

Fathers of Federation - 1

While most people in the colonies had an opinion about Federation, for it to actually happen, someone had to be prepared to do something about it.

Sir Henry Parkes

The most notable federalist who began the push for uniting the colonies with his 'Tenterfield Address' was the premier of New South Wales, Sir Henry Parkes. It has been said that Parkes was a man who never did anything that did not benefit Henry Parkes. But whatever his motives, from 1889 he did work very hard to persuade the people of the colonies that the time was right for Federation.



Although he did not live to see his dream realised, he is perhaps the one most often referred to as the 'father of Federation'.

After Parkes's big push for a united, independent Australia, the colony was hit with an economic depression that pushed Federation out of the headlines. But within a few years, it came to life again with greater force.

Andrew Inglis Clark

Australia's Constitution was modelled on those of the United States and Great Britain. People were familiar with the British system because Australia was a British colony but it was Andrew Inglis Clark, a politician from Tasmania, who introduced the notion of using the American system. Although his original draft of the Constitution was altered, his idea was adopted and used in the final draft.



John Quick

The 1893 Corowa Conference was a pivotal point on the road to Federation. It was here that the plan for creating a constitution for the people was first established. John Quick, a British-born politician from Bendigo, in Victoria, was the man who voiced this inspirational plan. Federation would be the people's choice. The Constitution would be written by representatives of the people, democratically elected ... a Constitution by the people, for the people, of the people.



Sir Alfred Deakin

Sir Alfred Deakin worked tirelessly to promote Federation, not only in his native Victoria but in other colonies as well. He believed fervently in democracy. Through his speeches, he convinced people that problems could be resolved if opposing sides realised that although they had different opinions, a compromise, a workable solution, could always be found.

Alfred Deakin was Australia's second prime minister and held that office a total of three times in the first decade of the new nation.

'Affable Alfred' is said to have been the major force behind Federation.



Edmund Barton

In 1901, Sydney-born Edmund Barton was appointed the first prime minister of the Commonwealth of Australia. This was a great honour for a man who had given up a self-indulgent lifestyle to work long hard hours as part of an elected group to write the constitution for a united Australia.

