



DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

Media Release

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EDMUND BARTON LECTURE: THE ROLE OF THE AG

The legacy of Australia's first Prime Minister will be commemorated at the Parliament of NSW with the inaugural Edmund Barton Lecture, an annual event exploring the key role Barton played in the NSW Parliament before he went to Canberra.

The first talk of the series will explore the role of the Attorney General in NSW's system of government.

Speaker of the NSW Legislative Assembly Jonathan O'Dea MP said a panel of current and former Attorneys General will share what it means to be the "first law officer" of the state.

"This is an excellent opportunity to hear what it is like to be responsible for protecting the rule of law and upholding the integrity of the courts," Mr O'Dea said.

"It is a fitting topic with which to launch the lecture series. Edmund Barton served as Speaker of the NSW Legislative Assembly and twice as Attorney General before he became Australia's first Prime Minister.

"NSW Attorney General Mark Speakman and former Attorneys General John Hatzistergos and Gabrielle Upton will exchange perspectives and experiences on their time in the position and the important function the role plays in our democratic system."

Attorney General Mark Speakman MP, who will appear as part of the panel, said it is a privilege to serve the people of NSW.

"Attorneys General typically administer more Acts of Parliament than any other minister in the Government, so that can mean a lot of 'floor time' in the House. Just as important is building and maintaining public confidence in the justice system, a central pillar of our democracy," Mr Speakman said.

President of the Legislative Council Matthew Mason-Cox MLC said Edmund Barton was a leading advocate of the colonies federating to become one nation.

"His extensive experience shaped not only parliaments but also the courts, where he went on to serve as a justice of the High Court," said Mr Mason-Cox.

"Edmund Barton began his life in politics at the Parliament of NSW and it is only appropriate that we continue to honour and remember him here, 120 years after Federation and his appointment as Australia's first Prime Minister."

The panel of speakers for the FREE online event to be held on **Tuesday, 21 September at 5:30pm** includes:

- NSW Attorney General **the Hon. Mark Speakman MP**
- NSW District Court Judge and former NSW Attorney General **the Hon. John Hatzistergos AM.**
- former NSW Attorney General **the Hon. Gabrielle Upton MP.**

Register to attend via the [Eventbrite link](#).

For more information about Edmund Barton, visit www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/education.