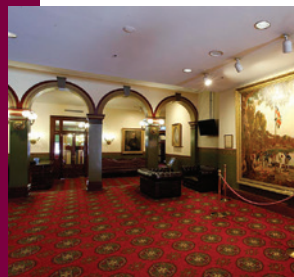


The Legislative Council chamber is a prefabricated cast-iron building manufactured in Scotland and originally shipped to Victoria. It was erected in 1856 to accommodate the Council when the bicameral parliamentary system was created. In the early 1980s the chamber was restored to its 1892 appearance.

- The Legislative Council of the Parliament of New South Wales has 42 Members, each serving eight year terms. Half stand for re-election every four years at the same time as the general election for the Legislative Assembly.
- Members are elected on a state-wide basis in proportion to the total vote their party receives. Consequently, no major party or parties have held a majority since 1988 and the House has a broad and diverse representation of minor parties and groups.
- Most bills commence in the Legislative Assembly and the Council is primarily a House of Review, taking a second look at, and often amending, bills. However, apart from money bills, bills can originate in either House.

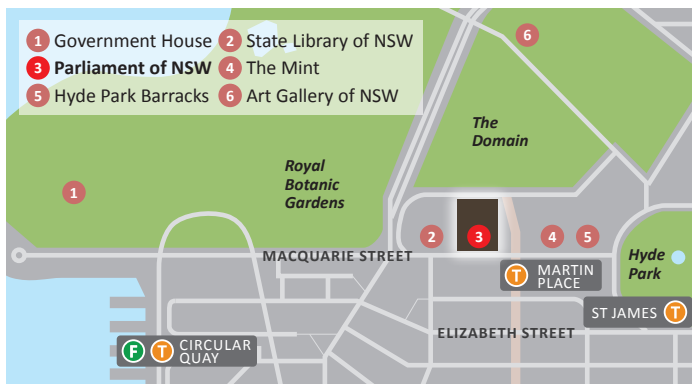
Legislative Council chamber



Legislative Council foyer

- The powers and procedures of both Houses of Parliament are broadly similar although the Council cannot block the annual appropriation (Budget) bill for government services. After their passage through both Houses, bills go to the Governor of New South Wales for assent to become law.

The Parliament of New South Wales acknowledges the traditional owners of this land, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation



VISIT THE PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

The Parliament of New South Wales is on Macquarie Street, Sydney, almost opposite Martin Place.

The Parliament, including displays and information, is open weekdays from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm.

On non-sitting days, regular legislative chamber tours are conducted. Public tours are held on Mondays and Fridays at 1.30 pm and every weekday during school holidays. **Group tours** should be booked by phoning **02 9230 3444**.

On sitting days, visitors are welcome to view proceedings from the public galleries.

Visits are free.

The Parliament has a range of dining options from casual café to fine dining at Strangers' Restaurant – where strangers become friends. Parts of the building are also available for public functions.

FIND OUT MORE

WEBSITE [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au)  
Information about Parliament, members, sitting times, Hansard, bills, committee reports and educational resources.

MAIL Parliament of New South Wales  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

PHONE (02) 9230 2111 – Switchboard  
(02) 9230 2319 – Legislative Council  
(02) 9230 2219 – Legislative Assembly  
(02) 9230 2047 – Parliamentary Education  
(02) 9230 2924 – Catering and functions

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[DPS.Education@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:DPS.Education@parliament.nsw.gov.au)  
[DPS.Catering@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:DPS.Catering@parliament.nsw.gov.au)



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES



AUSTRALIA'S  
FIRST PARLIAMENT

- The Parliament of New South Wales is the law-making body for New South Wales and is Australia's first and oldest parliament. It consists of two democratically elected Houses.
- The Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of New South Wales is the seat of Government, which is formed by the party or parties with the majority of the House's 93 Members.
- Elections take place every four years using an optional preferential voting system. Members each represent a single electorate.
- The Premier and most Ministers are members of the Legislative Assembly so most bills and government business are introduced there.
- The colours of the chambers follow the colours of the United Kingdom's Parliament: green for the House of Commons and red for the House of Lords.

Legislative Assembly chamber



The Legislative Assembly chamber is Australia's oldest legislative chamber. Originally built for the Legislative Council in 1843, it has been used continuously by the Legislative Assembly since it was created in 1856 when the bicameral (two houses) parliamentary system was introduced. In the early 1980s the chamber was restored to its 1908 appearance.



Legislative Assembly foyer

## FROM A HOSPITAL BUILT ON RUM...

Sydney was founded as a British convict colony in 1788, but by 1824, with many free settlers in the colony, a small Legislative Council was established to assist the Governor, a first step towards democratic government in Australia.

Sydney's first permanent hospital was completed in 1816. To fund it, the Governor, Lachlan Macquarie, let the building contractors import and sell 60,000 gallons of rum. Two of the Rum Hospital's original three buildings survive, one as part of the Parliament of New South Wales.

In 1829 the enlarged Legislative Council began to meet in the Chief Surgeon's Quarters and from that time this site has remained the centre of the Parliament.

In 1843 and again in 1856 legislative chambers were added to meet the needs of the increasingly democratic colony. Facilities such as offices, dining rooms and a library were later added. Plans for a completely new building were always abandoned because of cost.



Today, only the two outer buildings of the 1816 "Rum Hospital" remain on Macquarie Street. The northern wing shown above, once the Chief Surgeon's quarters, became the nucleus of the Parliament in 1829.

Old and new parts of the Parliament are both separated and linked by the Fountain Court area and the roof top garden.

Finally in 1974, rebuilding began. A jumble of buildings were replaced with a 12 storey block linked by the Fountain Court to the preserved Macquarie Street buildings. The historic chambers, library, foyers and former Surgeon's Quarters were meticulously restored, and remain today as the heart and public face of the Parliament of New South Wales.

## ... TO A CONTEMPORARY CORNERSTONE OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT

- The Parliament of New South Wales is directly elected by the people to make state laws, control state finances, and discuss matters of importance to the people of New South Wales. Parliamentary elections determine the **State Government** formed by the party or parties with majority support in the Legislative Assembly.
- Parliament is the **legislative** arm of the three branches in the system of government. The other two are the **executive** (the Cabinet) and the **judiciary** (judges and courts). Each has separate functions and acts to balance the powers of the other.

The Fountain Court



The Fountain Court features a central water sculpture by Robert Woodward. In the surrounding area temporary displays of artwork and items of historical and cultural interest are always on public view.

As part of the reconciliation process, and in recognition of the traditional owners of the land of New South Wales, the west wall of the Fountain Court is dedicated as a permanent area for the display of works of Aboriginal artists.

- The Premier and Ministers (the Cabinet) develop policy and administer the laws through government departments. They remain members of Parliament and are responsible to it.
- Of Australia's **three levels of government** – Federal, State and Local – the States are responsible for most day-to-day matters like education, health, police, roads and transport. The Federal Government deals with national matters like defence, foreign affairs, trade, communications and economic policy.