

International development and Pacific elevated in Turnbull reshuffle

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Date : September 20, 2015

On the weekend, the result of the ministry reshuffle following Malcolm Turnbull's sudden ascendency to Prime Minister [was announced](#). For aid and Pacific watchers, there was one particularly interesting thing: Julie Bishop's Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs ([since November 2014](#)), Steven Ciobo, was elevated to the new position of Minister for International Development and the Pacific.

On top of his foreign affairs role, Ciobo previously also served as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Trade and Investment, but Andrew Robb will now be assisted by Senator Richard Colbeck, freeing up Ciobo's time.

While PM Turnbull has scrapped parliamentary secretaries entirely in his ministry, most other former parliamentary secretary positions have been turned into Assistant Minister positions--not Ministerial ones (for comparison, [see the make-up of the Abbott ministry](#)).

Given that Foreign Minister Julie Bishop has such a strong personal interest in aid and the Pacific, it will be interesting to see what this new role entails.

This is not the first time development has risen to this level of prominence in a ministry. The short-lived second Rudd government [had a Minister for International Development](#) (Melissa Parke), also an outer ministry position. Delving further back into the past, Labor's Gordon Bilney was Minister for Development Cooperation and Pacific Affairs from 1993 to 1996, and Neal Blewett, also of Labor, was Minister for Trade and Overseas Development for a year in 1991, followed by John Kerin who held the role between 1992 and 1993.

As for the Pacific, under the Labor Rudd-Gillard-Rudd governments, there was a Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs position (filled by Richard Marles and Matt Thistlethwaite), but this disappeared under the Abbott government.

Perhaps this move is an indicator of Julie Bishop's stronger sway in the Turnbull government--ahead of the 2010 election, [she promised](#) to establish a Minister for International Development position, but this was not mentioned in the 2013 campaign.