Composition of the 45th Parliament: a quick guide

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Key points

• This paper provides a brief overview of the party and gender composition of the 45th Parliament of Australia.

• A double dissolution election was held on 2 July 2016 whereby all seats in the House of Representatives and Senate were up for election. All seats in both Chambers were declared by the Australian Electoral Commission prior to the return of the writs on 8 August 2016 and the 45th Parliament of Australia will be opened on 30 August 2016.

• Following various resignations, retirements and leadership changes this was the first election campaign for the leaders of the major parliamentary parties (Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, Deputy Prime Minister and The Nationals leader Barnaby Joyce, and Opposition leader and Australian Labor Party (ALP) leader Bill Shorten) as well as Australian Greens leader Richard Di Natale.

• The incumbent Turnbull Coalition Government experienced a national swing against it of 3.13 per cent, and now has a total of 76 seats in the House of Representatives, down from 90 seats in the previous Parliament.

• The ALP increased its number of seats in the House of Representatives from 55 to 69; two Independents (Cathy McGowan and Andrew Wilkie), one Katter’s Australian Party (KAP) member (Bob Katter), and one Australian Greens member (Adam Bandt) were re-elected; and a new minor party MP, Rebekha Sharkie (Nick Xenophon Team (NXT)) was elected to the House.

• Party representation in the Senate has changed from the 44th Parliament: Coalition parties now have 30 Senators (down from 33) and the ALP 26 (up from 25).

• The Senate crossbench now contains 20 Senators: nine Australian Greens (down from 10) and 11 minor party Senators (up from eight). This is the largest Senate crossbench since the expansion of the Senate in 1950.

• Pauline Hanson’s One Nation party (PHON) returns to the Parliament (and enters the Senate for the first time), securing four Senate seats.

Legend

AG Australian Greens
ALP Australian Labor Party
DHJP Derryn Hinch’s Justice Party
IND Independent
KAP Katter’s Australian Party
LIB Liberal Party of Australia
NXT Nick Xenophon Team
PHON Pauline Hanson’s One Nation
PUP Palmer United Party

*This paper does not discuss Indigenous representation, which we acknowledge is an important aspect of Australia’s political landscape. For more information please refer to the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ IndigenousStats database.*
House of Representatives

The federal election on 2 July 2016 saw the retirement of 23 members of the House of Representatives. This is fewer than at the 2013 election (25), which was the highest number of departures at any one election.

16 sitting members were defeated. There will be 39 new members of the House of Representatives. New members constitute approximately 26 per cent of the House of Representatives, compared with 28 per cent in 2013 (42 new members) and 21 per cent in 2010 (32 new members).

Included in the 39 new members of the House of Representatives are two former members: Steve Georganas (ALP, Hindmarsh, 2004–13, South Australia (SA)) and Mike Kelly (ALP, Eden-Monaro, 2007–13, New South Wales (NSW)).

During the recent Redistributions of Western Australia (WA), NSW and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), the electorate of Throsby (NSW) was renamed Whitlam. The electorate of Fraser (ACT) (not named after the late former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser) was renamed Fenner, and the electorate of Burt (WA) was established. The electorate of Hunter (NSW) was abolished, but the NSW electorate of Charlton was renamed Hunter as this is a federation electorate name.

Senate

As the election on 2 July was a double dissolution election, all 76 senators were up for re-election.

Four senators did not contest the election and 10 were defeated, thus 14 new senators (approximately 18 per cent of the Senate) were elected at the 2 July election from a variety of parties.¹ The 14 new senators elected equals the 14 new senators elected at the 2013 and 2007 federal elections.

The Senate of the 45th Parliament also sees the return of two former senators, Louise Pratt (ALP, WA) and Don Farrell (ALP, SA) and one former Member of the House of Representatives, Pauline Hanson (PHON, Qld). Senator Hanson will return to Parliament some 18 years after departing the House of Representatives; she served as the PHON Member for Oxley (Qld) from 1996 to 1998.

Party representation

The 2016 election reshuffled the balance of power in the Senate and significantly reduced the Government’s majority in the House of Representatives, as demonstrated in Table 1.

The Coalition won the election, having retained 76 seats in the House of Representatives—a one seat majority. The ALP emerged with 69 seats; two Independents (Ms McGowan and Mr Wilkie) and two minor party members (Mr Bandt (AG) and Mr Katter (KAP)) retained their seats; and a new minor party member, Rebekha Sharkie (NXT), won the seat of Mayo (SA). If the Speaker of the House of Representatives (to be elected on the first day of Parliament) is drawn from the Coalition ranks, the Government majority will fall to 75 seats.

Neither major party gained a majority in the Senate. The Coalition retained 30 seats (down from 33) and the ALP 26 seats (up from 25). The Australian Greens retained nine seats (down from 10) and the rest of the crossbench expanded to 11 senators, up from eight in the 44th Parliament.

Crossbench minor party representation in the Senate is as follows:

- Liberal Democratic Party—David Leyonhjelm (NSW)
- Family First—Bob Day (SA)
- Jacqui Lambie Network—Jacqui Lambie (Tas.)
- NXT—Nick Xenophon, Stirling Griff and Skye Kakoschke-Moore (SA)
- PHON—Pauline Hanson and Malcolm Roberts (Qld), Brian Burston (NSW), and Rodney Culleton (WA) and
- Derryn Hinch’s Justice Party (DHJP)—Derryn Hinch (Vic.).

1. Eight Senators retired during the 44th Parliament: Bob Carr (ALP, NSW), Kate Lundy (ALP, ACT), John Faulkner (ALP, NSW), Brett Mason (LIB, Qld), Christine Milne (AG, Tas.), Penny Wright (AG, SA), Michael Ronaldson (LIB, Vic.) and Joe Bullock (ALP, WA); they were replaced by Deborah O’Neill (ALP, NSW), Katy Gallagher (ALP, ACT), Jenny McAllister (ALP, NSW), Joanna Lindgren (LIB, Qld), Nick McKim (AG, Tas.), Robert Simms (AG, SA), James Paterson (LIB, Vic.) and Pat Dodson (ALP, WA), respectively.
John Madigan (IND, Vic.), Glenn Lazarus (Glenn Lazarus Team, Qld), Ricky Muir (Australian Motoring Enthusiast Party, Vic.) and Zhenya Wang (Palmer United Party, WA) were defeated at the 2016 general election; their terms ended on 9 May 2016 with the dissolution of the Parliament.  

Table 1: 45th Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia party representation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>House of Representatives</th>
<th>Senate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pre-election</td>
<td>post-election</td>
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<tr>
<td>COALITION</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party of Australia</td>
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<td>60</td>
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<td>The Nationals</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Palmer United Party</td>
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<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian Motoring Enthusiast Party</td>
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<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Democratic Party</td>
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<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family First</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nick Xenophon Team</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauline Hanson’s One Nation</td>
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<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacqui Lambie Network</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glenn Lazarus Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>Derryn Hinch’s Justice Party</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td>Independent</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>150</td>
</tr>
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</table>


Gender

Following the 2016 election, the number of women in the House of Representatives rose from 40 (27 per cent) at the end of the 44th Parliament to 43 (29 per cent).

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2. Elected at the 2010 general election as a senator for the Democratic Labour Party (DLP), John Madigan left the DLP to become an Independent in September 2014. He unsuccessfully contested the 2016 election as an Independent Senator for Victoria.
3. Three Palmer United Party (PUP) senators were elected at the 2013 federal election and 2014 WA Senate election: Jacqui Lambie, Glenn Lazarus and Zhenya (Dio) Wang. Jacqui Lambie and Glenn Lazarus departed the PUP during the 44th Parliament—Lambie in November 2014 and Lazarus in March 2015. Wang and Lazarus unsuccessfully contested the 2016 election as PUP and Glenn Lazarus Team senators respectively. Senator Lambie was elected as a senator for the Jacqui Lambie Network at the 2016 election.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
The number of women in the Senate rose slightly to 30 senators (39 per cent), one more than at the end of the 44th Parliament. Overall, the number of women in Parliament has risen from 69 (31 per cent) to 73 (32 per cent).

For the first time at the commencement of a Parliament, all major parties have a female leader or deputy leader: Liberal Party deputy leader Julie Bishop MP (LIB, Curtin, WA); The Nationals deputy leader Senator Fiona Nash (NAT, NSW); ALP deputy leader Tanya Plibersek MP (ALP, Sydney, NSW); and Australian Greens co-deputy leader Senator Larissa Waters (AG, Qld).

**Milestones**

- Linda Burney (ALP, Barton, NSW) becomes the first Indigenous woman elected to the House of Representatives. Ms Burney was also the first Indigenous person to be elected to the NSW Parliament.

- Rebekha Sharkie (NXT, Mayo, SA) becomes the first person elected to the House of Representatives from NXT. The three NXT senators—Nick Xenophon, Stirling Griff and Skye Kakoschke-Moore (all from SA)—are also the first NXT candidates to be elected to the Senate.

- PHON returns to Parliament, securing Senate representation for the first time and gaining four seats. They will be held by party leader Pauline Hanson (Qld), Brian Burston (NSW), Malcolm Roberts (Qld) and Rodney Culleton (WA).

- Derryn Hinch becomes the first person elected to any Australian Parliament from DHJP. He was elected as senator for Victoria.