

SDG WEBINAR SERIES

SHOULD PARLIAMENT BE A FULL-TIME INSTITUTION?

7 JULY 2021 | 10:00 – 11:30 AM

Maha Balakrishnan

Parliamentary Consultant
National Democratic Institute

Email: mahabalakrishnan@gmail.com

Number of sitting days in selected Lower Houses in 2018

YEAR (seats)	UK (650)	Canada (338)	New Zealand (120)	Australia (151)	South Africa (400)	Japan (465)	Germany (709)	United States (435)
2018	154 ¹	127 ²	93 ³	65 ⁴	92 ⁵	150 ⁶	104 ²	124 ²

1. *Source: UK Parliament*

2. Number of scheduled sittings. *Source: Institute for Government's Parliamentary Monitor 2018 report (September 2018).*

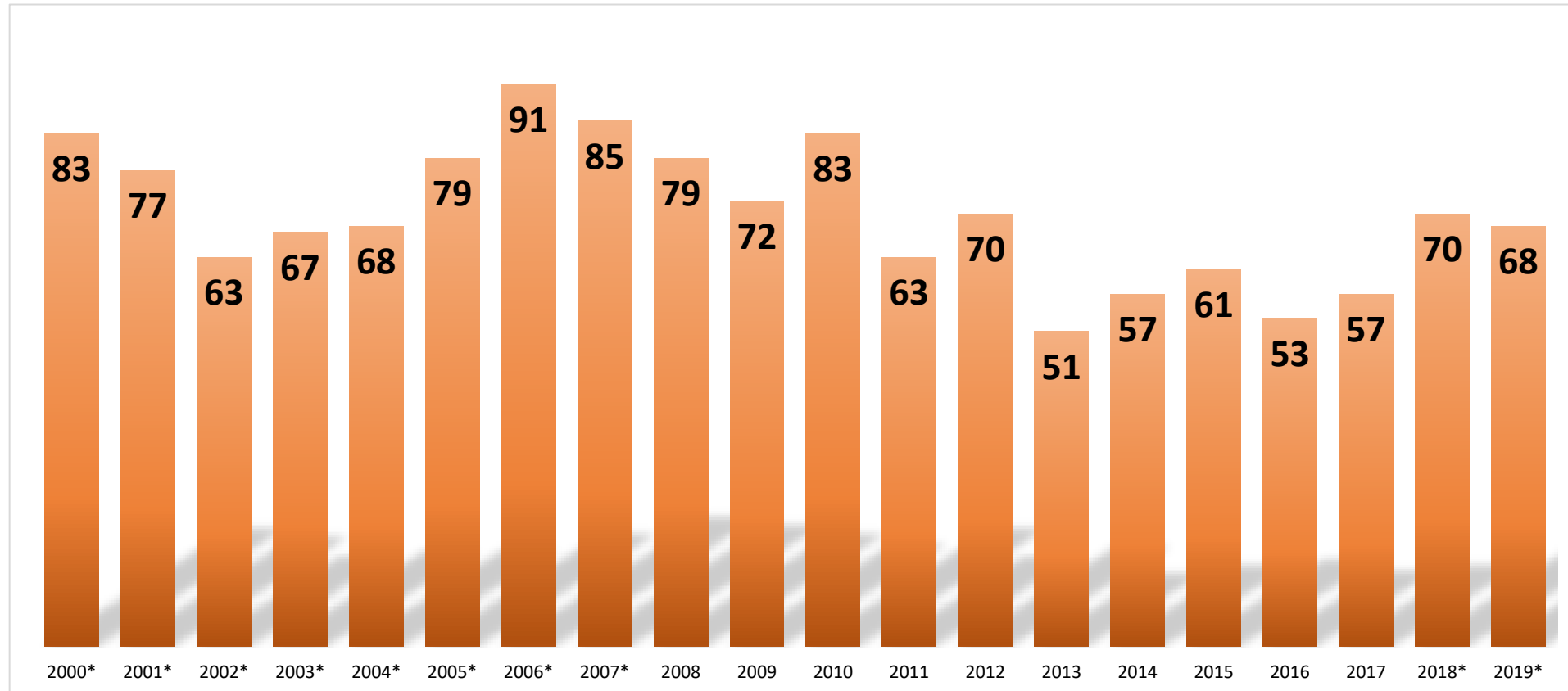
3. Number of scheduled sittings. *Source: New Zealand Parliament*

4. Days on which the House commenced a sitting, rather than days on which the House sat. On occasion a sitting may continue over more than one day. *Source: Department of the House of Representatives, Australia.*

5. Based on plenary sittings. *Source: Parliament of the Republic of South Africa.*

6. Based on precedent. *Source: Institute for Government's Parliamentary Monitor 2018 report (September 2018).*

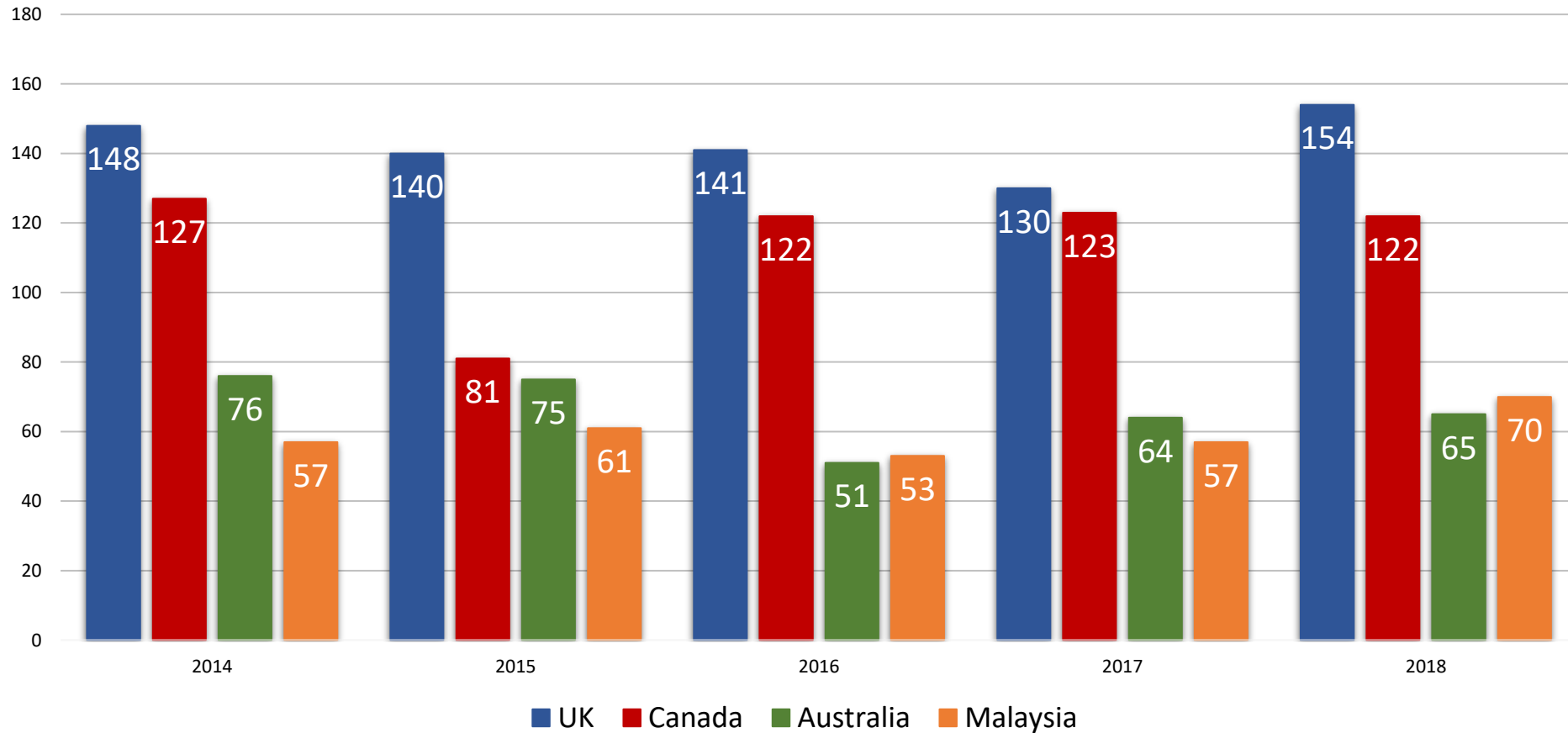
Number of sitting days of the Dewan Rakyat



Source (except for *): Liew Ching Tong MP (7 March 2017): <https://liewchintong.com/2017/03/07/parliament-should-sit-for-at-least-80-days-a-year/>

* Source: Dewan Rakyat Order Paper and Hansard Records, Parlimen Malaysia.

Number of sitting days compared, 2014-2018



Source:

UK: UK Parliament

Canada: House of Commons, Canada

Australia: House of Representatives Chamber Research Office, Australia

Malaysia: Liew Ching Tong MP (7 March 2017) and Parlimen Malaysia

Election years:

UK: 2015 & 2017

Canada: 2015

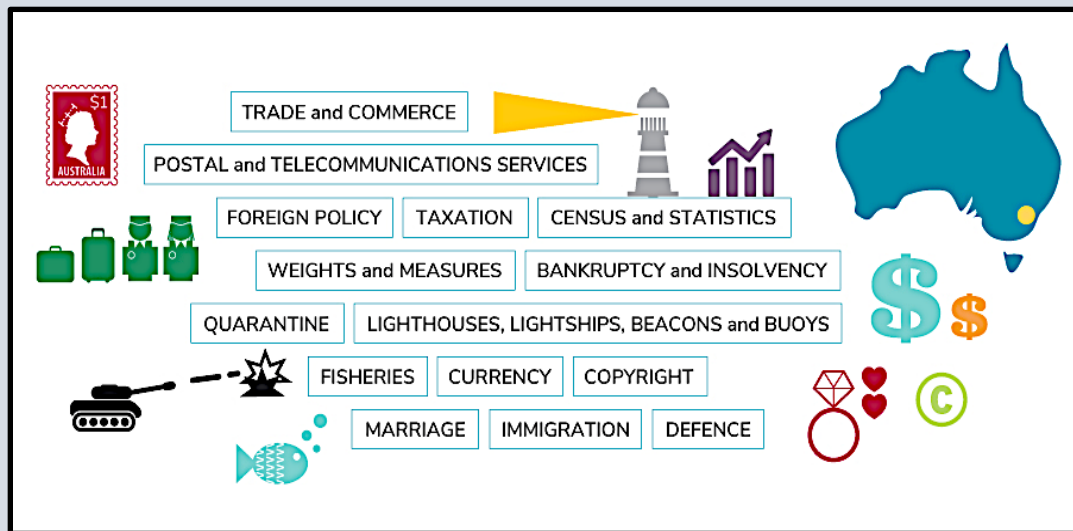
Australia: 2016

Malaysia: 2018

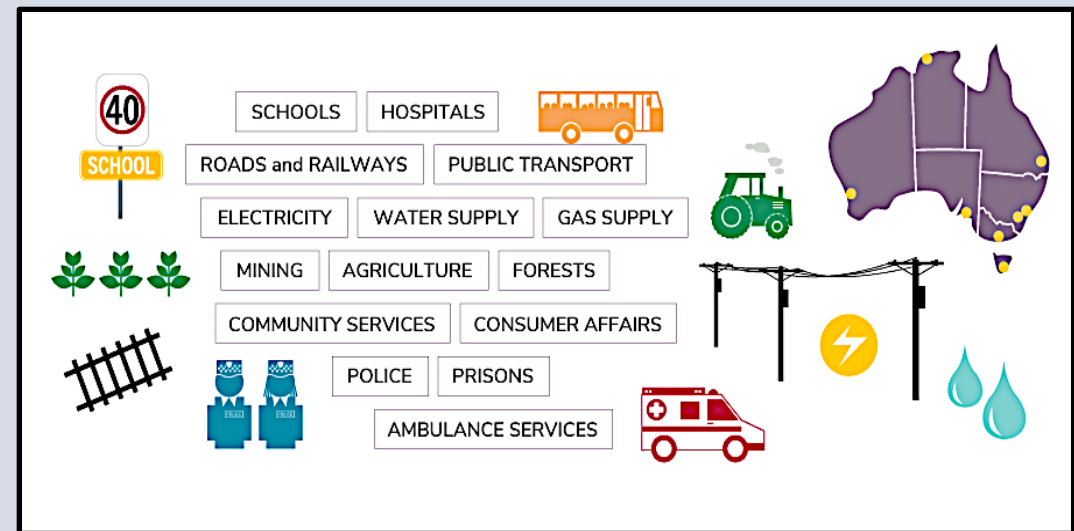
Caveats to note when comparing the Australian data

1. Australia's Lower House is a smaller legislative body than the Dewan Rakyat.
 - ❖ Australia's House of Representatives has 151 MPs. The Dewan Rakyat has 222 MPs (220 currently).
2. Australia's Federal Parliament has smaller legislative mandate than Malaysia's Federal Parliament.
 - ❖ In Australia's system of federalism, power is more decentralised. The federal Parliament has less legislative jurisdiction and the legislatures of the 6 states and 2 territories of Australia have more jurisdiction, compared to the distribution of powers between the Malaysian Parliament and its state legislatures.

Law-making powers of the federal Parliament



Law-making powers of the state parliaments



Australian House of Representatives: Number of sitting days, bills, motions, questions and petitions, 2014-2018

Year	Sitting days ^o	Total bills presented [^]	Private Members' bills [#]	Private Members' motions moved	Motions by Government Members	Motions by Non-Government Members	Total Questions	Questions in writing	Questions without notice ⁺	Total Petitions presented
2014	76	222	11	108	49	59	2077	644	1433	104
2015	75	208	17	129	60	69	2816	1445	1371	104
2016*	51	186	27	83	34	49	1656	711	945	101
2017	64	218	33	119	52	67	1410	255	1155	329
2018	65	226	42	112	54	58	1644	340	1304	317

Source: House of Representatives Chamber Research Office, Australia

* Election year

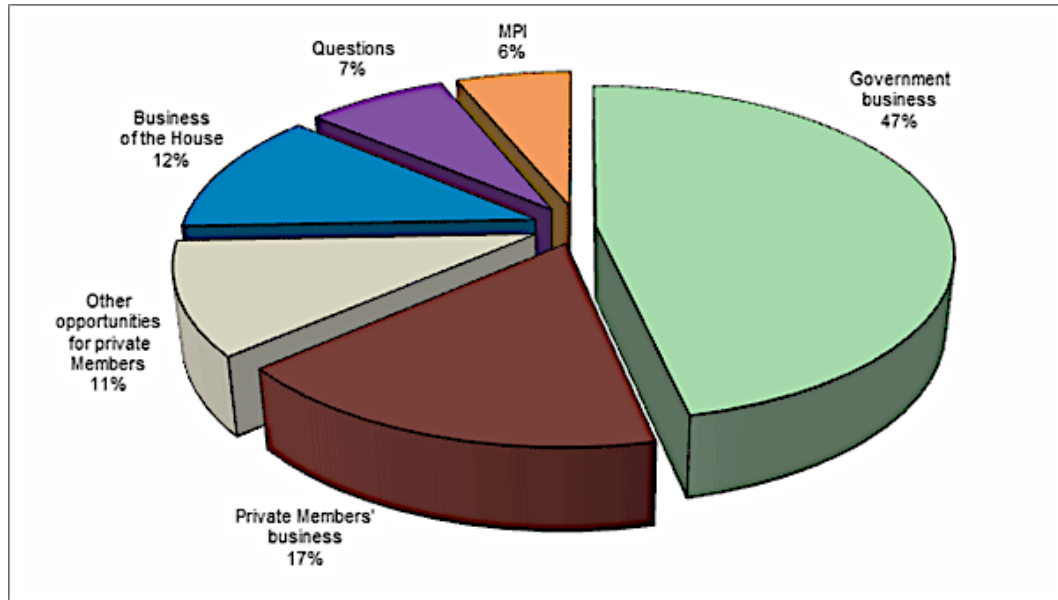
^o Days on which the House commenced a sitting, rather than days on which the House sat. On occasion a sitting may continue over more than one day.

[^] Includes bills from the Senate presented in the House.

[#] Includes private Senators' bills presented in the House. Does not include bills sponsored by the Speaker.

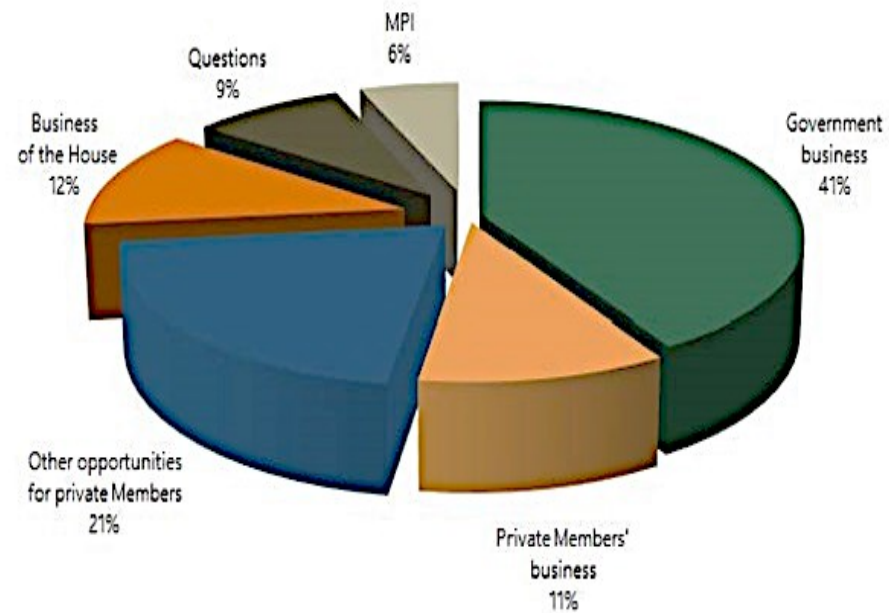
⁺ Excludes supplementary questions and questions ruled out of order.

Business conducted in the House of Representatives, 43rd & 46th Parliament



43rd Parliament
[28 September 2010 - 5 August 2013]

46th Parliament
[2 July 2019 - 24 June 2021]



Source: House of Representatives Chamber Research Office, Australia