The Northern Territory Government has passed the Northern Territory Electoral Bill establishing an independent electoral commission.

“The passage of this bill in Parliament tonight delivers another election commitment for the Martin Labor Government,” Chief Minister Clare Martin said.

“The Territory is one of the last jurisdictions in Australia to undertake a major review of its electoral system and pass appropriate legislation.

Some of the key sections of the bill include:

- Establishing an independent electoral commission headed by an independent electoral commissioner who reports to the Parliament through the Speaker. Additional funding will be made available for increased voter education, information and research.

- Establishing a redistribution committee consisting of the electoral commissioner, surveyor-general and auditor-general, with the addition of an additional member during the objection stage.

- Ensuring fixed minimum 3-year terms (retaining current maximum of 4-years).

- Redistributions to be held 2-years and 6 months after every general election.

- Retention of compulsory preferential voting and scrapping of alphabetical listings on ballot papers.

“I believe the reforms will deliver a better system – they are overdue and will help enshrine open and fair election contests in the Territory.”

“The legislation was passed following wide-spread community input from groups including town councils, NT electoral office and Australian electoral commission, political parties, multicultural council, ATSIC, local government association and legal fraternity.

Ms Martin thanked people and organisations for the 49 written submissions and for attending forums around the NT during the development of the legislation.

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