

The Northern Territory Legislative Assembly

September 2014

The Northern Territory Legislative Assembly is a unicameral parliament consisting of 25 members, each representing a single electoral division. Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) are elected through a compulsory preferential voting system for a set term of four years.

The Country Liberal Party is currently in power and holds 14 seats. The Labor Opposition holds 8 seats, the Palmer United Party holds two seats and one seat is held by independent Gerry Wood MLA. The current leader of the government in the Northern Territory is Chief Minister the Hon Adam Giles MLA from the CLP.

The next general election is scheduled for 27 August 2016.

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History of Administration in the Northern Territory

The first Legislative Council for the Northern Territory was formed in March 1948. It consisted of seven official members appointed by the Governor-General, six elected members and the Administrator as President of the Council.

In 1974 the Legislative Council was replaced by a fully elected Legislative Assembly with nineteen members. In 1978 the Territory achieved self-government and in 1982, the number of members in the Legislative Assembly was increased to 25.

Electoral history

From the Parliament's establishment in 1974 until the 2001 Territory election, the Legislative Council and later Legislative Assembly were controlled by the Country Liberal Party.

In 2001 the ALP, led by the Hon Clare Martin, won government. The party increased its majority to 19 seats at the 2005 election. Ms Martin served as the Territory's first Labor and first female Chief Minister until her resignation in 2007.

The Hon Paul Henderson became leader of the leader of the ALP and Chief Minister in 2007, and the ALP retained government in 2008 with a one-seat majority.

On 4 June 2009, former Labor minister the Hon Marion Scrymgour resigned from the ALP and moved to the crossbench as an independent. On 4 August 2009, after the defection of another minister, the Hon Alison Anderson MLA, she returned to the ALP again until her retirement in 2012.

At the 2012 Northern Territory election, the 11-year Australian Labor Party government led by Chief Minister Henderson was defeated by the CLP Opposition led by 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.

The next general election is scheduled for 27 August 2016.

The Hawker Britton Occasional Paper on the outcome of the 2012 Northern Territory election is available [here](#).

The Hawker Britton Occasional Paper on forthcoming elections is available [here](#).

The results of all Territory-wide elections since 1974 are listed below.

Election	CLP	ALP	Independent/Other
19 October 1974	17	-	2
13 August 1977	12	6	1
7 June 1980	11	7	1
3 December 1983	19	6	-
7 March 1987	16	6	3
27 October 1990	13	9	2
4 June 1994	17	7	1
38 August 1997	18	7	-
18 August 2001	10	13	2
18 June 2005	4	19	2
9 August 2008	11	13	1
25 August 2012	16	8	1

The state of the Parliament 2014

Since the 2012 election, two by-elections have changed the membership of the Legislative Assembly but not the party composition. However, three members of the CLP caucus resigned in April 2014 and joined the Palmer United Party, one of whom later left the PUP and rejoined the CLP in September 2014. The current composition of the Legislative Assembly is as follows:

CLP	ALP	PUP	Independent
14	8	2	1

Wanguri By-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 ALP Nicole Manison elected with nearly 70 per cent of the primary vote.

Blain By-Election

On 13 March 2013, while then-Chief Minister the Hon Terry Mills MLA was on a trade visit to Japan, the Hon Adam Giles MLA 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.

A by-election for the seat of Blain was held on 12 April 2014 following Mr Mills's resignation. The by-election saw a 2-party preferred swing to Labor of 10 per cent.

Despite this swing, CLP candidate Nathan Barrett held the seat, and was elected 53.2 per cent of the 2-party preferred vote. As a result, the CLP retained their thirteenth seat and their majority in the Legislative Assembly.

The Hawker Britton election brief on the Blain by-election is available [here](#).

Resignation of Alison Anderson, Larisa Lee and Francis Xavier Kurrupuwu

On 5 April 2014 three MPS—the Hon Alison Anderson MLA, Ms Larisa Lee MLA and Mr Francis Xavier Kurrupuwu MLA—resigned from the CLP, slipping their resignation letters under the door of the CLP office in Darwin. On 27 April 2014, the three MPs joined Palmer United, with Anderson becoming parliamentary leader.

There was been a great deal of media interest over the circumstances surrounding the departure of the three MLAs from the CLP. An example of the media coverage is available [here](#).

The Hawker Britton Occasional Paper on the Palmer United Party is available [here](#).

Francis Xavier Kurrupuwu rejoins the CLP

In September 2014, Mr Francis Xavier Kurrupuwu MLA left the PUP and rejoined the CLP, stating that he believed he could achieve more for his electorate by being part of the Government.

Key Personnel

Chief Minister the Hon Adam Giles MLA

Mr Giles was elected to the seat of Braitingling at the 2008 election.

Giles was born in the Blue Mountains. He started his career in the public sector, later moving to Canberra to work as a social and economic policy advisor for the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. He then stood unsuccessfully as the Liberal Party candidate for Fraser in the 2004 Federal election.



After moving to Alice Springs in the Northern Territory, Mr Giles then stood unsuccessfully as the Country Liberal Party candidate for the NT seat of Lingiari at the 2007 Federal election.

Following the 2012 election, Mr Giles became the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Local Government.

On 13 March 2013, Adam Giles replaced the Hon Terry Mills as leader of the Country Liberal Party while Mr Mills was on a trade mission in Japan.

Opposition Leader the Hon Delia Lawrie MLA

Ms Lawrie was elected to the seat of Karama at the 2001 election.

Born in the original Darwin Hospital, she attended school in Nightcliff. She went on to work as a journalist and then as a union organiser.

During her time in Parliament, she served as Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice in the Henderson Labor Territory Government.



Following Labor's defeat at the 2012 Territory election, Mr Henderson resigned as party leader and Ms Lawrie was elected to replace him as Opposition Leader.

Palmer United Party Leader the Hon Alison Anderson MLA

Ms Anderson was elected to the seat of MacDonnell (now Namatjira) at the 2005 election.

Anderson was born in the remote community of Haasts Bluff. She was elected Chief Executive Officer of the Papunya Community Council in 1985 and later served as ATSIC Commissioner for the Northern Territory Central Zone from November 1999.



Ms Anderson initially entered the NT Assembly as a member of the ALP and served in the Henderson Labor Government in various roles including Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage; Minister for Parks and Wildlife; Minister for Arts and Museums; and Minister for Indigenous Policy.

She left both the Cabinet and the ALP in 2009, and sat on the crossbench as an independent for two years.

In 2011, she joined the CLP and was elected as a CLP candidate at the 2012 election.

In 2014, she resigned from the CLP and later joined the Palmer United Party, becoming its parliamentary leader.

Mr Gerry Wood MLA (Independent)

Mr Wood was elected to the seat of Nelson at the 2001 election.

Gerry Wood previously worked in Daly River and on Bathurst Island, as the town clerk of Nguiu and later as the President of the Litchfield Shire Council.

Following his election in 2001, he served as Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees in the first term of the Martin Labor Government, but did not retain the role following Labor's success at the 2005 election.

Following the resignation of Alison Anderson from the Labor Party in August 2009, Mr Wood held the balance of power in the Legislative Assembly.

