

Barton Deakin Brief: Final Senate composition

21 April 2017

This Brief provides an update on the composition of the Senate, following the replacement of two Senators since the July 2016 federal election and a change of Party for another Senator.

This week, the High Court found Lucy Gichuhi of the Family First Party eligible to be the new Senator for South Australia, filling a vacancy left by former Family First Senator Bob Day. She will be sworn in on May 9, when the Senate meets next.

This followed the recent replacement of Senator Rod Culleton (One Nation) with Peter Georgiou (also One Nation), after a High Court decision in February found that Senator Culleton had not been eligible for election.

On 7 February 2017, Senator Bernardi resigned from the Liberal Party and announced that he would represent the Australian Conservatives.

Senate Composition

There are 76 Senators, comprised of:

Coalition	29
Labor	26
Greens	9
One Nation	4
Nick Xenophon Party	3
David Leyonhjelm	1
Jacqui Lambie	1
Cory Bernardi	1
Derryn Hinch	1
Lucy Gichuhi	1

For the government to pass legislation it needs 39 votes.

Where the Coalition faces opposition from the Labor Party and the Greens (ie, quite often), it needs the support of 10 of the remaining 12 crossbenchers. Where the government requires 10 of the 12 crossbench votes, the positions of One Nation (4 votes) and Nick Xenophon Team (3 votes) become critical.



Short and Long-term Senators

Normally Senators have six year terms, but the double-dissolution election in July, which saw all Senate positions created afresh, created the need for half of the Senators to serve three year terms and half serve six year terms. State senators have therefore been divided into two classes: short-term senators whose terms expire on 30 June 2019, and long-term senators whose terms expire on 30 June 2022. On 31 August the Senate decided to allocate senators according to the order of their election. Details of senators' terms of service are [available on this page](#).

Senator Lucy Gichuhi (Family First), South Australia

Ms Gichuhi was born in central Kenya and migrated to Adelaide, South Australia in 1999 with her husband and three children. She became an Australian citizen in 2001. She received her Bachelor of Law from the University of South Australia in November 2015, and also holds a Bachelor of Commerce.

She has previously worked at Ernst and Young and the SA Auditor-General's department where she developed programs introducing migrants and international students to the state. Ms Gichuhi has also volunteered as a lawyer with the Women's Legal Service in Adelaide.

Family First are a socially conservative party and have regularly voted with the Coalition government. Ms Gichuhi has stated that her Christian faith is the backbone of her political beliefs and she is firmly against government handouts. Ms Gichuhi has said will seek to empower new and emerging communities in hopes of making them feel and participate as Australians. Ms Gichuhi has not commented on whether she would support the Coalition's signature policies, or back spending cuts which have been blocked in the Upper House.

Western Australian Senator Peter Georgiou (One Nation), Western Australia

Mr Georgiou was born and raised in Australia of immigrant parents. He has worked in the electrical contracting industry for 24 years and has run a successful small electrical contracting business for over 16 years.

One Nation are a socially conservative party and have a crucial block of four votes in the Senate. Mr Georgiou has indicated his policy intentions to simplify government red tape, reduce costs to small business owners and reward owners of small businesses to encourage expansion and employment of Australian workers.

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