# DAVID CHARLES MCGRATH
## 1872 - 1934

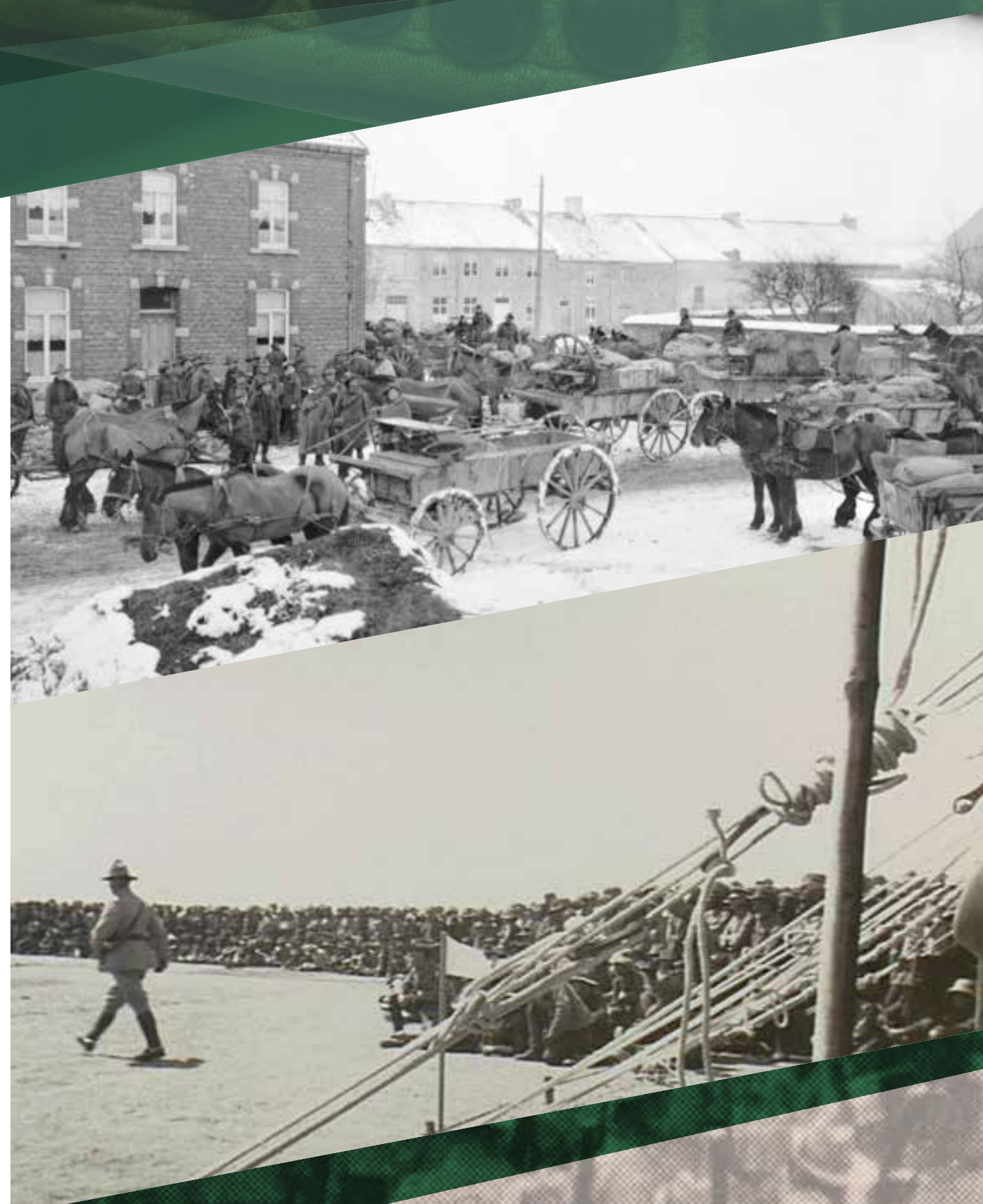## MP (Ballaarat, VIC) • ALP/UAP, 1913–1919 • 1920–1934

Born in 1872 in the Victorian town of Newtown, David McGrath worked in his family's stores in Allendale and Pitfield Plains (Victoria) and developed a keen interest in politics. An active member of the Australian Natives Association, McGrath successfully contested the Victorian Legislative Assembly seat of Grenville in 1904. He worked to expand support for the ALP in country areas, taking a strong interest in the mining industry.

Following Alfred Deakin's retirement as member for Ballaarat (as it was then spelt), McGrath won the seat for Labor in May 1913; however, in October of that year was suspended for the remainder of the Parliamentary session as he refused to apologise to the Speaker, Sir Elliot Johnson, for a number of allegations made in the Chamber. Re-elected in 1914, McGrath pushed the government to improve soldiers' conditions in the war.

McGrath enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force in March 1916 at the age of 43 years, embarking from Melbourne on HMAT *Persic*. He served as a staff sergeant with the 1st Divisional Train, Army Service Corps, and was promoted to warrant officer. After being transferred to No.1 Company, 1st Army Service Corps at the Australian Base Depot Havre (France) in 1917, he became seriously ill; in April 1918 returned to Australia where he was discharged as medically unfit.

While still at war, McGrath was returned as member for Ballaarat in absentia at the May 1917 election. Although narrowly defeated at the 1919 election, the results of his seat were declared void on appeal; and a by-election subsequently returned him to Parliament in July 1920. He continued to advocate in Parliament for soldiers' and returned servicemen rights. McGrath was Chairman of Committees and Deputy Speaker during the Scullin Government (1929–1931).

McGrath left the Labor Party in 1931 and joined the Lyon's United Australia Party, where he remained until his death in 1934 (while in office). He was buried with military and Masonic honours.

BALLARAT

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