

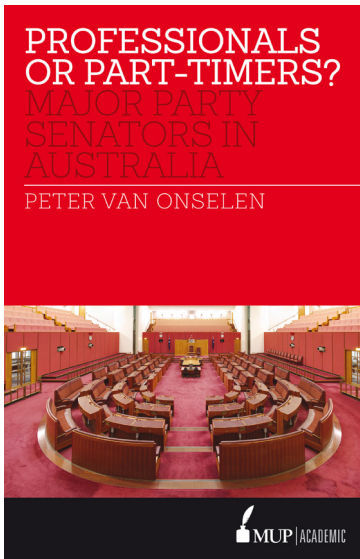
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PROFESSIONALS OR PART-TIMERS? Major Party Senators in Australia

By Peter van Onselen

While the minor party and independent senators might attract media attention, the overwhelming majority of Australia's upper house members are affiliated with the major political parties. These senators are highly partisan: they are dependent on the party for re-election and play a potentially vital role in assisting their parties to secure the maximum number of House of Representative seats, acting as 'shock troops' in marginal seat campaigning.

How does this impact the way these senators go about their business? How do they serve their party in the pursuit of lower house seats, the result of which determines who forms government?

Professionals or Part-timers? examines the electoral professionalism of major party senators, as well as how they deal with the sometimes competing interests of factionalism and personal ambition.

Peter van Onselen is an Australian academic, author and political journalist. He is the contributing editor at *The Australian* newspaper and a presenter at Sky News. In 2011 he was appointed a Professor and Foundation Chair of Journalism at the University of Western Australia having previously been an Associate Professor and discipline chair in politics and government at Edith Cowan University.

Van Onselen has authored or edited three books, including the best selling *John Winston Howard: The Biography*. His various roles include writing a weekly column in the *Weekend Australian* and the *Sunday Times* newspapers as well as hosting Sky News' Sunday morning political interview program, *Australian Agenda*.

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