

THE PRIME MINISTER

The Prime Minister is a member of Parliament in the House of Representatives. He or she is also the leader of the majority political party in the House. In the House of Representatives, the Prime Minister sits at the centre table in front of the government.

The Prime Minister is the most powerful person in Parliament and has many tasks. These include:

- chairing the weekly party meeting in which the party decides policy and examines new legislation
- selecting other members and senators from the same party to be ministers
- deciding with the ministers in Cabinet what new laws should be introduced into Parliament
- leading the government as the chief government spokesperson in the House of Representatives
- representing the Australian government overseas
- advising the Governor-General about important appointments such as the appointment of ambassadors, heads of government departments and other constitutional matters, and
- deciding when to call an election and leading the party in the election.

The Prime Minister also has a major influence on party policies and how the government runs the country because of his or her power and experience.

At any time, the party can vote the Prime Minister out and replace him or her with another government member of Parliament. After this happens, the Prime Minister reverts to being a backbencher.



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The Hon Julia Gillard MP,
Prime Minister of Australia