



## **2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Laurence Eric Clarke**



**Played with Adelaide University**



**Football Club: 1914 A Grade**

**Degree: LLB (1920)**

## ***Background***

***Coinciding with the Centenary of Anzacs our incentive behind the series of biographical publications is the Adelaide University Football and Cricket Club's desire to honour our players who served in the Great War (1914 - 1918). These brave men put on hold their academic, professional and sporting careers for King and Country in the name of peace and freedom. The AUFC/AUCC WW1 Memorial Committee is endeavouring to identify every one of our players who served and prepare life stories on all. This is to ensure their sacrifices and further contributions to society will be recognised by future generations.***

***On Anzac Day 2015, the Centenary of the Gallipoli landing, a memorial plaque was unveiled on the Adelaide University Oval Pavilion and this was followed by the erection of a picket fence between the pavilion and the scoreboard with each picket bearing a plaque with the name of an AUFC/AUCC player who served.***

***The following documentation relates to the life of Laurence Eric Clarke. It is compilation of information and photographs collected from a variety of historical sources.***

## The AIF Project

Note – All Laurence's WWI war records are incorrectly recorded under the spelling Lawrence.

<https://aif.adfa.edu.au/showPerson?pid=54385>




### Lawrence Eric CLARKE

Regimental number	2852A
Date of birth	8 June 1895
Religion	Methodist
Occupation	Articled law clerk
Address	Erskine Street, Goodwood Park, South Australia
Marital status	Single
Age at embarkation	20
Next of kin	Father, Rev W G Clarke, Erskine Street, Goodwood Park, South Australia
Enlistment date	9 June 1915
Rank on enlistment	Private
Unit name	27th Battalion, 6th Reinforcement
AWM Embarkation Roll number	23/44/2
Embarkation details	Unit embarked from Adelaide, South Australia, on board HMAT A24 <i>Benalla</i> on 27 October 1915
Regimental number from Nominal Roll	Commissioned
Rank from Nominal Roll	Lieutenant
Unit from Nominal Roll	27th Battalion
Promotions	2nd Lieutenant
	Unit: INF27
	Promotion date: 16 September 1915
Fate	Returned to Australia 5 July 1916

## Service Record

<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=1969957>

OCEANIC TRUE COPY.

AUSTRALIAN  MILITARY FORCES

**AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.**

**ATTESTATION PAPER OF PERSONS ENLISTED FOR SERVICE ABROAD**

No. \_\_\_\_\_ Name CLARKE Lawrence Eric  
Unit 9/10 Inf  
Joined on 9/6/15

**Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.**

1. What is your Name? ... Lawrence Eric Clarke
2. In the Parish of \_\_\_\_\_ in or  
near the Town of Parkside  
in the County of South Australia
3. Are you a natural born British Subject or a  
Naturalized British Subject? (N.B.—If the latter,  
papers to be shown.) ... NA
4. What is your age? ... 20 yrs
5. What is your trade or calling? ... Articled Law Clerk
6. Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? If so,  
where, to whom, and for what period? ... No
7. Are you married? ... No
8. Who is your next of kin? (Address to be stated) ...  
(Father) Rev W G Clarke,  
Erskine Street,  
Goodwood S.A.
9. Have you ever been convicted by the Civil Power? ... No
10. Have you ever been discharged from any part of His  
Majesty's Forces, with Ignominy, or as Incorrigible  
and Worthless, or on account of Conviction of  
Felony, or of a Sentence of Penal Servitude, or have  
you been dismissed with disgrace from the Navy? ... No
11. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His  
Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia, the  
Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, Royal Navy  
or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not  
now serving, state cause of discharge ...  
2 yrs school cadets  
2 yrs senior cadets. Trans to  
Light Horse. 35th Battery Field  
Artillery. Trans to 78th Infantry.
12. Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous  
service? ... No
13. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His  
Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds? ... No
14. (For married men, widowers with children, and soldiers who are the  
sole support of widowed mother)—  
Do you understand that no Separation Allowance will be issued  
to you, in respect of your service beyond an amount which  
together with pay would reach 8/- per day? ... -
15. Are you prepared to undergo inoculation against  
smallpox and enteric fever? ... Yes

Lawrence Eric Clarke do solemnly declare that the above answers made  
by me to the above questions are true, and I am willing and hereby voluntarily agree to serve in the Military Forces  
of the Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

And I further agree to allot not less than ~~two-fifths~~ <sup>three-fifths</sup> of the pay payable to me from time to time during my  
service for the support of my ~~wife~~ <sup>wife and children</sup>.

Date 31-5-1915 L E Clarke  
Signature of Person Enlisted.

wo 37209 \* This clause should be struck out in the case of unmarried men or widowers without children under 18 years of age  
† Two-fifths must be allotted to the wife, and if there are children three-fifths must be allotted.



## Biography

### Early Life

Laurence Eric Clarke was born on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1985 at Parkside, the son of Rev William George Clarke and Emily (Emmie) Maria Nock (SA Birth Registration 565/224). William, a Methodist minister, was in charge of the Koorunga Circuit (Burra) then the Clarendon Circuit when Laurence was young.

### Schooling

Initially Laurence was privately schooled before he commenced at the Burra School on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1900. The family left Burra in March 1902 and moved to the Coromandel Valley area.

In 1908 Laurence commenced at Prince Alfred College, Adelaide and later that year he passed his Primary Examinations, followed by Junior Examinations in 1909.

Laurence came second in the 110 yards flat and the 440 yards flat at the PAC Sports in April 1911. He played in the First Eighteen Football team for PAC in 1911 against Adelaide University and St Peters College and went on the team's trip to Melbourne to play Wesley College, Scotch College and Melbourne Grammar School.

Laurence completed two years in the Cadets and two years in the Senior Cadets prior to joining the Citizens Forces. He was with the 35<sup>th</sup> Battery Field Artillery before joining the 78<sup>th</sup> Infantry.

### 1911 - Prince Alfred College – First Eighteen Football Team



**L.E. Clarke – Back Row – Third from Left**

Laurence passed Special Senior Examinations in English Literature, Algebra & Geometry, Geometry and Trigonometry having studied with Mrs Dorsch in March 1912 and in December 1912 he Passed Senior Examinations in Latin.

### University

In 1913 Laurence commenced studying for his law degree at Adelaide University and passed examinations toward his degree in 1913 and 1914. He was studying in the 1915 year but joined up in on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1915. Laurence recommenced his studies in 1917 and was awarded his LLB in 1920.

### University Sport

#### Football

Laurence played for the Adelaide University Football Club in 1914. His only match located in the currently digitised newspapers was an A Grade pre-season match against North Adelaide in April 1914.

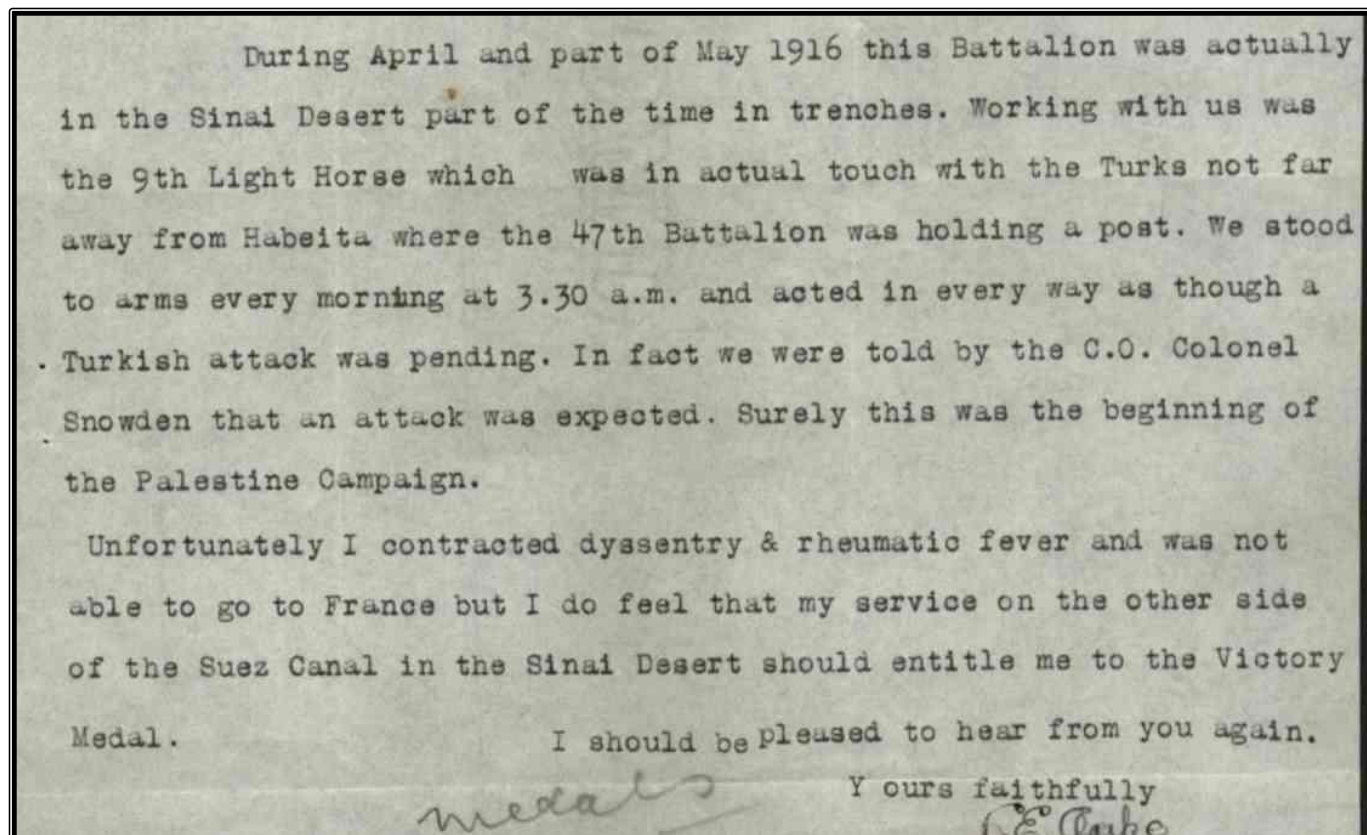
#### Athletics

Laurence won the 440 yards flat at the Adelaide University Sports in 1914.

### World War I

Laurence enlisted on the 31<sup>st</sup> May 1915 aged 20 years, he was 5' 10¾", and 155 lbs, with a fair complexion, blue eyes and dark hair. His father, Rev W.G. Clarke of Erskine Street, Parkside was listed as his next of kin. Laurence received his commission on 16<sup>th</sup> September 1915. While many from his unit embarked on the HMAT A24 *Benalla* on 27 October 1915, some of the unit, including Laurence did not depart until 1916. Before leaving for overseas service Laurence was in charge of guard of honour, composed of 100 men from the 10th reinforcements of the 27th Battalion which welcomed home returned soldiers in February 1916.

Laurence embarked from Adelaide on the H.M.A. T. "Mongolia" on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1916 and arrived at the Suez on 4th April 1916. He contracted severe dysentery and rheumatic fever while serving in the Sinai Desert. His own brief description of his service is in the letter below.



During April and part of May 1916 this Battalion was actually in the Sinai Desert part of the time in trenches. Working with us was the 9th Light Horse which was in actual touch with the Turks not far away from Habsita where the 47th Battalion was holding a post. We stood to arms every morning at 3.30 a.m. and acted in every way as though a Turkish attack was pending. In fact we were told by the C.O. Colonel Snowden that an attack was expected. Surely this was the beginning of the Palestine Campaign.

Unfortunately I contracted dysentery & rheumatic fever and was not able to go to France but I do feel that my service on the other side of the Suez Canal in the Sinai Desert should entitle me to the Victory Medal.

I should be pleased to hear from you again.

Yours faithfully  
L.E. Clarke

medals

**Portion of a letter written by L.E. Clarke to the Department of Defence, 31 July 1923**

Due to illness Laurence returned to Australia onboard the H.S. "Karoora" on 5 July 1916. His appointment was terminated on 27 September 1916 as medically unfit for active service.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> August 1916 Laurence Eric Clarke married Olive May Maslin the third daughter of Mr P Maslin of NSW.



From at least October 1916, Laurence was representing the Military Department at various courts where claims for exemption from Military Service were being heard.

In December 1916, Laurence was living at Unley Park and registered an 18.2 Delaunay Belleville Motor Cycle.

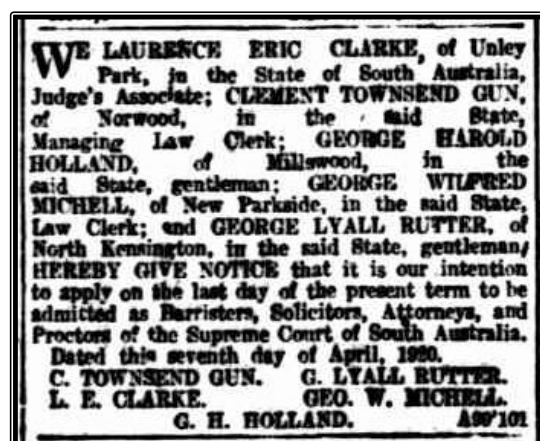
In January 1917, Laurence was selected to fill the position of Recruiting Officer, for the “Angus A, Gawler” area. Laurence recommenced as a member of the Citizens Forces and in December 1917 he was appointed a lieutenant (temporary) for the duration of the war in the 74<sup>th</sup> (Boothby) Infantry.

In June 1917 *Murray Pioneer and Australian River Record* (newspaper) reported that Mr Byron Gregory had sold his fine 30 acre vine property at Block C Renmark to Lieut. L.E. Clarke, late of the 27<sup>th</sup> Battalion A.I.F. However it is clear from other mentions of Laurence in the newspapers that he did not work the property himself.

### Career and Family Life

Laurence had returned to his studies of the law in 1917 and in May 1918 he was appointed acting associate to the Chief Justice of the South Australian Supreme Court. He held that position until November 1919 when F.B. McBryde returned from active service, Laurence then became the associate for Justice Poole.

In January 1920 Laurence and Olive purchased a house at Victoria Ave Unley Park. Mr J.G. Tenison Woods replaced Laurence as fourth associate and clerk of arraigns in the Supreme Court in March 1920 and Laurence was appointed third associate and clerk of arraigns. Laurence was awarded his LLB in 1920 and in April 1902 he was admitted to the Bar.



In August 1920, Laurence resigned his position as associate to Justice Buchanan at the Supreme Court to enter into private practice as a Barrister and Solicitor, at Eagle Chambers, King William Street, Adelaide.

In April 1924 Laurence and Olive left by the R.M.S. Maloja for a six month trip to England and the Continent. Olive, pictured below, was well known as Girl Guides' Commissioner of the South Australian District. The couple left Southampton, England for Quebec, Canada on the 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1924 onboard the “Empress of France”. They were back in Australia by September 1924.



After nine years in private practice, Laurence returned to the Supreme Court as associate to Mr Justice Richards in November 1929. He was also appointed Clerk of Arraignment and in July 1930 was described as Custodian of Records, Supreme Court.

**ASSOCIATE TO JUDGE**

**Mr. L. E. Clarke Appointed**

Mr. Laurence Eric Clarke has been appointed associate to Mr. Justice Richards, of the Supreme Court Bench, in succession to Mr. C. Wheatley Reeves, who resigned to enter private practice.

Mr. Clarke was formerly associate to Mr. Justice Buchanan, the late Mr. Justice Stanley Poole, and Sir George Murray (Chief Justice), holding the positions from 1918-1920. He left to engage in private practice.

Educated at Prince Alfred College and the University of Adelaide, Mr. Clarke was admitted to the Bar in 1920. He held the rank of lieutenant in the 47th Battalion of the Australian Imperial Force, and saw active service in Egypt and the Sinai Desert.



Laurence was appointed Deputy Registrar of Probates and in June 1931 he became Registrar of Probates. In 1932 he was recommended for appointment as a member of the Institute of Public Administration. Laurence's career advanced further and in January 1934 he was appointed as a magistrate in the Police and Traffic Courts.

The appointments of Messrs. E. J. R. Morgan and L. E. Clarke as magistrates in the Adelaide Police and Traffic Courts respectively were approved by Executive Council yesterday. Mr. Morgan will receive £600 a year as successor to Mr. Muirhead, who was recently promoted to the position of Police Magistrate, rendered vacant by the retirement of Mr. Sabine. Mr. Clarke will receive £540 as Traffic Magistrate in succession to Mr. Hall, who was retired.

For sport, Laurence now played golf and tennis. He played golf regularly at Royal Adelaide and was a participant in the 1934 A.I.F. Cup. In December 1934 he played in a Law Students versus Lawyers tennis competition.

### 1934 - Law Students versus Lawyers



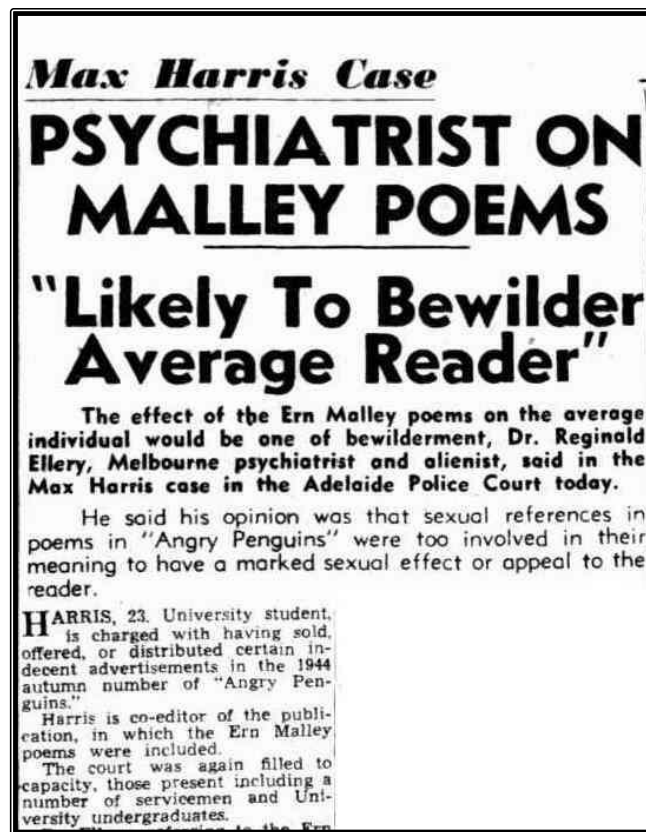
*L.E. Clarke – Second from Right*

By 1935 Laurence was the Stipendiary Magistrate (SM) of the No 3 Police Court. Laurence and Olive do not appear to have had children, but in 1936, Olive's niece, Miss Patricia Manton, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. R. T. Manton, of Berowra came to live with the couple. Unfortunately during the 1935 -1936 period Laurence's home at Victoria Avenue, Unley was broken into on three occasions. On the third occasion a fur was stolen.

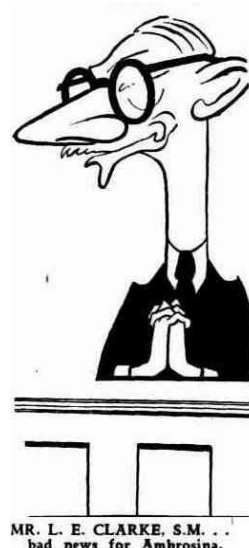
In 1938 it was noted in 'The Advertiser' that Laurence was never seen without his walking cane.

When WWII broke out Laurence enlisted (SN S2660) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939 and was discharged on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1942. He held the rank of Lieutenant and Olive was his next of kin. According to a Press Statement made in 1960, "During the Second World War he was Chief Legal Officer, South Australian Area H.Q.(1939-1942) and Major, 2 Aust. Division H.Q. (1942)". Laurence continued to serve as a Stipendiary Magistrate in South Australia throughout the entire period of WWII.

In later 1944 Laurence heard the case against Max Harris, who was charged with having sold, offered, or distributed certain indecent advertisements in the 1944 autumn number of "*Angry Penguins*". The Ern Malley poems were part of a famous literary hoax and were written by conservative writers James McAuley and Harold Stewart in order to hoax Max Harris and his modernist magazine *Angry Penguins*.




In October 1947 a cartoonist for "The Mail" provided this caricature of Mr L.E. Clarke, S.M. after a court case involving a widow known as Ambrosina who was fined for using indecent language.



In July 1950, Laurence was appointed as the new Police Magistrate for South Australia with a salary of £1,450 per annum. He held this position until his retirement, aged 65, in mid 1960.

## New Police Magistrate



Mr. Clarke.

Executive Council has appointed Mr. L. E. Clarke, SM, to succeed Mr. H. M. Muirhead as Police Magistrate and head of the Police Court Department. Salary for the position is £1,450 a year.



MR. L. E. CLARKE

## Mr. Clarke new police magistrate

Executive Council today appointed Mr. L. E. Clarke Police Magistrate in Adelaide Police Court.

Mr. Clarke will become head of the Police Court Department. He will succeed Mr. H. M. Muirhead, who has been Police Magistrate since 1933. Mr. Muirhead will retire at the end of the month.

Mr. Clarke has had 16 years' service as a Stipendiary Magistrate in Adelaide police courts. Before his appointment he was an associate in the Supreme Court, and was Deputy Registrar of Probates.

Two magistrates are to be appointed to serve in the Adelaide Police Courts. Applications for both positions have closed, and are now being considered by the Government.

One of the magistrates to be appointed will preside in the Children's Court.

After retiring from his role as head of the Police Magistrates in South Australia, Laurence was appointed acting Judge for the Northern Territory, from 26 August 1960. (note – the press statement is inaccurate regarding Laurence's WWI service as Laurence was only in the Sinai in April and May 1916.

PRESS STATEMENT.

The Attorney-General, Sir Garfield Barwick, Q.C., announced today that the Governor-General had appointed Mr. Laurence Eric Clarke to be Acting Judge of the Northern Territory as from 26 August, 1960. Mr. Acting Justice Clarke is taking the place of His Honour W.C. Gillespie, who is returning to his duties as Judge of the Local Court, South Australia. The office of the Judge of the Northern Territory has been vacant since the death of Mr. Justice Kriewaldt in June this year.

Mr. Acting Justice Clarke retired recently from the position of Chief Stipendiary Magistrate, Adelaide Police Court. He was educated at the Prince Alfred College and the University of Adelaide, served with the A.I.F. in 1915-1918 at Sinai, and was called to the bar in 1920. He was Deputy Registrar of Probates in South Australia in 1930-1934, and became a Stipendiary Magistrate in 1934. During the Second World War he was Chief Legal Officer, South Australian Area H.Q. (1939-1942) and Major, 2 Aust. Division H.Q. (1942).

## Death

Olive May Clarke passed away on the 27<sup>th</sup> May 1978 and Laurence Eric Clark passed away on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 1985, aged 89 years. They were both cremated at Centennial Park, South Australia.

***Profile Compiled by: Beth Filmer - AUFC/AUCC WW1 Memorial Committee***

## Sources and Acknowledgements:

The AIF Project <https://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/>

RSL Virtual War Memorial <https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/explore/>  
<https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/explore/people/371883>

The National Archives of Australia <http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/>

Australian War Memorial <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/>

The Adelaide University <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/records/archives/>

The National Library of Australia <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/>

(Trove Newspaper articles tagged – Laurence Eric Clarke)

SA Genealogy <https://www.genealogysa.org.au/resources/online-databases.html>

[http://www.burrahistory.info/BurraSchoolRegistersfromLibrary\\_Boys.htm](http://www.burrahistory.info/BurraSchoolRegistersfromLibrary_Boys.htm)

Justice in Arms: Military Lawyers in The Australian Army's First Hundred Years

By Australian, Army Legal Corps Staff

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ern\\_Malley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ern_Malley)

<http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media/pressrel/HPR10009433%22>