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Northern Territory Election 2012

August 2012

On 25 August 2012 election for the Legislative Assembly will be held in the Northern Territory. This is only the 12th election since the Legislative Assembly was established in 1974.

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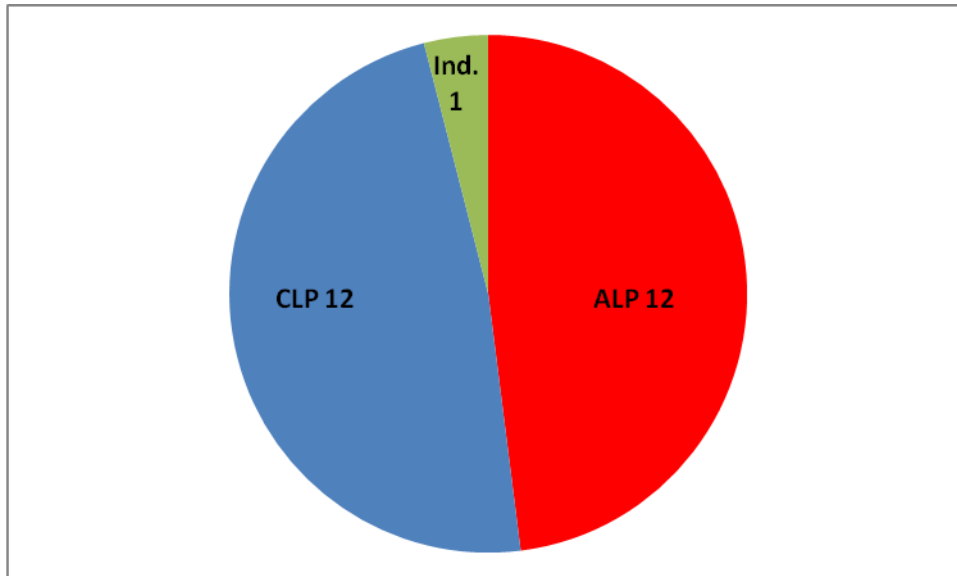
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Current Parliament of the Northern Territory

The Labor Government headed by Chief Minister Paul Henderson is seeking its fourth consecutive term in the Northern Territory. It will be the second time Paul Henderson is campaigning as Chief Minister, after replacing Clare Martin in 2007, who had successfully contested the 2001 and 2005 elections. The Labor Government currently holds 12 of the 25 seats, and is backed by Independent MP for Nelson, Gerry Wood.

The Northern Territory Country Liberal Party (CLP) is the main opposition party in the Northern Territory and it is affiliated with the National and the Liberal parties federally. The CLP dominated the Legislative Assembly from 1974, when it was first established, to 2001 when Labor won majority for the first time. In the 2005 election the CLP was reduced from ten to four seats. In the last general election in the Northern Territory in 2008, the CLP won 11 seats. The leader of CLP, Terry Mills, was first elected in the seat of Blain in 1999 and assumed the role of Leader of the Opposition, for the second time, in 2008.

In 2009 Labor's Alison Anderson resigned from the ministry and the Labor Party over a dispute of mismanagement in the Strategic Indigenous Housing Infrastructure Program. In 2011 Anderson formally joined the Country Liberal Party and is now the party's candidate for the seat of Namatjira, the new name for her old seat of Macdonell. Anderson will be running as a Country Liberal Party candidate in the seat she won twice as a Labor candidate.



Northern Territory Profile

In 1974 the Legislative Assembly was established replacing the partly elected Legislative Council. However, it was not until 1978 the Northern Territory became self-governing, when the Commonwealth's Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act was passed.

The Northern Territory has only one house of parliament, the Legislative Assembly consisting of 25 seats. Members of the Legislative Assembly are elected for a term of four years, and the election date is fixed to the fourth Saturday of August every four years.

Voting is compulsory in the Northern Territory, and the voting system for Legislative Assembly is preferential, which is the same system used for the election of members to the lower house in the Commonwealth parliament.

The Northern Territory has the smallest electoral divisions or areas in Australia in terms of population, each with approximately 5000 people. However, some of its electorates are very large in area, the largest being Barkly in Central Australia which covers some 450,000 square kilometres.

The small electoral divisions make incumbency a significant factor in Northern Territory elections. With many of the seats outside Darwin considered 'safe' for either Labor or CLP, elections have normally been decided in the suburbs of Darwin. This looks also to be the case in the 2012 election.

A total of 86 candidates are campaigning for a seat, with one candidate from Labor and the Country Liberal Party, in each of the 25 electorates. The Northern Territory Greens have endorsed 10 candidates. The 26 other candidates consist of eight First Nations Political Party



candidates, five Sex Party candidates, 10 Independents and three candidates with no affiliation on the ballot paper.

Last Election

On 9 August 2008, Northern Territory voters returned the Labor Government with a one-seat majority. The election was decided in the seat of retiring former chief minister Clare Martin, Fannie Bay, with Labor victory over the Country Liberal Party (CLP) by 78 votes.

Labor went into the election with 19 seats, with the CLP holding 4 seats and 2 Independents. Low voter turnout was said to contribute to the 9% swing against the Labor Party.

Labor won 13 of the 25 seats in Legislative Assembly, Country Liberals won 11 seats and Independent MP of Nelson, Gerry Wood, kept his seat.

Elections 1997-2008

Number of seats won by party:

Party	1997	2001	2005	2008
ALP	7	13	19	13
Country Liberal	18	10	4	11
Independents	-	2	2	1

Key Seats (Labor)

Fannie Bay, Labor, 0.9%

Fannie Bay, an inner Darwin electorate, held in the past by two Chief Ministers, the CLP's Marshall Perron 1983-1995 and Labor's Clare Martin 1995-2008. Martin's retirement in 2008 put the seat at risk for Labor, but in the election's narrowest contest, Labor's Michael Gunner won by 78 votes. Michael Gunner was previously chief-of-staff to Local Government Minister Rob Knight. His CLP opponent will be Tony Clementson, the general manager of Tourism Top End, who won preselection ahead of Country Liberals president Sue Fraser-Adams.

Daly, Labor, 5.8%

Daly surrounds the Darwin metropolitan area and stretches from the western and southern shores of Darwin Harbour in the north to the Fitzmaurice River in the south. It was gained for Labor at the 2005 election by Rob Knight after a swing of 24.4%, building up a big enough buffer to hold on against a 10.2% swing back in 2008. The CLP candidate is Gary Higgins, owner of the Daly River Mango Farm and former director of corporate services with the Attorney-General's Department.

Johnston, Labor, 6.9%

The electorate of Johnston lies in the northern suburbs of Darwin. It has been held by Labor's Dr Chris Burns since gaining it on the election of the Martin government in 2001. Burns is retiring at the 2012 election, and with the high personal vote for sitting members at



Northern Territory elections, Labor is at risk of losing the seat. The new Labor candidate Ken Vowles is a senior planner with Parks and Wildlife and former coach for the Northern Territory cricket team. The CLP have again endorsed their candidate from last time, former Darwin deputy mayor Jo Sangster.

Key Seats (CLP)

Brennan, CLP, 2.7%

Brennan, a northern Palmerston electorate, is traditional Country Liberal territory and was held by former Chief Minister Denis Burke from 1994 until 2005, when it was won by Labor candidate James Burke. James Burke held the seat by a narrow margin, and despite receiving the smallest swing against any Labor MP at the 2008 election, he lost the seat to the CLP's Peter Chandler. Chandler was previously a regulatory services manager at Palmerston City Council. The seat will be contested for Labor at the coming election by Russell Jeffrey, a former St Kilda and Brisbane Bears AFL player who later coached the Palmerston football club.

Port Darwin, CLP, 2.9%

Port Darwin covers the Darwin business district along with the inner suburbs of Larrakeyah and Stuart Park. Following a relatively mild 4.8% swing in 2008, and the seat passed from Labor's Kerry Sacilotto to John Elferink, a previous member for the remote electorate of Macdonnell who had lost his seat in 2005. Elferink is also the Shadow Treasurer. The Labor Candidate in this seat is Alan James.

Fong Lim, CLP, 4.3%

Fong Lim extends from the inner Darwin suburbs of Ludmilla and Woolmer through the outskirts south of the airport and RAAF base out to the edge of Palmerston. The electorate includes Darwin Airport, the Winnellie industrial estate and East Arm port and rail terminus facilities. It was a new seat first contested at the 2008 election and won by the CLP's Dave Tollner, a former Federal MHR for Solomon 2001-07. His chances of re-election have been assisted by the redistribution which has doubled his margin from 2.1% to 4.3%. Labor's candidate will be Ashley Marsh, a commercial lawyer with the Department of Justice.

Sanderson, CLP, 5.2%

This northern Darwin suburbs seat shifted to Labor when Clare Martin came to power in 2001, public servant Len Kiely defeating CLP member Daryl Manzie. Kiely was re-elected in 2005, but lost in 2008 by a 16.4% swing to the CLP candidate, former policeman Peter Styles. Styles has been named as one of four members of the CLP party room opposed to the leadership of Terry Mills, although he supported him in David Tollner's leadership challenge in August 2010 Peter Styles is opposed at this election by new Labor candidate Jodie Green, the Principal of Sanderson Middle School.



Election Pendulum

Labor (12)		Country Liberal (12)	
Fannie Bay	Labor 0.9%	Brennan	CLP 2.7%
Daly	Labor 5.8%	Port Darwin	CLP 2.9%
Johnston	Labor 6.9%	Fong Lim	CLP 4.3%
Nightcliff	Labor 10.7%	Sanderson	CLP 5.2%
Karama	Labor 10.8%	Goyder	CLP 8.4%
Arafura	Labor 14.0%	Katherin	CLP 8.4%
Casuarina	Labor 14.3%	Drysdale	CLP 9.3%
Wanguri	Labor 14.7%	Blain	CLP 10.6%
Stuart	Labor 15.0%	Greatorex	CLP 16.5%
Barkly	Labor 15.6%	Braitling	CLP 20.3%
Nhulunbuy	Labor 24.2%	Araluen	CLP 24.7%
Arnhem	Labor *	Namatjira	CLP **
Independent (1)			
Nelson	IND 28.7% v CLP		

* Uncontested in 2008 election

** The party status of this electorate has been changed due to the sitting MP changing party