



Parliament 101 – The 46th Parliament

The Australian Parliament is made up of two 'Houses'. The House of Representatives (the green one) and the Senate (the red one).

The Australian Parliament makes laws, authorises the Government to spend public money, scrutinises government activities, and is a forum for debate on national issues.

The House of Representatives

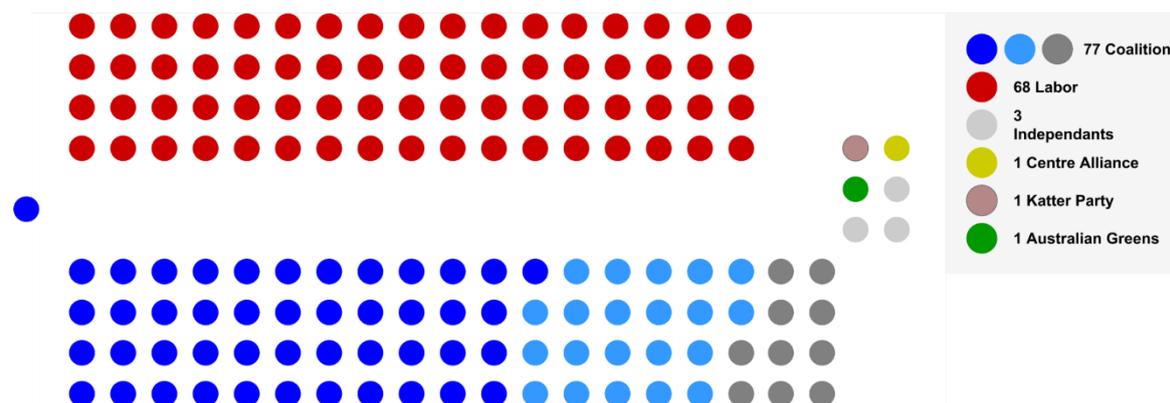
There are 151 Members of the House of Representatives. Each Member of Parliament represents an electorate in Australia.

The party (or parties) that hold the majority of seats in the House of Representatives forms government.

What happens in the House of Representatives?

- Members of Parliament discuss and debate matters of importance both national and international.
- National laws are made and amended by debating on bills (draft legislation).
- Members of Parliament scrutinise the work of the Government, particularly during question time.

The make up of the House of Representatives





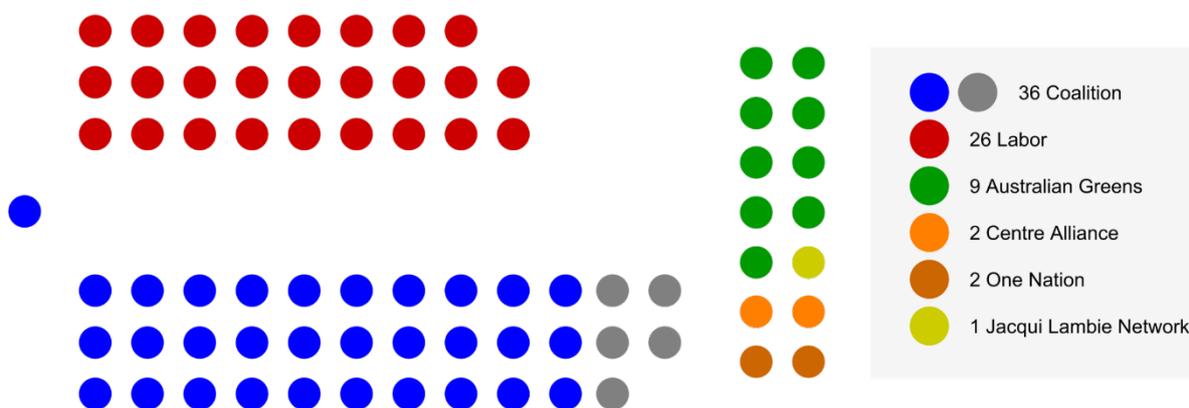
The Senate

The Senate consists of 76 senators, twelve from each of the six states and two from each territories. The Senate shares the power to make laws with the House of Representatives.

The numbers in the Senate are a proportional representation. This means that the make up of the Senate closely reflects the voting pattern of the electors.

Like the House of Representatives, the Senate can introduce and amend legislation. However, it cannot introduce or amend proposed laws that impose taxation. The Senate can, request that the House of Representatives make amendments to financial legislation and it can refuse to pass a bill if there is not enough support.

The make up of the Senate



If all 76 senators are present, 39 are needed to pass legislation, and 38 are needed to block. The Coalition will need 3 of the other cross bench Senators to pass legislation and Labor and the Greens will need 3 of the other cross bench Senators to block legislation.

More information

Engaging with the 46th Parliament is a key part of working in the policy and advocacy sector of not-for-profit organisations.

The [46th Parliament Online Course](#) will provide you with an overview of the Parliament and the Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet, Committees and ideas on how to engage and why it is important.

The course also includes our tips, resources, templates and tools for understanding and engaging with the 46th Parliament.