



Irene Longman (1877 - 1964)

Audio transcript

Now the first Queensland woman to take a seat in parliament is Irene Longman. She stands for the seat of Bulimba. She's a very good teacher, and this makes her very good when she stands for parliament - she's good at controlling men who heckle her.

And she stands for the National Party in the Electorate of Bulimba in 1929, and her male opponent says, "Oh, I've only got a woman standing against me, she'll never get in, she hasn't got a hope", so he doesn't try very hard. She's a very good speaker, and she promises women that she will do her best to get free kindergartens, free baby clinics, you know, things to improve their lives. She gets in with quite a large majority, which you know, shatters her male opponent.

Because of her teaching career, and her love for children, she wants to improve schools, she wants to get better books, more books into libraries. She wants to get better teaching aides, she wants to get these kindergartens, playgrounds for women, and she wants to get women into the Queensland police force. And so all these measures she puts through in parliament, she does a great deal, but it's in the 1930s, the Great Depression - the National Party are out after one term, and so she goes back to teaching.

Now she has used the Margaret Ogg fund to get into parliament, and so does Dame Annabelle Rankin, who becomes Queensland's first female Senator, from 1947 to 1971.