Chief Minister Clare Martin today announced the first stage in reforming electoral practices in the Territory that will lead to the creation of an independent Electoral Commission.

Ms Martin said that an Electoral Commission, removed from the control of the Chief Minister, was an important part of the Government’s good governance policy first proposed when in Opposition in 1997.

"Territorians want their electoral processes to be fair, open to scrutiny and not subject to political influence," she said.

"We have been calling for the establishment of an independent Electoral Commission for years.

"Advertisements will be lodged nationally for an independent review of current arrangements and to make recommendations for the future.

"We want to examine electoral laws here and elsewhere to make sure we have the best possible system in the Territory.

"That is why input from the community will be sought as part of the reform."

Under the Government’s plan, the reform will encompass consideration of a new legislative framework, as well as the structure and functions of the proposed Electoral Commission.

While Terms of Reference are being finalised, Ms Martin said they would include: electoral redistribution, the kind of voting system we have, whether we should move to electronic voting (as found in the US), at what age Territorians should vote and the type of disclosure on funding for political parties.

"All aspects of electoral administration will be reviewed," she said.

Currently, the Northern Territory Electoral Office conducts elections for the Legislative Assembly, local government and other organisations with the office being administered by the Department of Chief Minister.

The final report will be provided to Government by 30 March 2003.