



THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE ARCHIVES

NAME OF COLLECTION	Fraser, John Malcolm (Rt Hon.)
ACCESSION NO	106/13 (formerly NAA M1262)
CATEGORY	Community and Political, individuals
ACTIVITY	Prime Ministers, Politicians, Farmers
DATE RANGE	1974–1975
SIZE OF COLLECTION	0.7 metres (4 boxes)
HISTORICAL NOTE	<p>John Malcolm Fraser was born in Toorak, Melbourne on 21 May 1930.</p> <p>His grandfather, Sir Simon Fraser (1832–1919), had emigrated from Canada in 1853, initially to work as a prospector, but later moving into business, farming and politics. He was elected to the Victorian Legislative Assembly in 1874 and later served as a delegate to the Australasian Federal Convention (1897–1898) and a senator representing the Free Trade Party (1901–1913).</p> <p>Malcolm’s father, John Neville Fraser (1890–1962), studied law at the University of Oxford, but on his return to Australia concerned himself largely with his work as a pastoralist. In 1926, he married Una Woolf. Neville and Una had two children: Lorraine (1926–) and (John) Malcolm (1930–).</p> <p>The Fraser family lived at Balpool-Nyang near Moulamein in New South Wales before moving to ‘Nareen’, a station in western Victoria, in 1943. During this period Malcolm attended Tudor House School in New South Wales (1940–1943) and Melbourne Grammar (1944–1948). In 1949, he was admitted to the University of Oxford to study ‘Modern Greats’ (Politics, Philosophy and Economics).</p> <p>After graduating, Malcolm Fraser returned to Victoria and decided to embark on a political career. He succeeded in being elected as Liberal member for the seat of Wannon in western Victoria at his second attempt in 1955. A backbencher under Menzies for ten years, Fraser gained his first cabinet post as Minister for the Army under Prime Minister Harold Holt in 1966. He went on to become Minister for Education and Science (1968–1969 and 1971–1972) and Minister for Defence (1969–1971). Following the Labor government’s election win in 1972, he served as Shadow Minister for Industrial Relations. He became leader of the Liberal Party in March 1975 and in November became caretaker Prime Minister</p>

	<p>after the Governor-General, Sir John Kerr, dismissed the Whitlam government. He was returned to office through election victories in 1975, 1977 and 1980, before losing to Bob Hawke at the 1983 election. He resigned from politics in March 1983.</p> <p>Following his formal political career, Malcolm Fraser has continued a presence on the world stage, as Chair of the United Nations Panel of Eminent Persons on the Role of Transnational Corporations in South Africa (1985); as Co-Chair of the Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons campaigning for an end to apartheid in South Africa (1985–1986); and Chair of the UN Secretary-General’s Expert Group on African Commodity Issues (1989–1990). In 1987 he founded CARE Australia, the country’s largest non-political and non-religious overseas aid organisation and was president of CARE International from 1990 to 1995. In 1997, he led a Commonwealth Observer Mission to Pakistan to monitor the national elections.</p> <p>Malcolm Fraser remains actively interested in issues associated with human rights, multiculturalism and reconciliation with indigenous Australians. He has been highly critical of the Howard government’s involvement in the war in Iraq, as well as of its treatment of asylum seekers.</p>
DATE OF TRANSFER	February 2006
ACCESS CONDITIONS	Open
DESCRIPTION	<p>This series relates to particular events in 1975, in the period when J M (Malcolm) Fraser was Leader of the Opposition (March–November 1975). The events covered are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr Fraser’s election as Leader of the Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition on 21 March, replacing B M (Billy) Snedden. 2. The Bass (Northern Tasmania) by-election on 28 June 1975, following the resignation of L H (Lance) Barnard, a senior member of the Whitlam Labor Government. The by-election resulted in a convincing win by the Liberal Party candidate, Kevin Newman. 3. Opposition strategy to effect an early election, brought to a head through the rejection of Appropriation Bills in the Senate in mid-October. The blocking of supply, as it is often referred to, prompted a deadlock between the House of Representatives and the Senate. This constituted a major political crisis resulting in the controversial dismissal of the Whitlam Government by the Governor-General, Sir John Kerr, on 11 November 1975. <p>Several folders of congratulatory messages to Fraser, from friends, Liberal Party branches, members of the public and community groups,</p>

	<p>relate to the first event. Many include criticism of other political figures (items [1]–[10]). The second event, the Bass by-election, engendered similar messages (item [11]).</p> <p>Most of the series, however, consists of letters and messages documenting public opinion on the Whitlam Government, Mr Fraser’s Opposition election prospects and particularly its actions in relation to the Supply bills (items [12]–[21]). These files mainly cover the critical period September-October 1975 and include several thousand individual letters and telegrams in which support (green file covers) and protest (red file covers) are fairly evenly balanced. They well record the depth of concern and how divisive the issues became among the Australian public: private individuals (including Liberal Party voters), professional and church representatives, students, unions and other community organisations.</p>
NOTE ON COLLECTIONS	This series was transferred from National Archives of Australia in February 2006.
NOTE ON LISTING	Single number system imposed by National Archives of Australia; chronological
LISTED BY	Initial listing by NAA; revised and re-formatted by Caitlin Stone
DATE	23 January 2007

Box No	Series No	Description	Date
		Correspondence relating to election as Leader of the Opposition, Bass by-election and the 1975 political crisis	1974–1975
1	1	Congratulations (Leadership) [relating to election as Leader of the Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition]	18 Mar 1975–23 Apr 1975
	2	Congratulations (Leadership) [relating to election as Leader of the Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition]	13 Nov 1974–5 May 1975
	3	Congratulations - General [relating to election as Leader of the Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition]	20 Mar 1975–26 May 1975
	4	Congratulations sent [relating to election as Leader of the Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition]	18 Mar 1975–20 May 1975
	5	Letters phoned to Melbourne for typing [relating to possible early election and other matters]	Feb 1975–13 May 1975
	6	Congratulations [relating to election as Leader of the Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition, includes representations about anti-Chilean campaign]	20 Mar 1975–17 Jun 1975
	7	Congratulations - Liberal Party branches [relating to election as Leader of the Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition]	19 Mar 1975–4 Jun 1975
	8	Congratulations for filing [relating to election as Leader of the Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition]	18 Mar 1975–8 Apr 1975
	9 PART 1	Congratulations [relating to election as Leader of the Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition]	9 Mar 1975–21 Apr 1975
2	9 PART 2	Congratulations [relating to election as Leader of the Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition, includes letter from Sir Henry Bland]	19 Mar 1975–20 May 1975
	10	Congratulations and offers of assistance [relating to election as Leader of the Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition, includes articles 'The Liberals and history' by Howard Beale and 'The defence of Australia' by D N Veron, letters from Kerry Packer and others]	Dec 1974–20 Oct 1975
	11	Congratulations - Bass by-election [relates to election of Liberal Party candidate, Kevin	27 Jun 1975–15 Aug 1975

Box No	Series No	Description	Date
		Newman]	
	12	Letters of support [relating to possible early election]	30 Apr 1975–14 Oct 1975
	13 PART 1	Messages of support [relating to Supply bills, early election etc.]	
	13 PART 2	Messages of support [relating to Supply bills, early election etc.]	29 Sep 1975–21 Oct 1 1975
	13 PART 3	Messages of support [relating to Supply bills, early election etc.]	16 Oct 1975–23 Oct 1975
3	14 PART 1	Messages of support [relating to Supply bills, early election etc.]	20 Aug 1975–21 Oct 1975
	14 PART 2	Messages of support [relating to Supply bills, early election etc.]	20 Oct 1975–6 Nov 1975
	15 PART 1	Letters of support [relating to political crisis, includes Australian League of Rights leaflet 'Spell it out', Democratic Labour Party 'Focus' supplement, 'Rundts Weekly Intelligence' (14–21 Oct 1975), news cuttings]	14 Oct 1975–13 Nov 1975
	15 PART 2	Letters of support [relating to political crisis]	25 Oct 1975–10 Nov 1975
	16 PART 1	Letters and messages of support [relating to political crisis, includes paper by Prof J Francis]	9 Aug 1975–27 Oct 1 1975
	16 PART 2	Letters and messages of support [relating to political crisis, includes news cuttings]	21 Oct 1975–30 Oct 1975
	17.PAR T.1	Letters and messages of support [relating to political crisis, includes news cuttings]	28 Jul 1975–3 Nov 1975
	17 PART 2	Letters and messages of support [relating to political crisis, includes flyer 'The constitutional crisis: is Fraser wrong?']	23 Oct 1975–6 Nov 1975
4	18 PART 1	Letters and messages of protest [relating to blocking of Supply bills]	1 Oct 1975–20 Oct 1975
	18 PART 2	Letters and messages of protest [relating to blocking of Supply bills]	16 Oct 1975–6 Nov 1975
	19 PART 1	Letters and messages of protest [relating to blocking of Supply bills]	10 Oct 1975–23 Oct 1975
	19 PART 2	Letters and messages of protest [relating to blocking of Supply bills]	16 Oct 1975–27 Oct 1975
	19 PART 3	Letters and messages of protest [relating to blocking of Supply bills]	17 Oct 1975–30 Oct 1975
	20	Letters and messages of protest [relating to blocking of Supply bills]	7 Oct 1975–6 Nov 1975
21	21	Letters of protest [relating to political crisis, includes statement by Governor-General (11 Nov 1975)]	8 Oct 1975–24 Nov 1975

Box No	Series No	Description	Date
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