

## **Biography – Senator the Hon Ursula Stephens**

The Hon. Senator Ursula Stephens was born in Wicklow, Ireland and came to Australia in 1961. She and her family settled in Grafton on the NSW North Coast, where she completed school, then went on to train as a primary teacher. She later completed a Bachelor of Education through the University of South Australia while living in the Northern Territory.

She has worked as a primary, secondary and TAFE teacher and studied for a Masters Degree in Adult Education which she converted to a PhD in Public Administration graduating in 2005.

Senator Stephens joined the Australian Labor Party in 1975 after the sacking of the Whitlam government and since that time was a member of several NSW and National Policy Committees. In November 2001 she was elected to the Senate as a Country Labor Senator for New South Wales and was re-elected in the 2007 Federal election.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd appointed the Senator as Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and Parliamentary Secretary for the Voluntary Sector.

Her current position as a Parliamentary Secretary will mean working to ensure that Australia's prosperity does not continue to leave so many people behind. Senator Stephens believes that no matter where you live, or who you are, all Australians should be able to participate in the social and economic life of the nation.

The Senator has particular interest in community services and mental health. She helped to form the Parliamentary Friends of Schizophrenia, which aims to raise awareness about schizophrenia within the Parliament