



SIR JOHN LESLIE CARRICK

Class of 1935

John Leslie Carrick was a former NSW Senator from 1971 to 1987.

Born in Sydney on 4 September 1918, John attended government schools at Woollahra and Randwick before gaining admission to the selective Sydney Technical High School. Thereafter he enrolled in night classes in pure chemistry at Sydney Technical College. Awarded an AGL cadetship, he studied economics at the University of Sydney, debated at the University Union, and joined the Sydney University Regiment, through which he was commissioned in 1939. Carrick graduated with a Bachelor of Economics in 1941.

Posted to the 18th Anti-Tank Battery, his unit was deployed to West Timor as part of Sparrow Force in December 1941, with orders 'to deny the island to the enemy'. After being over-run by Japanese paratroopers, Lieutenant Carrick, together with other survivors, was shipped to Java in July 1942 and in September to Singapore's Changi camp, before being dispatched in early 1943 to the Thailand-Burma railway and its infamous Hellfire Pass.

After Carrick had returned to Australia in October 1945 he enrolled in a law course at the University of Sydney. Nearly two years later, still not knowing what he wanted to do, senior Liberal Party members persuaded him to become the general secretary of the NSW division, a position he held until his election to the Senate in 1971.

Carrick cared passionately about education. His first experience of Senate committees was as a member of the Senate's Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts. Carrick established the Tertiary Education Commission (1977-1987, from 1981 the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission) to oversee the coordination of national tertiary institutions, and he assisted the States by providing federal funding for TAFE colleges to implement the Education Program for Unemployed Youth (EPUY).

In 1978, Carrick was appointed Leader of the Government in the Senate, a position he held until his retirement in 1987. Honours included a KCMG (1982) and a Companion of the Order of Australia in 2008 for 'distinguished service in the area of educational reform in Australia'.