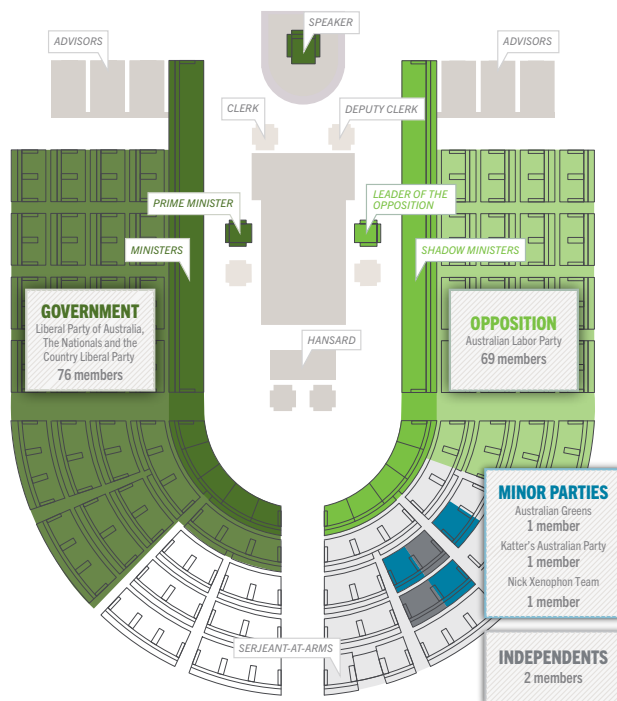
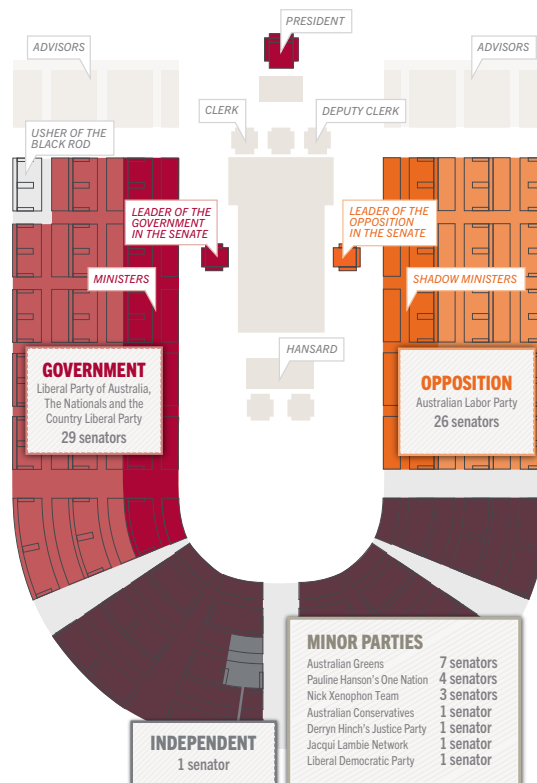


OPPOSITION

COMPOSITION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



COMPOSITION OF THE SENATE



The opposition is formed by the largest party or coalition of parties that does not have the support of the majority of members in the House of Representatives.

The opposition is sometimes called the alternative government, because it could form government if it was to win the support of the majority of members.

Although the opposition is formed in the House of Representatives, there are also members of the opposition in the Senate. The opposition may or may not hold the majority of seats in the Senate.

Opposition responsibilities

The responsibilities of the opposition include:

- scrutinising (closely examining) the work of the government
- asking the government to explain its actions
- debating bills (proposed laws) in the Parliament
- working on committees that examine bills and important national issues
- providing alternatives to government policies.

Opposition leadership

By convention, the Leader of the Opposition sits in the House of Representatives. There is also a head of opposition in the Senate called the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate.

Some members of the opposition are selected by the Leader of the Opposition to be shadow ministers and are responsible for examining the work of ministers. For example, the Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs scrutinises the work of the Minister for Foreign Affairs (see *Ministers and Shadow Ministers*).

The Leader of the Opposition and top-level shadow ministers make up the Shadow Cabinet. The Shadow Cabinet is the leading decision-making group in the opposition, meeting regularly to develop opposition policies.

LINKS

PEO website

Fact Sheet: *Leader of the Opposition*
www.peo.gov.au/learning/fact-sheets/leader-of-the-opposition.html

APH website

H of R Infosheet: *The House, Government and Opposition*
www.tinyurl.com/Infosheet19