

The Hon. Dr Mike Kelly AM MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Defence

Member for Eden-Monaro

While working his way through university, Mike worked as a storeman and packer, a cleaner, and a labourer. Upon graduation from university and the College of Law, Mike worked at a law firm in Sydney fighting for the rights of injured workers, helping with campaigns for those suffering from asbestos related diseases.



Mike joined the Army in 1987 and has extensive military experience including deployments in Somalia (for which he was awarded the Chief of the General Staff Commendation and made a Member of the Order of Australia); with the International Red Cross in Bosnia Herzegovina and Croatia; Kenya; East Timor; working with the SAS in the lead-up to the Sydney Olympics; and at the Headquarters Australian Theatre and in Iraq. He finished his military career as Director of Operations and International Law and Director of Army Legal Services in 2007.

Mike has been a regular speaker at military training programs and conferences around the world and is a leading expert on Operations Law, peace operations, post conflict reconstruction and counter insurgency issues. He has published numerous articles and chapters in books on various military and legal subjects.

Mike has a long family history in Eden-Monaro. His great great grandfather, Thomas Joseph Kelly, settled in Bega in 1865. Thomas went on to found the Bega Cheese factory and was its first chairman. Thomas married the daughter of Daniel Gowing, also a significant family in the region, and had many descendants who helped build the area as farmers, saw millers and teachers. Mike's great grandfather, Benjamin George Kelly, ran for the seat of Eden-Monaro in 1940 and his grand uncle, Father John Kelly, was the parish priest in Bombala and Braidwood before becoming a Monsignor and the Inspector of Catholic Education for the region. Mike has many relatives still living and working in the Bega/Tanja area.

Mike was first elected as the Member for Eden Monaro in November 2007. He was appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support in the Federal Labor Government. On 25 February 2009, Mike was appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Water in addition to his existing duties.

Mike was appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in the Gillard Labor Government on 14 September 2010. Mike returned to the Defence Portfolio when he was appointed as a Parliamentary Secretary for Defence in December 2011. In this role, he will assist the Minister for Defence on the Afghanistan transition.