

The debating chamber of the New Zealand House of Representatives is entered from the members' lobby onto the floor of the House. The first desk is the *Hansard* table where the reporters recording the speeches from the members sit. Immediately beyond that is the table of the House on which all formal and others papers submitted to the House are placed or 'tabled'. The Clerk of the House also sits at the far end of the table immediately below the Speaker's chair. Under the canopy capped by the coat of arms is the chair where the Speaker of the House of Representatives sits when the full House meets. All members are required to address their speeches and remarks, in the House, to the chair and not directly to any other member of the House.

The layout of the chamber follows the Westminster parliamentary tradition. The rows of seats on the Speaker's right-hand side are occupied by the government members. The seats to the Speaker's left are the opposition's benches. The prime minister sits at the second bench from the Speaker's chair. Opposite that bench is the leader of the opposition, who is the leader of the largest parliamentary party not in government.

The balcony area immediately above the Speaker's chair is the press gallery where news-media representatives accredited to Parliament are entitled to sit and report on debates and proceedings in the House. On the left and right of the press gallery are the public galleries where members of the public may sit and observe the House and listen to debates. Opposite the press gallery is the Speaker's gallery, which is reserved for special visitors to Parliament. Immediately below the Speaker's gallery, on the right-hand side, is the broadcasting box from which all debates in the House are broadcast live to air.

The debating chamber is a major heritage area and has changed little since it was first used in 1918. The carved wreaths on the balustrades of the galleries commemorate the battles fought by New Zealanders in the First World War. Beneath them are fern-leaf emblems naming battles in the Second World War and the Malaysia, Korea and Vietnam campaigns. The two bronze sculptures of camellias entwined with puhoehoe were installed in 1993 to commemorate the centenary of women having the right to vote in New Zealand.