



The Role of a Member of Parliament

Performing many different roles

The role of a Member of Parliament (MP) is a multi-functional one. They have a responsibility to three primary groups in their capacity as:

- the elected representative of an electorate
- a Member of Parliament and
- a Member of a particular political party (the exception being for Independents). Many Members also work on parliamentary committees, which examine the Government's actions in detail. Up to 19 of the 93 Members may be Ministers. This includes the Premier who is the leader of the Government.

Working in the electorate

Members of Parliament are the representatives of all of the constituents in their electorate. Their responsibilities are therefore often wide-ranging. The ways in which Members typically serve their constituents includes:

- giving assistance and advice to those in difficulty
- acting as a lobbyist for local interest groups
- being a communicator for their party's policies and
- playing an active community role.

To meet these responsibilities, local Members need to be active in their electorates to keep in touch with what is happening and to get to know constituents' views and problems. Members must also give constituents help and advice, communicate the needs of their region to the Government, and promote their policies to the community.

Members provide a direct link between their constituents and the Parliament, and members

in large electorates can spend a lot of time travelling within their electorate. Each member has an office in their electorate, and those with the largest electorates have two. Constituents often bring their concerns to their local Member of Parliament. Personal intervention in a constituent matter by a Member may result in priority attention from government departments. If a matter is particularly urgent or serious, the Member may approach the relevant Minister directly, or may even bring the matter before the Parliament by asking a question of the responsible Minister. The Member may also sponsor a petition about the issue in question.

Working in the Parliament

Members' parliamentary functions may include:

- enacting and debating proposed new legislation
- scrutinising the actions of the Government and government departments as members of parliamentary committees
- participating in general debates in the Chamber
- attending parliamentary party meetings and
- performing other duties within the parliamentary complex such as Deputy Speaker roles.

Participating in general debates in the Chamber is a major parliamentary occupation. Members regularly speak either in support of, or in opposition to, a piece of legislation. In Parliament, Members may also address constituent concerns during debates, ask questions of Ministers during Question Time and work to create or amend laws. They may also seek to have matters referred to a parliamentary committee for investigation.

Queensland Parliament Factsheet

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Member of a political party

Most Members of Parliament belong to a political party and are expected to contribute to the development and amendment of their party policies. At the start of each parliamentary sitting week, MPs (with the exception of Independent members) will attend their respective party meetings where they will:

- plan strategies
- develop policies
- scrutinise proposed legislation and
- discuss parliamentary business.

In their electorates, Members' party responsibilities may include:

- attending branch party meetings
- keeping their fellow party members well informed on policy decisions and other relevant information
- participating in party debate at branch level and
- generally representing the party at the electorate level.