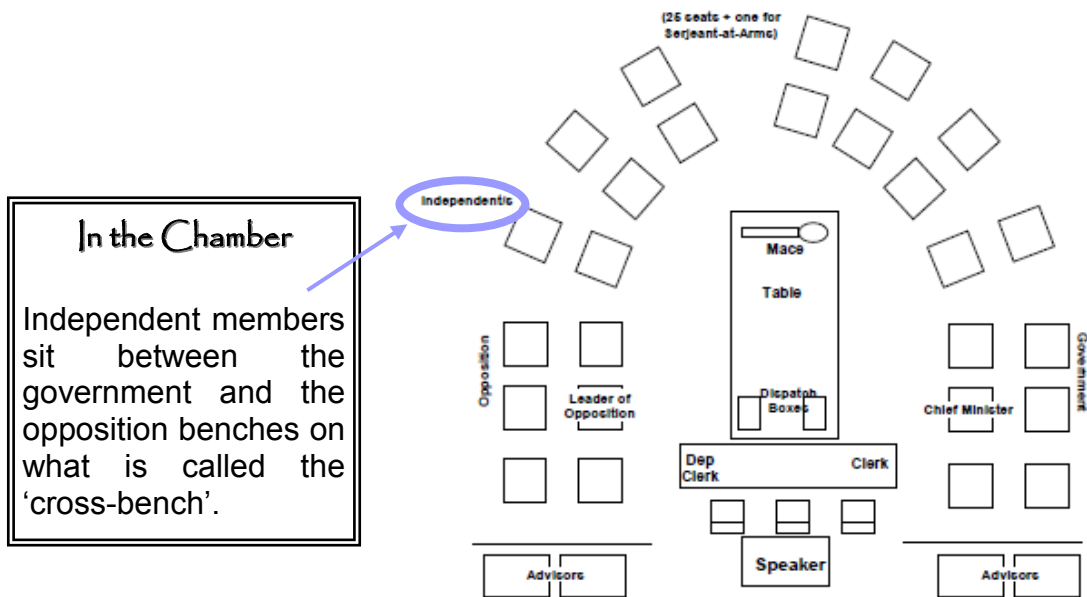


INDEPENDENTS

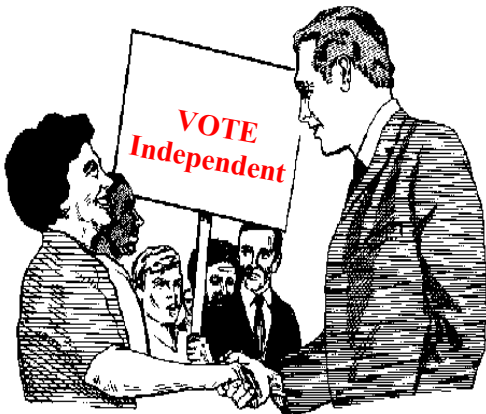
Independents are members of parliament who do not belong to a political party and therefore are not bound by the policies of a party. They are free to make their own decisions and so sometimes vote with the government and sometimes with the opposition. On some occasions they abstain and do not vote at all.

In parliament, independent members do not always have as much influence as members working together in a political party. However, if the numbers of government and opposition are nearly equal, the views and decisions of an independent member may be very important when it comes to voting for legislation or supporting policies.

Independents can introduce their own bills into Parliament. These are called private member's bills. Independents introduce their own bills so that they can suggest new laws about issues that they think are important and which the government is not addressing.



Chamber Floor Plan of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly



Getting Elected

It can be difficult for independent candidates to win elections because they may not have the financial resources or public profile of political parties. Independent members are usually elected because they are well known and respected in their community and have a strong personal following.