

Office of the Speaker



The Speaker

Historically, much of the tradition and dignity of parliament has centred on the Office of the Speaker. References to the Speaker in the English parliaments date back as early as 1377, when Sir Thomas Hungerford was the first to be called Mr Speaker. In early Westminster Parliaments, the Speaker was an agent of the King. However, the Speaker came to be regarded as the spokesperson of the English House of Commons, before the Sovereign. In accordance with the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, the first job of a new parliament following a general election is to elect a Speaker. In the Queensland Parliament, the Speaker is elected by a secret ballot involving all Members of Parliament. This is the only time there is a secret ballot in the Queensland Parliament.

Once the Speaker is elected, it is a Westminster tradition that two members 'drag' the Speaker to the chair, reminding the House of how dangerous the role was when the Speaker was a spokesperson of the Sovereign (king or queen) in the emerging English parliamentary system. The Speaker remains in office until the day before the Assembly's first sitting day after a general election, even if they have not contested the election themselves. The Speaker ceases to be Speaker if they resign, die or are removed by a vote of the Assembly. At that time, the Members must elect another Speaker before proceeding to any other business.

The Speaker's duties can be categorised as ceremonial, procedural and administrative. These duties are in addition to the responsibilities that the Speaker carries as a Member of Parliament representing an electorate.

Ceremonial duties

The Speaker represents the House in its relations with the Crown. The Speaker also acts as the representative of the House in its relations with other authorities and persons outside Parliament, including on ceremonial and formal occasions.

The Speaker receives delegations from other Parliaments, members of the diplomatic corps and other dignitaries on behalf of the House.

Procedural duties

The Speaker impartially chairs or presides over the meetings of the Parliament and calls members to speak. The Speaker maintains order in the House and ensures the rules of the Parliament (known as Standing Rules and Orders) are observed while the business of the House is conducted. The Speaker has a range of disciplinary measures to assist in this process, including ordering a Member to withdraw offensive comments and unparliamentary language, warning a Member and/or ordering them to withdraw from the Chamber for up to one hour or for the remainder of the day. The Speaker is assisted in presiding over the proceedings of the Parliament by the Deputy Speaker and a panel of Temporary Speakers. When Members vote on a question that is before the House, the Speaker 'puts the question' to the House and announces the results of each vote. If the vote is tied, the Speaker has a casting vote. If a parliamentary seat becomes vacant, the Speaker will issue the writs for a by-election.



 The Speaker's Chair in the Legislative Assembly.

Administrative duties

The Speaker is the head of the Parliamentary Service, which provides procedural, information, reporting, research and other support services to the Members of Parliament to assist them in fulfilling their constitutional and parliamentary responsibilities. The Speaker is also the Chair of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly which has responsibility for the Members' Code of Ethics, parliamentary powers rights and immunities, and the Standing Rules and Orders. The Speaker has a deliberative vote on this committee and a casting vote in the case of a tied vote.

Prayers and Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The reading of a prayer at the commencement of Parliament is another Westminster tradition. During the first session of the first Queensland Parliament in 1860, Mr Henry Jordan MLA, the Member for Brisbane North, introduced a motion to open each sitting day of Parliament with a prayer. The motion was approved 20 votes to 2. At the commencement of each sitting day, the Speaker opens proceedings by reading the Lord's Prayer. At the start of each sitting day, following the prayer, the Speaker acknowledges the traditional owners of the land upon which Parliament is assembled.

List of Speakers of the Queensland Parliament from 1859

22.05.1860–13.07.1870	Gilbert Elliott CMG
15.11.1870–21.06.1871	Arthur Macalister
07.11.1871–01.09.1873	Frederick Augustus Forbes
06.01.1874–20.07.1876	William Henry Walsh
25.07.1876–26.07.1883	Henry Edward King
07.11.1883–04.04.1888	William Henry Groom
12.06.1888–05.04.1893	Albert Norton
25.05.1893–15.02.1899	Sir Alfred Sandlings Cowley
16.05.1899–15.09.1903	Sir Arthur Morgan
17.09.1903–11.04.1907	Sir Alfred Sandlings Cowley
23.07.1907–20.01.1909	John Leahy
29.06.1909–10.03.1911	Joshua Thomas Bell
11.07.1911–15.04.1915	William Drayton Armstrong
12.07.1915–09.09.1919	William McCormack
09.09.1919–09.01.1920	William Lennon
09.01.1920–11.05.1929	William Bertram
20.08.1929–11.06.1932	Charles Taylor
15.08.1932–24.03.1939	George Pollock
08.08.1939–31.07.1944	Edward Joseph Hanson
01.08.1944–04.10.1950	Samuel John Brassington
10.10.1950–03.08.1957	John Henry Mann

27.08.1957–15.06.1960	Sir Alan Roy Fletcher
23.08.1960–25.05.1972	Sir David Eric Nicholson
02.08.1972–28.10.1974	William Horace Lonergan
29.10.1974–04.07.1979	James Edward Hiram Houghton
07.08.1979–17.10.1983	Selwyn John Muller
22.11.1983–18.09.1986	John Herbert Warner
17.02.1987–25.11.1987	Kevin Rowson Lingard
02.12.1987–05.07.1989	Lionel William Powell
05.07.1989–19.10.1989	Kevin Rowson Lingard
27.02.1990–02.04.1996	Demetrios Fouras
02.04.1996–20.06.1998	Neil John Turner
28.07.1998–21.07.2005	Raymond Keith Hollis
09.08.2005–10.10.2006	Anthony Mcgrady
10.10.2006–20.04.2009	Michael Francis Reynolds AM
21.04.2009–14.04.2012	Reginald John Mickel
15.05.2012–23.03.2015	Fiona Stuart Simpson
24.03.2015–12.02.2018	Peter Wellington
13.02.2018–25.11.2024	Curtis Pitt
26.11.2024–present	Pat Weir