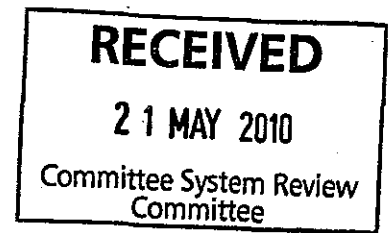


CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE &
INDUSTRY
QUEENSLAND

21 May 2010

Sub # 13.

The Research Director
Committee System Review Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000



Dear Sir/Madam,

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland (CCIQ) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Review of the Committee System of the Queensland Parliament. CCIQ is the State's largest business organisation with a State-wide membership across all industry sectors and of business sizes. In total the Chamber represents in excess of 25,000 businesses - 3,700 members spread across the State with links to 135 local chambers of commerce and 60 industry associations.

CCIQ has been actively involved in Committees of the Queensland Parliament. Recently the Chamber provided detailed submissions to the Economic Development Committee's Inquiry into identifying World's best practice by Governments to effectively stimulate employment opportunities in Queensland and the Environment and Resources Committee's Inquiry into energy efficiency improvements.

CCIQ believes that a strong and active Committee system is essential for an efficient and effective Queensland Parliament. The Chamber believes that a vibrant Committee system is even more important in Queensland given the nature of its unicameral parliament. CCIQ would support greater focus being placed on Parliament Committees to achieve their aim:

"...allow the Parliament to ensure that the right decisions are being made at the right time and for the right reasons. At the same time they effectively enhance the democratic process by taking the Parliament to the people and giving them a role in its operations." Queensland Parliament website.

Queensland Parliament Committees should be comparable to Committees of the Parliament of Australia as well as Committees from other jurisdictions in terms of their role, effectiveness and enhancing the accountability of their respective Parliaments. Roles of Australian Parliamentary Committees that should also be considered relevant for Queensland include:

- Investigating specific matters of policy and government administration and performance;
- Checking on Government activities, including thoroughly investigating questions of government administration and service delivery;
- Overseeing the expenditure of public money;
- Calling the Government / public service to account for their actions and asking for explanations or justifications for administrative decisions;
- Contributing to better informed policy-making and legislative processes;
- Assessing a wide range of community and expert views so that through the Committee process, the Parliament is able to be better informed of community issues and attitudes;
- Providing a public forum for presentations from individual citizens and interest groups;
- Promoting public debate on the issues being focused on.

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In addition to these roles, CCIQ believes Queensland Parliament Committees should:

- Investigate issues and polices to ensure greater accountability within the Queensland Parliament;
- Make Parliament decision making more open and transparent by conducting public inquiries that embrace stakeholders' input;
- Effectively evaluate and examine the vast majority of legislative proposals;
- Ensure that those Bills passed through Parliament will not have unintended consequences on businesses and the broader community;
- Monitoring and reviewing public sector organisations or keep areas of the law or activity under review.

From an industry body's perspective, Parliamentary Committees and the associated inquiry process should continue to:

- Allow for written submissions and for stakeholders to meet in person with the Committee (whether at a public hearing or in other forums);
- Provide sufficient time frames to allow for the completion of submissions;
- Establish clear terms of reference and outlining of the inquiry's scope;
- Provide regular updates to stakeholders on the inquiry's progress;
- Provide the final report to all stakeholders;
- Incorporate a range of recommendations and strategies within the final report.

The Chamber also supports greater focus being placed on ensuring the Government's response to the Inquiry's final report is clear. Bolstering Committee's composition with Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet members would also strengthen the Committees and enhance accountability.

CCIQ calls on the Committee System Review Committee to thoroughly investigate the current Committee system and report to the State Parliament a range of recommendations and strategies to deliver an even stronger and more efficient Committee system in Queensland. Strengthening the process of legislative development will ultimately strengthen the Queensland economy and enhance business growth in terms of profitability, investment and employment generation.

If you have any questions regarding this correspondence, please do not hesitate to contact me on (07) 3842 2279.

Yours sincerely,



Nick Behrens
General Manager - Policy