

fact sheet series 12

COALITION



A coalition is the cooperation of two or more parties in Parliament in order to create a majority party and thereby win government. A party that does not have enough members to form a government can therefore enjoy greater power if it adds the numbers from another party.

The Liberal Party of Australia and the Nationals have formed the longest-running coalition in the Australian Parliament. These two parties ran coalition governments in the three periods 1949-1972, 1975-1983 and 1996-2007.

The Liberal-National coalition has several ways of cooperating and working together. For example, when in government, the leader of the senior party (Liberal Party of Australia) is the Prime Minister. The leader of the junior party (the Nationals) is the Deputy Prime Minister. Ministries are shared between the two parties according to the ratio of seats held by the two parties.

On the floor of the House of Representatives and the Senate, members of the coalition parties sit as separate groups but the two groups are adjacent to each other. They nearly always vote the same way, although they often have slightly different ideas on particular bills.

Each party holds separate party meetings.