



Role of the Opposition

The Opposition in Parliament

The Opposition is the largest non-government party or coalition of parties in the Legislative Assembly.

The Role of the Opposition

The opposition's main role is to question the government of the day and hold them accountable. Opportunities for scrutinising the policies and administration of the government are provided in Question Time, the Address-in-Reply debate, Budget debates, debates on legislation, notices of motion and No Confidence Motions. Members of the opposition who are members of parliamentary committees have a further opportunity to scrutinise new legislation as part of the committee process.

The opposition also utilises the media to reach the electorate with its views and to establish an identity as an alternative government.

The Leader of the Opposition

In the Queensland Parliament, official recognition was given to the position of Leader of the Opposition in 1909 through the granting of a salary to that office in the amount of 10 pounds per week.

The Leader of the Opposition is elected by opposition Members of Parliament as their leader and spokesperson. Although not constitutionally recognised, the Leader of the Opposition is provided with a special salary, entitlements and facilities.

Traditional Role of the Leader of the Opposition

The duties of the Leader of the Opposition include:

- leading the opposition in parliamentary and policy debate;
- holding the government accountable and presenting the views of an alternative government;
- chairing the meetings of shadow cabinet;
- leading and publicising the development of party policy;
- identifying as an alternative premier;

- leading the party in an election; and
- representing their electorate.

Shadow Cabinet

The opposition appoints shadow ministers who, with the Leader of the Opposition, collectively form a shadow cabinet. The role of a shadow minister is to follow closely the areas and responsibilities and activities of government ministers. It is also the duty of the shadow cabinet to respond to government policy initiatives and offer alternative policies to the electorate.

Democracy at Work

The role of an opposition is important. The effectiveness of Parliament largely depends on the strength of the opposition.

Opposition Leaders, from 1898 - present

30.08.1898 - 12.05.1899	GLASSEY, T
Australian Labor Party	
12.05.1899 - 01.12.1899	DAWSON, A
Australian Labor Party	
01.12.1899 - 07.12.1899	PHILP, R
Ministerialist	
07.12.1899 - 16.07.1900	DAWSON, A
Australian Labor Party	
16.07.1900 - 17.09.1903	BROWNE, WH
Australian Labor Party	
17.09.1903 - 28.06.1904	PHILP, R
Opposition	
28.06.1904 - 27.08.1904	RUTLEDGE, A
Opposition	
19.09.1904 - 19.11.1907	PHILP, R
Opposition	
19.11.1907 - 15.02.1908	KIDSTON, W
Ministerialist	
15.02.1908 - 29.10.1908	PHILP, R
Opposition	

Queensland Parliament Factsheet

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16.11.1908 - 06.09.1912	BOWMAN, D	Australian Labor Party	
06.09.1912 - 22.05.1915	RYAN, TJ	National Party	COOPER, TR
24.06.1915 - 08.09.1915	MACARTNEY, E	National Party	BORBIDGE, RE
08.09.1915 - 27.06.1917	TOLMIE, J	Australian Labor Party	BEATTIE, PD
27.06.1917 - 15.02.1918	TOLMIE, J	National Party	BORBIDGE, RE
15.02.1918 - 28.01.1920	MACARTNEY, E	National Party	HORAN, MJ
28.01.1920 - 28.07.1920	VOWLES, WJ	National Party	SPRINGBORG, LJ
28.07.1920 - 11.07.1923	VOWLES, WJ	National Party	SEENEY, JW
11.07.1923 - 09.04.1924	TAYLOR, C	National Party	SPRINGBORG, LJ
09.04.1924 - 12.05.1925	MOORE, AE	Liberal National Party	SPRINGBORG, LJ
2.05.1925 - 15.12.1925	MOORE, AE	Liberal National Party	LANGBROEK, J-PH
15.12.1925 - 11.05.1929	MOORE, AE	Liberal National Party	SEENEY, JW
27.05.1929 - 11.06.1932	SMITH, WF	Liberal National Party	PALASZCZUK, A
15.07.1936 - 21.05.1941	MAHER, EB	Labor Party	SPRINGBORG, LJ
21.05.1941 - 23.10.1945	NICKLIN, GFR	Liberal National Party	NICHOLLS, T
23.10.1945 - 03.08.1957	NICKLIN, GFR	Liberal National Party	FRECKLINGTON, D
15.08.1957 - 29.03.1958	WOOD, LA	Liberal National Party	CRISAFULLI, D
14.04.1958 - 18.08.1958	DONALD, J	Liberal National Party	
18.08.1958 - 11.10.1966	DUGGAN, JE	Liberal National Party	
12.10.1966 - 01.07.1974	HOUSTON, JW	Liberal National Party	
01.07.1974 - 07.12.1974	TUCKER, PJ	Liberal National Party	
19.12.1974 - 28.11.1978	BURNS, TJ	Liberal National Party	
28.11.1978 - 20.10.1982	CASEY, ED	Liberal National Party	
20.10.1982 - 29.08.1984	WRIGHT, KW	Liberal National Party	
29.08.1984 - 02.03.1988	WARBUTON, NG	Liberal National Party	
02.03.1988 - 02.12.1989	GOSS, WK	Liberal National Party	