

Blain By-Election

April 2014

On 20 February 2014 former Northern Territory Chief Minister the Hon Terry Mills MLA announced his resignation from the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. As a result, a by-election for the seat of Blain will be held on 12 April 2014. Mr Mills has held the seat of Blain since 1999.

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Background to the by-election

Following the retirement of the Hon Barry Coulter MLA in 1999, Terry Mills was elected to the seat of Blain, in Palmerston, in a by-election. In August 2012, Mr Mills was elected as Chief Minister of the Northern Territory following the CLP's success in the Territory election.

On 6 March, Mr Mills offered the Hon Adam Giles MLA the position of Deputy Chief Minister. Mr Giles rejected the offer and unsuccessfully challenged Mr Mills for the leadership.

On 13 March 2013, while Mr Mills was on a trade visit to Japan, Mr Giles with the support of the Hon Dave Tollner MLA successfully challenged for the leadership. As a result, Mr Mills was replaced as Chief Minister by Mr Giles.

On 20 February 2014 Mr Mills announced his resignation on the floor of the Assembly.

Current composition of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly

The Country Liberal Party currently holds 13 seats. Labor holds 8 seats, one seat is held by independent Gerry Wood MLA and three seats are held by Indigenous Independents (former-CLP).

The last territory election was held on Saturday 25 August 2012.

At the election, the 11-year Australian Labor Party government led by Chief Minister the Hon Paul Henderson MLA was defeated by the opposition Country Liberal Party led by then-Opposition Leader Terry Mills MLA with a gain of four seats. Labor lost the remote seats of Arafura, Arnhem, Daly and Stuart, while retaining their more urban seats that were picked up at the 2001 election.

A by-election for the seat of Wanguri was held on 16 February 2013 following the resignation of former Chief Minister the Hon Paul Henderson MLA. The by-election saw a 2-party preferred swing to Labor of 12.4 per cent, with Labor's candidate Nicole Manison elected with nearly 70 per cent of the primary vote.

On Saturday 5 April three members of the CLP party room—Alison Anderson, Larissa Lee and Francis Xavier Kurrupuwu—announced their resignation from the party. These MLAs will move to the cross benches as Independents but intend to form a new regional Territory party.

As such, the CLP now effectively have a one-seat majority. If the CLP is not successful at the Blain by-election, it will require the support of Independent MLA Gerry Wood or the former CLP-Independents to maintain the confidence of the Assembly.

Profile of the seat of Blain

The electorate of Blain is based in the southern parts of Palmerston and takes in the suburbs of Moulden, Woodroffe, Zuccoli and the western half of Rosebery. Since its creation in 1997 the seat has been held by the CLP.

A map of the division is available [here](#).

Although the seat has consistently remained a CLP seat, the margin by which the CLP has won has fluctuated a great deal over the past 15 years. At its strongest in 1997, the CLP has achieved 73.8 per cent of the two-party preferred count. At the last by-election in 1999 the CLP suffered a 20 per cent swing and this margin was reduced to 53.3 per cent, briefly rendering Blain a marginal seat.

Election	First Preference %			2-Party %	
	CLP	ALP	OTH	CLP	ALP
1997	73.8	26.2		73.8	26.2
1999 (by)	46.4	40.5	13.1	53.3	46.7
2001	64	29.3	6.8	66.7	33.3
2005	51.9	38	10.1	57.2	42.8
2008	61.6	38.4		61.6	38.4
2012	61.6	33.6	4.9	63.2	36.8

2012 results

Candidate	Party	Votes	% Vote	Swing
CLP	Terry Mills	2 529	63.2	+ 2.6
ALP	Geoff Bahnert	1 470	36.8	- 2.6

Candidates

Nathan Barrett—Country Liberal Party

Nathan Barrett has lived in Palmerston for 20 years. Mr Barrett previously worked as a school economics teacher and also ran a small family business for three years. He is now a port worker and works at East Arm Port.

Geoff Bahnert—Australian Labor Party

Geoff Bahnert was the Labor candidate in this seat at the 2012 Territory election. Mr Bahnert grew up in Adelaide where he played state and national baseball and AFL. After working as a butcher, Mr Bahnert moved to the Territory in 1985 to play baseball with Waratahs and joined the Northern Territory Police. He currently serves as the NT boss of Adults Surviving Child Abuse (ACSA).

Matthew Cranitch—AUE/Independent

Matthew Cranitch is currently President of the NT branch of the Australian Education Union, which has been fighting the NT Government over staffing cuts implemented at the start of the school year. Mr Cranitch is contesting Blain as part of the union's action against the new enterprise bargaining agreement. The AEU is not affiliated with the Australian Labor Party.

Sue McKinnon—NT Greens

Sue McKinnon previously contested Blain as a Green candidate at the 2005 Territory election. Ms McKinnon has since served as an elected member of the City of Palmerston Council for six years. Ms McKinnon helped to establish the Mitchell Creek Catchment Landcare Group and was the recipient of the NT Individual Landcarer Award and the Inaugural NT NRM Champion Award in 2013.

Peter Flynn—Citizens Electoral Council

Peter Flynn was the Citizens Electoral Council candidate in the Federal seat of Lingiari at the 2010 and 2013 Federal elections. Mr Flynn grew up on a wheat and sheep property, spent six years in the Australian Navy. He currently lives in Humpty Doo and has spent 15 years working as an Earth Moving Contractor.