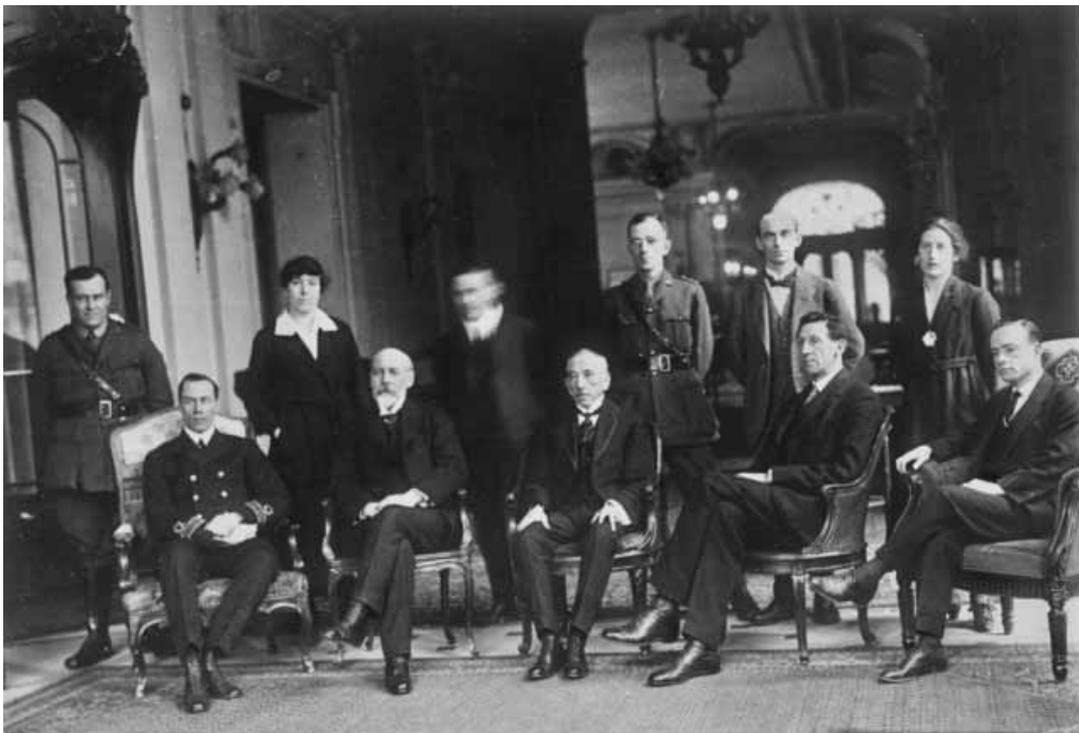


John Greig LATHAM

John Latham was born in Ascot Vale in August 1877. Originally trained as teacher, having completed at Bachelor of Arts in 1896, he returned to the University of Melbourne to undertake a law degree in 1899. Latham was admitted to practice as barrister in 1904, and, by the outbreak of the War in 1914, was earning £2000 a year.

In 1915, Latham helped found the Universal Service League, which worked for the introduction of conscription of military service. At the end of 1916, following unrest and suspected sabotage on the waterfront, the Navy sought to appoint an officer to command its intelligence service. Latham was selected at the recommendation of his friend the federal Solicitor-General Sir Robert Garran. Latham was awarded the rank of lieutenant commander and, during 1917, he co-ordinated naval intelligence activities.

In April 1918, Latham sailed with Garran and Prime Minister Billy Hughes for England, to participate in the Imperial Conference and later the Peace Conference at Versailles at the end of the war. At Versailles, he was the Assistant Secretary of the British Empire delegation. He assisted with negotiations regarding former German possessions in the Pacific and helped with the drafting of aspects of the Treaty.



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After his return to Australia in 1919, Latham resumed his career at the Bar, taking silk in 1922. In the same year, he began his parliamentary career on the conservative side. He later served as leader of his party, and Attorney General, when he was again responsible for intelligence matters. He retired from parliament in 1934 and was appointed the Chief Justice of the High Court in 1935. In 1940, he was appointed to a diplomatic post in Japan, but was fortunate to have returned to Australia before the Japanese entry into the Second World War. He retired from the bench of the High Court in 1952 and died in 1962.