

## WADE STREET

(Research by the Coolamon & District History Group)

Sir Charles Gregory Wade KCMG, KC, JP (26 January 1863 – 26 September 1922) was Premier of New South Wales 2 October 1907 – 21 October 1910. According to Percival Serle, "Wade was a public-spirited man of high character. His ability, honesty and courage were quickly recognized and, though he could not be called a great leader, he was either in office or leader of the opposition for nearly the whole of his political life of 14 years. His career as a judge was short, but his sense of justice and grasp of principles and details, eminently fitted him for that position.

In September 1903, he ran successfully for the Legislative Assembly seat of Willoughby, with the support of the Liberal and Reform Association, People's Reform League, New South Wales Alliance for the Suppression of Intemperance, Loyal Orange Institution and Australian Protestant Defence Association. From 1904 to 1917, he represented Gordon.[6][7] Within a year of his first election he joined the Carruthers ministry as Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. When Carruthers resigned Wade became Premier on 2 October 1907, but still retained his previous portfolios. He was an energetic leader, and a large number of acts were passed by his government dealing with among others, industrial disputes, neglected children, minimum wage, employers' liability, the liquor problem, and closer settlement. There was some remission of taxation and each year the treasurer was able to show a surplus. The great Burrinjuck Dam for which the Carruthers government was responsible was started, and special care was taken that the consequent increase in the value of the land should be preserved for the people generally and not merely the landholders. During the 1909–10 coal strike, Wade appeared to favour the mine-owners and lost significant community support.



## MR. WADE AT COOLAMON.

### A TRYING EXPERIENCE.

COOLAMON, Tuesday.

Mr. Wade was announced to speak here today at 2.30 p.m., but did not arrive till 5 p.m. Nevertheless, an enthusiastic crowd awaited him at the Oddfellows' Hall. He explained that his motor had bogged three times, and that he had walked, driven in a springcart, borrowed a bicycle, and finished in a buggy, which accounted for his tired, worn, and travel-stained appearance, especially as he had touched no food since 3 a.m. He confined himself to topics of land settlement, tenure, and facilities of communication. The present Government, he said, had done more than any other to settle men on the land. In six years the See Administration granted 18,000 original and additional holdings. He in five and a half years had to his credit 25,000. Further, the Government had opened new doors to land settlement. Their main intention was to make land available to the small man, and to prevent the aggregation of big estates. This they had safeguarded. The Carruthers Government had opened the way by resuming three large holdings. The Wade Government followed with 24 estates. Half a million acres would be available for 1500 new settlers in a few months. The effect of this policy was seen in the fact that holdings above 7000 acres were decreasing in number, and holdings under 7000 acres were increasing. There were three main principles by which they differentiated from the Labour party. First, they encouraged freehold tenure. The title was the most coveted by men on the land. The Labour party would restrict them to leasehold, and behind that they screened land nationalisation, a cage into which they would put their birds, and perhaps pay with "Federal flimies" in the hour of danger. There was no comparison between the freehold and leasehold titles. Secondly, there was the question of railway facilities, essential to the development of the country. This Government had added rolling stock to the value of three millions—double that of the three years of the See Government. They were raising a special loan of two millions for the duplication of the North, South, and West lines. They would also build crosscountry lines to simplify and facilitate the transit of stock and fodder in drought. They would also connect with deep-water ports. They were pledged to this line of policy. They would not expect these lines to pay from the jump, but they would ultimately pay. The Labour party could not build any railway, for no new line could conform to the standard of financial reform and paying interest and sinking fund from the first year. Progress would be effectually blocked. Like the Labour party, they had a scheme of dividing big estates, but not by forcing on the market and reducing values to the small man as well as the great. But if a group of men agreed with a big landowner the State, through the Savings Bank, would advance all the purchase money on a 5 per cent. instalment, spread over 33 years. This would prove more effective for good and less productive of evil than any bursting-up scheme. He claimed that the Liberal party had been progressive and on sound lines, and felt confidence in the generous spirit of gratitude Australians always evinced for the man who went honestly and earnestly in their service. Hearty cheers were accorded the Premier for his spirited address.