



The Honourable Gareth Ward MP Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services

Gareth Ward was born in Gerringong into a small-business family and has lived in the Illawarra and South Coast his entire life. Born with Oculocutaneous Albinism, Gareth has been legally blind since birth.

Growing up in the Illawarra, Gareth attended local schools at Nowra East Public School, Bomaderry Primary School and Bomaderry High School. Gareth attended the University of Wollongong and holds Bachelor's Degrees in Arts, Commerce and Law. Following his undergraduate studies, Gareth went on to complete the Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice.

Gareth is on the roll of admitted solicitors for the Supreme Court of NSW and the High Court of Australia. He is a Member of the Law Society of NSW and holds an Australian Practising Certificate (Government Legal Practitioner) from the NSW Law Society.

Gareth served the University of Wollongong on its governing board – the University Council – which is responsible for setting the strategic direction of the University which is now in the top 2% of the world's universities.

Gareth has a keen interest in music and was a weekend student at the Conservatorium of Music, studying violin. He completed several grades through the Australian Music Examinations Board and lead a Jazz Band 'Rusty Fence' whilst studying at University.

Gareth worked and paid his own way through University holding several jobs including with the NSW Department of Education as a Debating and Public Speaking coach and adjudicator in local schools.

Elected to Shoalhaven City Council at age 22 in 2004, Gareth is the youngest-ever Councillor to serve on Shoalhaven City Council. He was re-elected in 2008 – topping the poll and was unanimously elected Deputy Mayor between 2008-2010. In that time, Gareth chaired the City's Development Committee, headed up the Council's Budget Committee which had oversight of the City's \$300Million budget as well as chairing the City's Aboriginal Advisory Committee. He also led the successful bid to win the rights to host the NSW Local Government Conference in the Shoalhaven in 2012.

Prior to entering Parliament, Gareth was employed as an advisor to Senator John Tierney, South Coast MP Shelley Hancock and Upper House MLC Don Harwin. He has also worked for the fundraising group the Millennium Forum and served as a director of Southern Water Services.

Gareth has held positions on several boards including the Wollongong UniCentre and the NSW Local Government Association – the peak representative body of elected Councillors in NSW.

Gareth counts his most memorable moments in life as carrying the Olympic Torch as part of the torch relay in 2000, being named Shoalhaven's Young Citizen of the Year in 2001 and the Illawarra Young Business Person of the Year in 2001.

In 2011, Gareth became the first Liberal Member for the State Seat of Kiama.

In Parliament, Gareth has previously served as an Acting Speaker on the Speaker's Panel – presiding over the House in the absence of the Speaker. Gareth has served on the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters as a member and chair as well as serving on the Legislation Review Committee.

Following the appointment of the Hon. Mike Baird as Premier in 2014, Gareth was unanimously elected Deputy Government Whip. A position he held till the 2015 State election.

In April 2015, Gareth was appointed by the Premier as the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast which involves representing the interests of the entire region directly to the Premier

and Cabinet. Gareth also has the responsibility of holding the NSW Government to account for its election promises to our region.

In March 2017, Gareth added the role of Parliamentary Secretary for Education to his list of responsibilities. Gareth is responsible for assisting the Minister for Education on anti-bullying and students with disabilities. Gareth enjoys traveling all over the State meeting with front-line teachers and staff and working hard to make our education system the best in the world.

Gareth is currently the Chair of the New South Wales Parliamentary Friends of the European Union and Secretary of the Bipartisan Action Committee for NSW Bravehearts. He is also a member of the Parliamentary Lions Club, the Parliamentary Friends of Ireland, the Parliamentary Friends of Asia-Pacific, the Parliamentary Friends of ANZAC and the Parliamentary Friends of Surf Life Saving.

Gareth is patron of many organisations in his electorate including:

- State Patron, University of Wollongong Liberal Club 2011 – present
- Patron, Albion Park Show Society 2010 – present
- Patron, Berry Show Society 2011 – present
- Patron, Kiama U3A 2011 – present
- Patron, Berry Show Society 2011 – present
- Patron, Nowra Players 2011 – present
- Patron, Shoalhaven Historical Society 2011 – present
- Patron, Kiama and District Historical Society 2011 – present
- Patron, Shoalhaven Rugby Club 2011 – present
- Harold Ambassador, Life Education New South Wales 2011 – present
- Honorary Patron Noah's Ark Centre of Shoalhaven Inc 2011 – present
- Patron, Albion Park Women's Hockey Club 2012 – present
- Patron, The Roo Theatre Company 2012 – present
- Patron, Peterborough Foundation Inc 2012 – present
- In his rare private time, Gareth enjoys golf, watching cricket and music.

Gareth resides at Meroo Meadow in the southern part of the Kiama Electorate.