

## THE MEDIA

The media consists of people who work for newspaper, television, radio and other organisations that collect and publish information.

In both the House of Representatives and the Senate, there are special seats reserved for journalists. These are located above and behind the Speaker and the President where the journalists can see and hear everything that is happening. Journalists sit in these galleries and take notes, especially during Question Time. They also watch the proceedings on television in their offices so that they can copy video clips for news programs.

Press Gallery offices and studios are on the second floor of the Senate side of Parliament House. In this area, there are television and radio studios for the ABC, SBS and the commercial television stations. There are also offices for all the major newspapers such as The Australian, The Age, The West Australian and the Sydney Morning Herald.

The main work of journalists is to select information and stories about what happens in Parliament and to present the information in such a way that everyone in Australia is aware of what Parliament and the government are doing. Each day, journalists prepare stories about what happens in Parliament (especially about events in Question Time), policies and decisions of the government and opposition, and particular people such as ministers and shadow ministers.

Members and senators depend on the media to inform people throughout Australia and the wider world about what is happening in the Parliament. For example, a senator from Tasmania can inform people in his or her state about an issue by briefing a journalist from The Mercury in Hobart to write a story about what that senator is doing in the Senate. Ministers and shadow ministers like to be interviewed on television from the Parliament House studios so that they can explain what they are doing in Parliament.



Photo by AUSPIC

A press conference

The journalists are quite powerful because they decide which members and senators they will interview and publicise. They decide the content of each story. Although members and senators do not like journalists writing critical stories about them, journalists and media organisations are free to select the news and write what they think to be the important and interesting stories. In this way, the media exercise a very important scrutinising role in the Parliament.