

**From:** webmaster@parliament.qld.gov.au  
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Sub #15.

**ONLINE SUBMISSION**

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**1. How could the existing committee system be strengthened to enhance accountability?**

refer to question 4

**4. How effective is the committee structure of the 53rd Parliament following the restructure of the committee system on 23 April 2009?**

The Health Quality and Complaints Commission (HQCC) was disappointed that the Social Development Committee's terms of reference were limited compared with HQCC's expectations. As the independent health watchdog in Queensland, the HQCC has been concerned since its creation that the reporting arrangements for HQCC have hindered the perception that HQCC is independent. Currently, HQCC reports through the Minister for Health to Parliament. Understandably, Ministers for Health can seek advice from their department, Queensland Health (QH), even on matters that relate to HQCC. This is particularly difficult for HQCC when seeking change to its funding or its legislation. In both these instances the administrative process for HQCC require that submissions are channelled through QH. Undoubtedly, this process poses a potential conflict of interest for QH especially when such changes may have an effect on the department. HQCC would like to recommend that reporting to parliament through a committee such as the Social Development Committee would present the public with an increased perception of HQCC's independence. Then information sought about matters related to HQCC could have a broader community of advice including private hospital, health practitioners groups, insurers etc. It must be said that both Ministers for Health through whom HQCC has reported to parliament have promoted HQCC's independence and sought broad advice when necessary. The major difficulties for HQCC are the growing concern about the public's perception of our independence and the growing potential for conflicts of interest for QH. This occurs when such important administrative processes such as funding submissions and legislative change are channelled through the largest agency for which HQCC is watchdog.