



Archibald Stewart

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Trade unionist and political leader

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Born in December 1867 at Sebastopol, Victoria, Archibald Stewart grew up in Creswick where his father was the caretaker of the Botanical Gardens. As a young man he undertook numerous jobs in the Creswick district and became an active member of several labour organisations.

Stewart was an early member of the Australian Workers' Union and held office at various times as vice-president, trustee and returning officer. In 1902 he helped to establish the Ballarat branch of the Political Labor Council, serving as secretary for two years. Over the next few years he ran unsuccessfully for parliament a number of times before moving his family to Melbourne.

In 1910 Stewart was elected an office bearer of the Political Labor Council and after diligent service was appointed secretary to the new formed Australian Labor Party in 1915, holding that role for ten years. He worked tirelessly for the organisation and was acknowledged for his staunch adherence to the principles of the Labor Party. The esteem in which he was held is reflected in the memorial tablet you can see on his grave. This was unveiled in December 1926 by the then president of the Victorian branch of the ALP.

Stewart died of tuberculosis on 29 May 1925. At his interment, James Scullin, who was to become Prime Minister in 1929, said of Stewart that 'he was a man whose word was his bond'. His contributions to the union movement and Australian politics cannot be underestimated.

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