

This is the text of the commemorative sign unveiled on 2 February 2011 at Ginninderra village Canberra to honour the memory of Henry Edmund (Harry) Holland - Man of the People



Harry Holland was born in Ginninderra on 10 June 1868, the younger son of Edward Holland, a farm worker on the Ginninderra Estate, and Mary, nee Chaplin.

He received little formal education but is believed to have attended the Ginninderra Provisional School when it operated out of the nearby St Francis' Church prior to the construction of the Ginninderra Schoolhouse in 1883, which you can still visit in the village.

At age 14, he was apprenticed as a compositor on the *Queanbeyan Times*. He remained there until 1887 when he departed for Sydney in search of work. In 1888, he married Annie McLachlan, formerly of Duntroon. Despite years of poverty and hardship, the couple remained close and had eight children together.

After a period of unemployment, Harry became active in radical politics, standing unsuccessfully for the Commonwealth Parliament as a socialist candidate in 1901 and again for the NSW Parliament in 1907. He edited a number of newspapers devoted to radical and socialist causes and was active in trade union struggles. He helped form the Tailoresses Union in Sydney in 1901 and led them in a successful campaign for better pay and conditions.

Convicted of sedition for his involvement in the Broken Hill miners' strike in 1909, Harry served five months of a two year gaol sentence. In 1912, he migrated to New Zealand, arriving in the middle of the bitter Waihi miners' dispute in which a striking miner was killed. He was prominent in the formation of the New Zealand Labour Party and in 1918, was elected to Parliament. The following year, he became leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, a position he held until his death in 1933, just two years before New Zealand's first Labour Government was elected.

Harry Holland was a skilful politician with a warm and generous nature. During the harsh years of the Great Depression, he gave away his money, food, even household furniture, to any needy constituents who came to his door. He died penniless after suffering a heart attack while attending the funeral of a Maori leader on 8 October 1933.

Tributes poured in from friend and foe alike. He is remembered today as a man of principle who genuinely believed that a better world is possible and who did everything in his power to make it so.



This sign was erected with the assistance of the New Zealand Government.