

# Parliament in the Northern Territory



**Information booklet for primary students**



# Democracy in the Northern Territory



Here in the Northern Territory we live in a **representative democracy**. This means eligible citizens vote for their preferred person (someone) to act on their behalf in the parliament.

Our parliament is **unicameral** – one chamber only.

Twenty five Members are our voice in the Parliament, making laws for all Territorians.

The Self-Government Act 1978 gives the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly power to make laws on matters just for Territorians. Laws for all Australians are made in the Federal parliament.

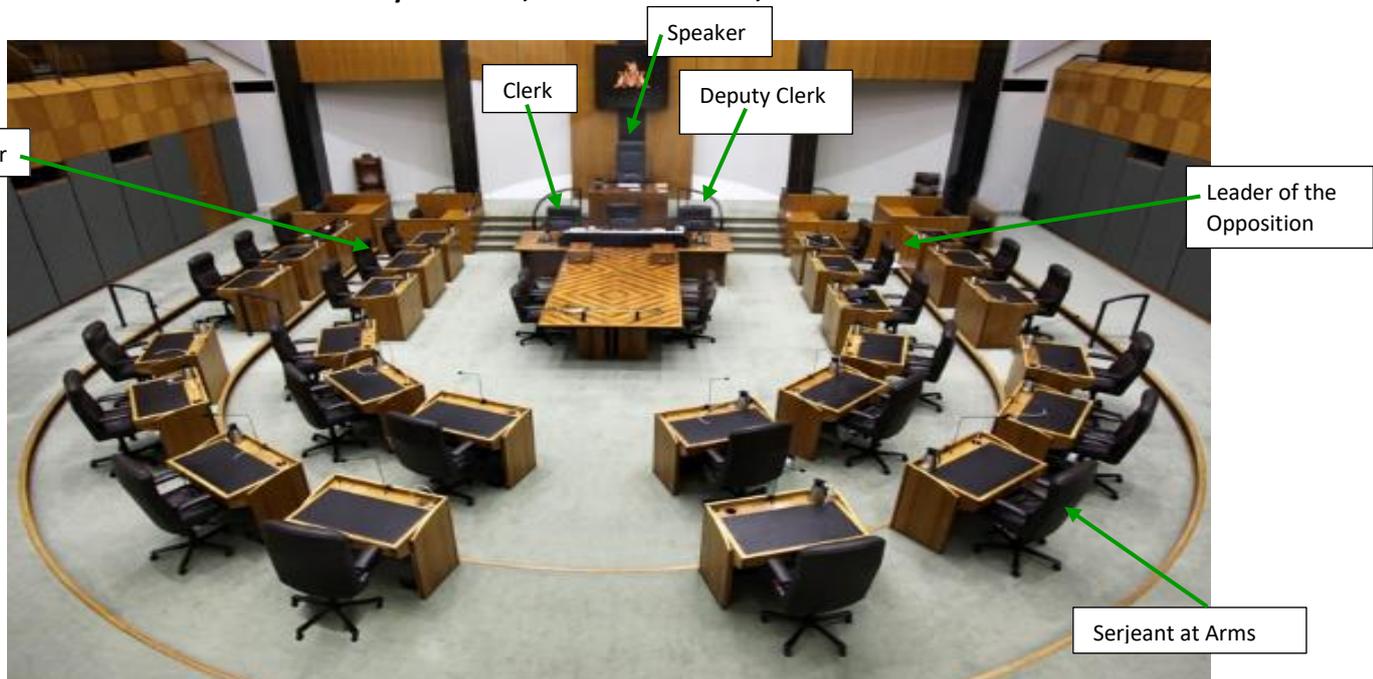
## Our Parliament

The Northern Territory parliament has 25 members.

The Northern Territory Government is formed by the political party with the majority of Members elected to the Parliament.

To have a majority a political party would need to have at least **13** members elected.

### Our Parliamentary Chamber, Parliament House, Darwin



# People of the Parliament



The mace of the Northern Territory Parliament

**Speaker:** an elected member of the Northern Territory Parliament voted by the Parliament to run the meetings of the Legislative Assembly.

**Chief Minister:** the elected leader of the Northern Territory government. The Chief Minister answers questions during Question Time, makes statements on government policy and moves major motions on behalf of the government. Ministerial portfolios are determined by the Chief Minister.

**Leader of the Opposition:** the elected leader of the main non-government party. The Leader of the Opposition takes the lead in asking questions during Question Time. Shadow Ministerial portfolios are determined by the Leader of the Opposition.

**Clerk and Deputy Clerk:** the Clerk and Deputy Clerk are not elected members of the Northern Territory parliament. They are specialists in the rules of parliamentary procedure and practice, providing advice to the Speaker and Members. The Clerk also announces each item of business and 'reads' bills at each stage of their progress. The Deputy Clerk operates the clocks which time Members' speeches and the duration of the ringing of the bells.

**Serjeant-at-Arms:** this person is not an elected member of the Northern Territory parliament. This role includes escorting the Speaker into the Chamber and the ceremonial parliamentary procession of bringing the mace into the Chamber at the start of the meeting day.

# Members of Parliament

There are 25 members of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, who are elected for four years. Each member represents about 5,000 voters. Use the link below to find out the name of your electorate.

<https://ntec.nt.gov.au/Electoral-divisions/find-my-electoral-division>

Type your home address in the search box and it will tell you who your current representative in the Northern Territory Parliament is.

Go the **Division profiles** – you will discover the history behind the name of your electoral division.

My electoral division is:.....

My representative is:.....

They are a member of the.....party.

My representative is (circle one)

in government

in opposition

an independent



# Making a Law in the Northern Territory

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## 1st READING

The bill (an idea for a new law) is introduced in to the Legislative Assembly.

## 2nd READING

Members debate and vote on the main idea of the bill.

## Consideration in detail

Members look closely at the bill, and may make changes.

## 3rd READING

Members vote on the final version of the bill.

**BILL PASSED**  
in the  
Legislative Assembly

ADMINISTRATOR

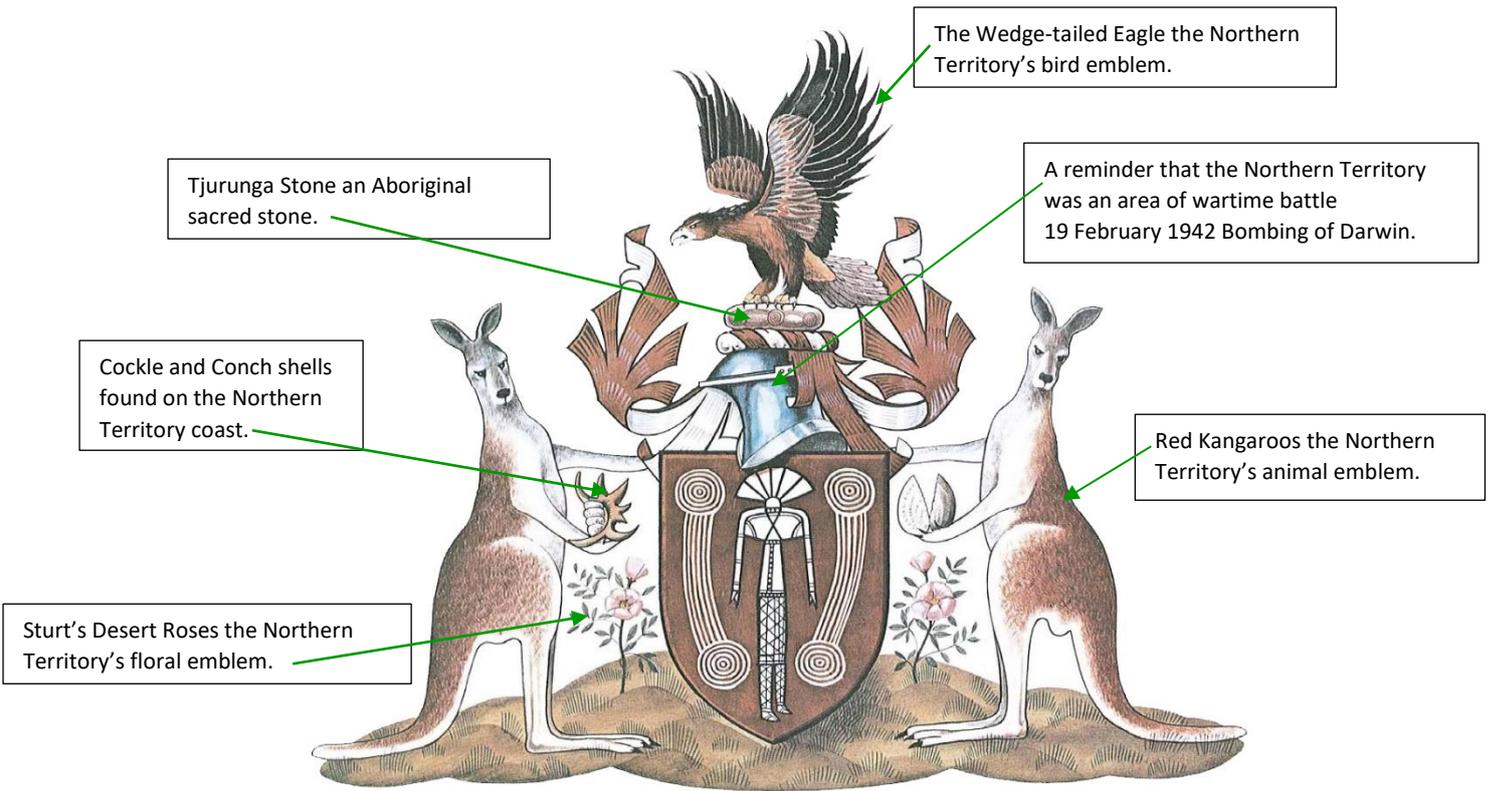
## Assent

The Northern Territory Administrator signs the bill.

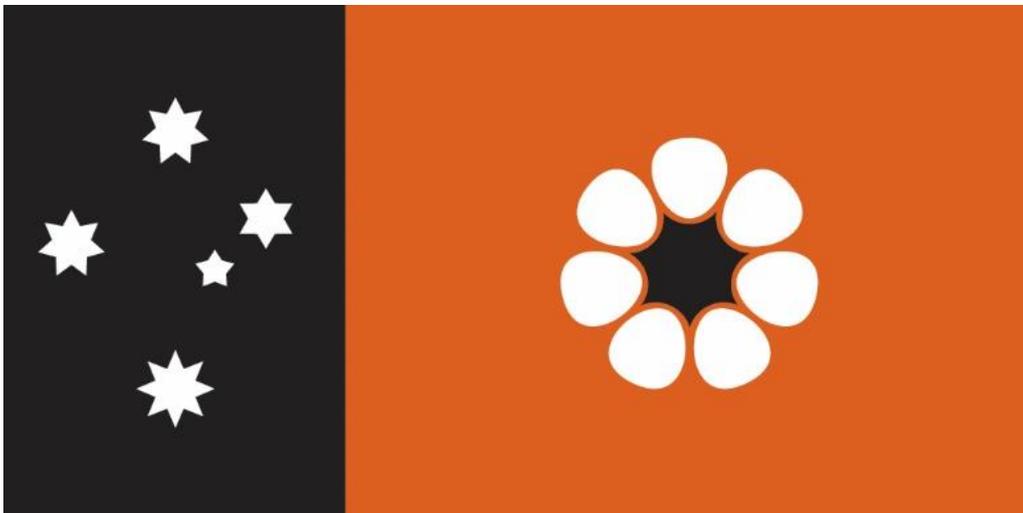
**BILL BECOMES A LAW  
FOR THE  
NORTHERN TERRITORY**

# Symbols of democracy

## The Northern Territory Coat of Arms



## The Northern Territory Flag



Our flag, designed by Dr Robert Ingpen AM, was first raised on 1 July 1978 to mark the granting of Self-Government to the Northern Territory. The flag incorporates the Territory's three official colours, red ochre, black and white, and the official floral emblem, the Sturt's Desert Rose.



**Dispatch boxes** are no longer used in modern parliaments and are symbols of the Westminster tradition. They were once used to transport papers between the British Parliament and the Monarch.



The **mace of the Northern Territory Parliament** is made of silver and gold gilt by Garrods the Royal Jewellers to Queen Elizabeth II. It incorporates elements of the traditional Westminster system and emblems of the Northern Territory.

# Important dates in the Northern Territory

**1863**

The Northern Territory was annexed from New South Wales to be part of South Australia.

**1869**

The South Australian Surveyor-General George Goyder and his team sailed into Port Darwin on 5 February. Goyder had travelled from Adelaide by the barque the Moonta to survey the lands that would eventually become the town of Palmerston, later called Darwin. Goyder's plan included a government precinct around Mitchell Street and the Esplanade.

**1911**

The Northern Territory was transferred to Commonwealth control with an Administrator.

**1942**

On 19 February the post office buildings were reduced to rubble by direct hits during the first raid of the bombing of Darwin in World War II, killing ten people. The post office was later moved to another location.

**1948**

A new Northern Territory Legislative Council with 13 members was established but with very limited powers.

**1974**

The Commonwealth Government granted the Northern Territory a fully elected Legislative Assembly of 19 members, replacing the Legislative Council. A few months later, Cyclone Tracy caused extensive damage to the building yet the assembly still met amid dangling electric wires and gaps in the ceiling.

**1982**

The number of Northern Territory Legislative Assembly members was increased to 25 to reflect the Northern Territory's growth.

**1994**

Northern Territory Parliament House was officially opened by the Honourable Bill Hayden AC Governor-General on 18 August.

**1998**

A referendum held in the Northern Territory questioning whether the Northern Territory should become a state is defeated by a 51% 'NO' vote.

**2018**

The Northern Territory celebrates 40 years of self-government

**2019**

The 25th Anniversary of the Opening of Parliament House.

