from Wagga Wagga and
District Family History Society - Gary Croker and Rob Walker

Manager, Riverina Archives - Wayne Doubleday

Archivist Diocese of Wagga Wagga - Kay Judd