

Parliament makes call for new NMPs

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The search for non-partisan Singaporeans to champion special causes in Parliament has begun.

From today, people can submit names of those whom they think are suitable to be a Nominated Member of Parliament (NMP).

They have three weeks – until 4.30pm on Feb 23 – to do it.

Forms are available at Parliament House or on the Parliament website, the Clerk of Parliament said in a statement yesterday.

When contacted, one of the nine NMPs in the last Parliament said she would seek a second term,

while two others said they would not do so.

Another two said they would leave the decision to the sectors they represent.

The remaining four who could not be reached for comment are corporate lawyer Chia Yong Yong, labour economist Randolph Tan, businessman Thomas Chua and architect Rita Soh.

Entrepreneur Kuik Shiao-Yin said she would seek a second term, pointing out that she and her fellow NMPs had served for about a year before Parliament was dissolved last August ahead of the general election.

Each NMP term can last up to 2½

years and the last group was sworn in on Sept 8, 2014.

Said Ms Kuik: “I was prepared to commit to 2½ years as an NMP, so if I am selected again, I’ll see it as a chance to ‘complete’ my term.”

But Maybank Singapore’s premier wealth department vice-president Ismail Hussein and Changi General Hospital sports medicine chief Benedict Tan said they will not seek another term. They added that other capable Singaporeans should get the chance to have their say in Parliament.

Said Dr Tan: “You can have more diversity in Parliament with different styles and different inputs from different individuals.”

In the NMP scheme, introduced in 1990 to provide alternative voices in Parliament, seven groups are invited to propose names of suitable candidates.

They are: business and industry; the professions; the labour movement; social service organisations; the civic and people sector; tertiary education institutions; and the arts, media and sports.

Veteran unionist K. Karthikeyan and Yale-NUS College executive vice-president of academic affairs Tan Tai Yong said they will leave the decision to the labour movement and tertiary education sector, which they represent.

Said Mr Karthikeyan: “If they ask

me to continue as NMP, I will surely do so. But if they decide to nominate another person to give him more exposure, I will be okay with it too.”

The labour movement and Singapore Business Federation said it was too early to comment on their choice of nominees.

Speaker of Parliament Halimah Yacob has met representatives of the seven groups to inform them about the nomination procedures.

She has also appointed one coordinator per group to gather views and submit suitable names to Parliament’s Special Select Committee on Nominations for Appointment as NMPs for consideration.

The committee of eight MPs is chaired by Madam Halimah and includes Workers’ Party chairman Sylvia Lim. It will consider all the applications as well as other MPs’ views on the applicants.

They will interview shortlisted candidates, agree on the final nominees and recommend them to the President, who appoints the NMPs.

The seven coordinators in the various sectors are: Singapore Business Federation chairman Teo Siong Seng, NTUC president Mary Liew, Singapore Academy of Medicine master Lim Shih Hui, National Council of Social Service chief executive Sim Gim Guan, People’s Association chief executive director Ang Hak Seng, National University of Singapore president Tan Chorh Chuan and National Arts Council chairman Chan Heng Chee.

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