

# Former Northern Territory leaders call for fresh blood to replace retiring senator Nigel Scullion

By [Matt Garrick](#)



**PHOTO:** Former chief ministers Perron, Stone and Everingham want the nomination process changed. (ABC News)

**Three stalwarts of the Northern Territory's Country Liberal Party agree fresh blood is needed to replace retiring senator Nigel Scullion.**

Key points:

- Shane Stone cited the dire state of the NT economy in his call for better Senate candidates
- Mr Stone wants to extend the CLP's nomination process and ensure non-members can also nominate
- The CLP president said a candidate will be chosen based on all the information and advice available

Marshall Perron and the first elected leader of the self-governed NT, Paul Everingham, have backed fellow former chief minister Shane Stone's call to "put the Territory first" in the nomination decision, and avoid choosing a "recycled defeated candidate" for the role.

Between them, the three leaders ran the NT for nearly half of the years since self-government began in 1978.

"The CLP must get the Senate right," Mr Stone, the NT's leader between 1995 until 1999, wrote in an open letter.

"The Territory economy is now officially the worst in Australia ... the simple fact is that we Territorians are all in this together."

Mr Stone said the NT's "crippling debt, the fraying economy, the looming collapse of the commercial sector is a problem that belongs to all of us".

"The right candidate as senator can play a very important role in helping the Territory out of its current predicament," he said.

"To be blunt — this is not something for recycled defeated candidates that belonged to a failed CLP government.

["This is not a role for a 'green horn' who will disappear into Canberra and be swallowed up by the machinations of a Coalition party room."](#)

## Wide support for Stone's comments

Mr Perron, the NT's chief minister from 1988 to 1995, wrote that he supported Mr Stone's view 100 per cent.

["The NT pool is small anyway and limiting prospective candidates to party members would be folly," Mr Perron said.](#)

Mr Everingham also offered his "unequivocal" support to the open letter in a personal email, according to Mr Stone.

Former CLP planning commission chair Gary Nairn and prominent pollster Mark Textor were among others who have publicly voiced their support for Mr Stone's comments.

Already a number of former candidates have voiced their intention to run for the position, including ex-NT police minister Peter Chandler and former Alice Springs town council candidate Josh Burgoyne, who currently sits at number two on the NT CLP Senate ticket.

Former housing minister [Bess Price](#) is also understood to have considered throwing her hat in the ring.

## Changes needed to nomination process

With the February 18 deadline for nominations looming, Mr Stone has posted a statement saying the three former leaders are calling for an extension and a change to the nominations process so the right candidate can be found.

"In all modesty the three most successful chief ministers in the CLP's history are aligned on what needs to happen," he wrote.

"It's a simple proposition. Management committee reconvene and re-open the nominations for an additional week."

He also suggested, as a way of attracting those outside the party, that non-CLP candidates who wished to nominate could apply for membership alongside their nomination.

CLP president Ron Kelly told the ABC "council delegates will select who they believe is the best nominating candidate to represent the Country Liberal Party at the upcoming election".

"Their decision will be based upon consideration and deliberations on all information and advice at their disposal," Mr Kelly said.

Mr Scullion announced his retirement last month, calling time on almost 18 years in politics.

The CLP is expected to reveal its decision on who will replace Senator Scullion after a CLP Central Council meeting in March.