

## Hon. Mathias Cormann next Secretary-General of the OECD

My best congratulations to the Hon. Mathias Cormann who beat nine other candidates representing Greece, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, Estonia, Denmark, Poland, the United States, Sweden and Canada and on 12 March 2021 was elected as the next Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), with his term due to start on 1 June. The 50-year-old will become the first person from Asia-Pacific to lead the Paris-based, 37-nation organisation, and takes the role in the middle of one of the worst global recessions on record.

Mr Cormann quit parliament late last year to seek the top job. He has won this prestigious position despite that the Greens leader Adam Bandt wrote to the OECD's ambassadors urging them to sink Cormann's campaign and despite lobbying by a cluster of environment groups publishing an open letter attempting to derail his candidacy.

It was reported that Mr Cormann was elected because of his in-depth understanding of the rise of China, future of digital taxation and the need for the OECD to tilt towards the increasingly important Asia-Pacific. Mathias also supported the policy of helping the world reach net zero emissions by 2050.

Mathias Cormann was born on 20 September 1970 in Eupen, Belgium within the country's German-speaking Community. Cormann completed his secondary schooling in Liège, where he learnt French as a second language and went on to the University of Namur, where he attained the degree of candidate in law. Cormann later undertook law graduate studies at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, attaining the degree of licentiate and learning Dutch. He learned English as a fourth language in 1993 while on an Erasmus Programme exchange to the University of East Anglia in Norwich, England.



Mr Cormann first came to Australia from Europe in June 1994 and settled permanently in Perth in July 1996, aged 25, initially working as a gardener as his Belgian law degrees were not recognised. Since settling in Australia Mathias rose through Liberal Party ranks, entered the Federal Parliament in 2007 as Western Australian Senator and between 2013 to 2020 spent a record seven years and 42 days as finance minister.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said Mr Cormann had overcome "great odds" to secure "the most senior appointment of an Australian candidate to an international body for decades". /.../ "This is a great honour for Mathias who has worked tirelessly over several months to engage with leaders, senior ministers and officials of OECD member nations from Europe, Asia and the Americas," Mr Morrison said.



From my point of view, Mr Cormann is a great flag bearer for Multicultural Australia. He migrated to Australia as a young man, despite his qualifications being not recognised and starting as manual worker, he advanced through the society to achieve high positions in Australia, including that of Acting Prime Minister. Although many migrants to Australia achieved high government ranks after returning to their home countries, Mr Cormann achieved as na Australian migrant the highest positions in international multilateral bodies - the position of Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Congratulations Mathias. You are a role model to all of us!

**For more about Mathias Cormann see: [Mathias Cormann - Wikipedia](#)**