

The Hon Judy Spence MP
Chair
Committee System Review Committee
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Dear Chair

Review of the Committee System of the Queensland Parliament

The Liberal National Party of Queensland (LNP) responds to the invitation to provide a submission to your Committee's *Review of the Committee System of the Queensland Parliament*.

As a means for the Queensland Parliament to effectively uphold its primary function of keeping the Government accountable, such an inquiry is long overdue.

The LNP has long advocated a thorough, independent review to address the Bligh Government's lack of accountability and integrity of its electoral and parliamentary processes. The very nature of this inquiry is an ironic symbol of the flawed parliamentary committee system and the Government's control over the Parliament. Once again, it is the Executive presiding over an inquiry into its own lack of accountability to the Parliament and its Committees.

Attached is the LNP's submission provided in the spirit of true bipartisanship, trusting that the outcome will be in the best interest of open and accountable government.

Please contact me if you have any issues that require clarification or amplification.

Yours faithfully



Bruce McIver
LNP State President

SUBMISSION BY THE LIBERAL NATIONAL PARTY TO THE REVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM OF THE QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENT

1. Introduction

Over the past decade successive Labor Governments have undermined the standing of Parliament as an institution of ethical practice and democratic values – a pattern of behaviour totally in line with established Labor tradition. As Justice McPherson¹ has commented:

“A tendency for the legislature to assert its dominance over the judiciary, and for the executive to dominate the legislature, may have its origins in the bungling of Queensland's constitution at Separation ... Its apotheosis was the decision in McCawley's case and The Supreme Court Act of 1921 followed a year later by the abolition of the Legislative Council. In fashioning an instrument of power for their use the politicians of that era lacked the wisdom to foresee, or perhaps to care, that control of it would one day pass to their opponents. Those who now regret the ambit of Executive authority in Queensland can be in no doubt who were responsible for creating it ...”²

The recent Bligh Government's “Integrity and Accountability in Queensland” Discussion Paper is another example of undermining the Parliament given that it avoids “any major discussion of the present operation and effectiveness of the Parliament.”³ This is not surprising as Labor Governments have long ignored the separation of powers between Executive Government and the Legislature, with Parliament used to rubber stamp its decisions with minimal debate.

Parliament is central to our democratic system of government. It is the pillar of ‘representative government’ whose role is to uphold the public interest through scrutiny and influence over Government policies and actions. While it is the role of Government to govern, it is the role of Parliament to act as a check on government, both to extract accountability and to control the quality of government measures. A strong and vibrant parliamentary committee structure is vital to achieving these aims.

These principles are also embodied within the LNP Constitution which states (amongst other essentials) that “*an intelligent and free Australian Democracy shall be maintained by the preservation of the Westminster system of Government whereby the Parliament controls the Executive and the law controls all.*” Despite our best efforts, consecutive Labor Governments in Queensland have managed to control the Parliament and obfuscate the law.

The LNP has addressed each of the Committee's terms of reference below and set out a number of recommendations and suggestions for the Committee's consideration.

¹ B.H. McPherson J.A., *The Supreme Court of Queensland*, 1989, Butterworths at pp.290-1.

² B.H. McPherson J.A., *op. cit.*, p.399.

³ Department of Premier and Cabinet, “Integrity and Accountability in Queensland”, Discussion Paper, August 2009, www.premiers.qld.gov.au and Aroney, Professor N, and Prasser, Professor S, Response to “Integrity and Accountability in Queensland” Discussion Paper, September 2009.

2. The role of Parliamentary committees in both Australian and international jurisdictions in examining legislative proposals, particularly those with unicameral parliaments

In all other States and at the Commonwealth level, an upper house of Parliament has contributed to a level of scrutiny and a clearer separation of powers between the Parliament and the Executive compared with Queensland's unicameral Parliament. The nature of the upper house of Parliament is as a 'House of Review' and it is the role of members of the upper house to scrutinise the effect of legislative proposals and contribute to keeping the Executive accountable for its performance and expenditure.

The former Electoral and Administrative Review Commission (EARC) noted that a comprehensive committee system "could and should carry out some of the functions traditionally undertaken by upper houses in those jurisdictions which still have them".⁴ In the absence of a bicameral Parliament, a strong Committee system that enables proper and detailed scrutiny of legislation, policy issues and the performance of the Government, and through which the public have direct input, is paramount to transparent and accountable government. By default, Committees are one mechanism that can perform the 'review' that is otherwise the purview of the upper house.

The LNP is firmly of the opinion that the current Queensland Parliamentary Committee system does not achieve this aim. In recent times, Labor outrageously suggested that the Parliamentary Committee system is a replacement for the Upper House. Compared to the Federal Parliamentary committee system, Queensland's model is weak and dominated by Government Members who carry out the will of the Executive.

A comprehensive parliamentary committee system, operating effectively, subjects government decisions and spending to thorough scrutiny. Broadly, each of the parliaments in Australia and New Zealand's unicameral parliament outline the role of their committees as embodying the Westminster tradition by enabling an efficient, detailed consideration or investigation into certain matters such as legislation, expenditure, implementation of policy and government performance. Each jurisdiction also sees the role of Committees as one that enables public participation and requires reporting back their findings to the Parliament.⁵

The parliamentary committee system that is a hallmark of the Westminster system became almost defunct in Queensland in the years after the abolition of the upper house of parliament. The Fitzgerald Report, which considered the ways in which accountability of the Queensland government could be improved, recommended:⁶

"a comprehensive system of parliamentary committees to enhance the ability of Parliament to monitor the efficiency of Government...[with] the power to conduct public hearings, as well as the power to investigate and obtain information and documents and, where appropriate, accept and report on petitions and complaints. The legislative process should

⁴ Electoral and Administrative Review Commission, *Report on Review of Parliamentary Committees*, October 1992.

⁵ See for example, Senate Brief No. 4, *Senate Committees*, February 2010; House of Representatives, *Infosheet: Committees*, No.4, March 2008; New Zealand House of Representatives, *Parliament Brief*, Select Committees, August 2006; and NSW Legislative Council, *Standing Committees: Taking Parliament to the People*.

⁶ At page 125 of the report.

allow sufficient time for the involvement of parliamentary committees, having regard particularly to members' general parliamentary duties, including attending to their constituencies."

That this vision has never been truly realised is a failure of responsible government for the people of Queensland.⁷ The LNP notes the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review's (PCEAR) *Report on Review of Parliamentary Committees* was tabled in October 1993. This report was in response to EARC and its proposal for the establishment of a more sophisticated Committee system in the Queensland Parliament following the 'Fitzgerald Report'. In the foreword, the Chair of PCEAR, Dr Lesley Ann Clark MLA stated:⁸

Queensland's unicameral system of Parliament, coupled with strong party discipline, dictates that accountability through rigorous scrutiny of government activity rather than general policy investigation and research must be the primary goal of the committee system in Queensland.

Moreover,some tasks should be accorded a higher priority so as to better enable the committees to assist the Parliament in meeting its core constitutional responsibilities. These are to:

- a) Review legislation appropriating public funds for executive government;*
- b) Monitor and review the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration, in particular expenditure by executive agencies entrusted with public funds; and*
- c) Scrutinise the quality and standard of government legislation.*

The LNP fully supports these remarks and considers them to still (almost 20 years later) be reflective of the ideal role of parliamentary Committees in Australia and particularly so for Queensland's unicameral Parliament. The LNP is disappointed that the reality of the committee system of the Queensland Parliament is not fulfilling its desired role as articulated by the Chair of the PCEAR. Consecutive Labor Governments have not had the will to implement the recommendations of EARC for a comprehensive parliamentary committee system, but worse, have ignored their own appointed committee, chaired by Dr Lesley Ann Clark, and the articulation of the ideal role for parliamentary committees in a unicameral parliament.

The Australian Senate states, in relation to its well-regarded system of committees that:⁹

The Senate's comprehensive committee system has significantly strengthened the Australian parliamentary system of government. It assists the Senate to perform its law-making and inquiry role more effectively and to keep the government accountable for its actions. ...

Enhancing the capacity of Parliament and the community to scrutinise the legislative process, and to monitor the performance of executive government, the committee system emerges as the accountability powerhouse of the Senate.

⁷ See also, Neil Laurie, Clerk of the Queensland Parliament, *Submission to Review of Integrity and Accountability in Queensland*, pp. 20-21.

⁸ Queensland Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review, *Report on Review of Parliamentary Committees*, Report No. 19, October 1993, p. i.

⁹ Senate Brief No. 4, *Senate Committees*, February 2010, p. 10.

It is the LNP's opinion that Queensland's parliamentary committees should be adequately resourced and empowered to fulfil their role of:

- Reviewing and scrutinising legislation appropriating funds for the Executive Government;
- Monitoring, reviewing and scrutinising the performance, expenditure and policy implementation of the public service and their associated agencies; and
- Scrutinising the quality and standard of government legislation.

3. Timely and cost effective ways by which Queensland Parliamentary Committees can more effectively evaluate and examine legislative proposals

The ability for Queensland's parliamentary committees to effectively evaluate and examine legislative proposals should begin with a complete overhaul of the current structure of the Committee system. Despite the description of the role of Committees as articulated by the Chair of PCEAR in 1993, in practice, Committees do not as a matter of course consider legislation (other than appropriations, but even this function is woefully inadequate, as explained below). The legislative review function is largely defunct and there is no doubt that the sole reason for this is the Government's domination of all aspects of the Parliament. This may be best demonstrated by the recent late and inept stakeholder consultations relating to the *Valuation of Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010*. The Bligh Labor Government sought to push this massive new tax on land through the Parliament without consultation, minimal debate and no consideration by a Committee. Reference to the appropriate Parliamentary Committee would have enabled stakeholder consultation and avoided over one hundred hastily drafted amendments.

Non-government members do not 'have the numbers' to move a motion to have a particular piece of legislation referred to a committee for detailed consideration. Even if the Government were to agree to the referral of legislation to a committee, the Government still 'has the numbers' (through the Chair's casting vote) on the Committee which will inevitably prevent any meaningful debate and/or amendment. Until this imbalance is addressed, it is unlikely that Queensland's parliamentary committees will ever be in a position of fulfilling their role to effectively review legislative proposals.

It is possible for members of parliament to play a much greater role in determining the business of the Parliament through the committee system. This may be in relation to the consideration of legislation, its impacts and whether it meets the policy intention of the government but particularly in relation to the scrutiny of Government appropriations and public service implementation of policy. Such a role would create a dynamic and responsive parliament that would distance itself from decades of being beholden to the government of the day determining the business of the Parliament.

Legislative review of appropriations

The Legislative Assembly at present has nine committees, each considering a different area of responsibility. Annually, each area of portfolio responsibility is subject to a one-day only estimates

hearing in which the budget for that portfolio is scrutinised. This is the sum-total of so-called rigorous examination currently given to each portfolio through the committees.

The time constraints alone are a substantial barrier to the effectiveness of the committee system as a measure for holding the government to account. The government exercises firm control over the process of these hearings too – with the effect of minimising the amount of time in which the opposition can make the enquiries the system is supposed to facilitate. Consideration of all Government appropriations and performance against expenditure is limited to a public hearing of up to nine hours, one day per year. Within this time limit, only half of the day's hearing is set aside to questions and answers from non-Government members. This reduces the ability to scrutinise appropriations and expenditure for a portfolio for an entire year to a matter of a couple of hours. When coupled with the restrictions on non-Government questions during question time, this does not promote accountability of Government.

Each committee comprises of 4 members from the government and 3 from the non-government parties. A committee is more likely than not to recommend the government's program or proposal no matter what the other committee members have said or done during the committee process, because it is inherently in the governing party's interest to do so.

Procedures within Estimates proceedings are seriously undermined by the inability of members to question public servants directly. All questions must be directed to the Minister who may consult with senior public servants if necessary.¹⁰ This does not promote openness and accountability as public servants must also be accountable for the implementation of policies and programs and should not be prevented from discussing this directly with the Parliament.

New Zealand is perhaps the closest parliamentary model to the Queensland Parliament. The New Zealand Parliament is both a unicameral Parliament and one based on the Westminster system of Government. In that system, committees have the opportunity to consider the Government's spending plans or Estimates for the new financial year over a period of two months after the Budget has been presented in the House.

Under the New Zealand model, committees have the ability to examine departmental documents and call for evidence from ministers and officials before reporting to the House.¹¹ Similarly, the same committees are charged with conducting financial reviews of over 100 public organisations by examining their previous year's performance and current operations. They have more time to consider the elements than the Queensland Parliament's Estimates model, thus enabling a more thorough examination which is considered to be crucial to maintaining Government accountability to the House.¹² An efficiency to be considered from the New Zealand model is that Estimates form part of general committee business and therefore, separate committees are not established for the purposes of considering estimates (like the Commonwealth system). The Clerk of the Queensland Parliament, Neil Laurie believes that the New Zealand system has merit and should be a model that is considered.¹³

¹⁰ Queensland Parliament Tertiary Factsheet 3.12, *Estimates Committees*, p. 2.

¹¹ See, New Zealand House of Representatives, *Parliament Brief*, Select Committees, August 2006, p.2.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Neil Laurie, Clerk of the Queensland Parliament, *Submission to Review of Integrity and Accountability in Queensland*, p. 21.

In contrast to the Queensland system, since 13 May 2009, the Australian Senate's eight legislative and general purpose standing committees each comprise a pair of committees: A Legislation Committee the purpose of which is to deal with bills referred by the Senate, the Estimates process and oversee the performance of departments, including their annual reports, and a References Committee the purpose of which is to deal with all other matters referred by the Senate (often of a policy nature).¹⁴ This system was in place from 1994 to 2006. From September 2006 to May 2009, the system changed to combine the legislation and references committees but this was ultimately overturned in May 2009 to revert to the original system of paired committees. The Commonwealth Parliament marks the 40th anniversary of the Senate's legislative and general purpose standing committee system in July 2010.

Standing committees are appointed at the beginning of each Parliament covering every area of government operations and *"have developed a reputation as the backbone of the Senate's committee work"*.¹⁵ Standing committees *"permit a continuing surveillance of defined fields of government activity, call upon research and advice and create an awareness of the Senate's 'watchdog' function."*¹⁶ In addition, the Senate's standing orders specify the membership of legislative and general purpose standing committees and the number of positions to be allocated to senators from the government, opposition, minority parties and independents.¹⁷

The Senate outlines that legislation committees consist of three government members, two opposition members and one member from the minority groups and independent senators. References committees consist of three opposition members, two government members and one member from the minority groups and independent senators. Government senators chair the eight legislation committees and opposition, minority party or independent senators are elected as deputy chairs. Opposition or minority party senators chair the eight references committees and government senators are elected as deputy chairs.¹⁸ The chair of a committee—or deputy chair when acting as chair—has a casting vote if the vote is tied. Until the change to the system in 2006, membership of committees still provided for opposition, minority or independent chairs of the eight references committees, even from 2004 when the former Howard Government had the majority in the Senate.

In contrast to the powers and procedures of Queensland Estimates Committees, Senate Legislation committees inquire into and report upon the government's estimates of expenditure referred to them by the Senate. *"Public hearings are held at which the relevant Senate ministers, together with senior officials from the organisations whose estimates are being examined, appear before the committees to explain expenditure proposals and to answer questions concerning the effectiveness and efficiency of various programs."*¹⁹ Each committee is allocated four days to conduct hearings during Budget estimates and two days or more to consider additional estimates later in the year. Committees have the ability to question public officials directly in relation to proposed expenditures and the implementation of policies and programs. When information is not provided during a

¹⁴ See <http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/index.htm>

¹⁵ Senate Brief No. 4, *Senate Committees*, February 2010, p. 2.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ See Senate Standing Orders 17 to 25.

¹⁸ Senate Brief No. 4, *Senate Committees*, February 2010, p. 6.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

hearing, the committee sets a date by which that information is required and supplementary hearings can also be held for budget estimates.²⁰

Consideration of estimates is regarded by senators as among the most valuable of the Senate's activities.²¹ The former Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, the Hon. Senator John Faulkner, described the process as the 'best accountability mechanism of any Australian parliament.'²²

Recommendation:

- **Estimates should be the permanent responsibility of a new structure of standing legislation committees and should meet quarterly as well as have extended powers modelled on the New Zealand and Commonwealth Senate systems, such as the time available to consider appropriations, spending and the ability to ask questions directly of public servants.**

Consideration of general legislation

Senate Committees also inquire into and report on any bills or draft bills referred to them. Since 1990 there has been a systematic referral of bills to committees by the Selection of Bills Committee. *"Some bills are considered from a technical point of view while others may be examined in terms of their substance and impact. The practice of routinely referring bills to committees has given Senate committees a greater role in the consideration of legislation. A committee has no power to amend a bill referred to it, but it may recommend amendments or it may advise the Senate to agree to the bill without changes."*²³

To ensure that Queensland parliamentary committees have the opportunity to scrutinise, debate and consider general legislation, the LNP supports a Selection of Bills Committee in Queensland to be modelled on the Senate Selection of Bills Committee. The Senate Selection of Bills Committee is chaired by the Government Whip with the Deputy Chair position being held by the Opposition Whip. Other members include two Government members, two non-Government members and the Whips of other minor parties which results in the Senate Selection of Bills Committee being made up of a majority of non-Government members but chaired by the Government.²⁴ This was also the case when the former Coalition Government had a majority of seats in the Senate during the last Parliament.

The purpose of this Committee is to consider all legislation before the Parliament (except bills which are strictly appropriating revenue or money). It recommends to the Senate which bills should be referred to a committee for detailed inquiry and public consultation, to which committee, and at what stage of their passage they should be referred and the date by which the committee should present its report. This is the most common method by which bills are referred to committees and the Selection of Bills Committee meets weekly when the Senate is sitting.²⁵

The Senate's own Brief states that:²⁶

²⁰ Ibid, pp. 4-5.

²¹ Ibid, p. 5.

²² *Senate Hansard*, 13 May 2004, p. 23209.

²³ Senate Brief No. 4, *Senate Committees*, February 2010, pp. 5-6.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 2.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

By referring bills to the appropriate committees, several bills can be considered in detail simultaneously, thus allowing more time to debate the major issues of the day in the principal forum, the Senate chamber.

The work of the Selection of Bills Committee does not duplicate the work of the Scrutiny of Bills Committee whose role is specifically to examine and assess bills against personal rights and liberties criteria.

Another important feature of Senate Committee powers is the ability to establish a sub-committee. Sub-committees may be appointed consisting of three or more of its members and any matters which the Committee is empowered to consider can be delegated to a sub-committee. Sub-committees usually have the same powers as their parent committees but must report their findings back to the parent committee rather than the Senate. Sub-committees can increase the flexibility of committees and enable them to pursue several tasks simultaneously.²⁷ The LNP believes that this could be a very useful feature to include in the reform of Queensland parliamentary committees as it would enable the more efficient consideration of some matters and increase the responsiveness of committees and thereby, the Parliament.

Any expansion of the Committee structure to enable it to incorporate its core functions and contribute to the Parliament's constitutional responsibility requires adequate resources and support. The LNP is of the view that if a committee system were implemented akin to the recommendations in this submission, the Legislative Assembly would require greater resources to staff and facilitate the expanded and portfolio-specific activities of each committee.

Without reform of the Estimates process, establishment of the Selection of Bills Committee to enable greater consideration of legislation and for some committees to be non-Government chaired similar to the References Committees of the Senate, the Government will continue to control and dominate the Parliament, endlessly blurring the separation of powers between the Parliament and the Executive.

Recommendations:

- **A system of Legislative and General Purpose (References) Standing Committees should be established, fashioned in a model akin to that present in the Commonwealth Senate would provide greater time for the questioning of government ministers and key bureaucrats, greater publicity for those committee hearings and a broader scope of matters that are subject to inquiry.**
- **Establishment of a Selection of Bills Committee which is legislated to have a majority of non-government members and tasked with referring necessary general legislation to the relevant Standing Committee for inquiry and report.**
- **Standing Committees should be split similar to Senate Committees according to Legislation and References – with Legislation Committee to have a permanent mandate to also consider Estimates. Within this, the make up of the Committees is Government chaired for the Legislation Committee and non-Government chaired for the References Committee.**
- **Both Legislation and References Committees should have the power to establish sub-committees to enable a more efficient inquiry process where necessary.**

²⁷ Senate Brief No. 4, *Senate Committees*, February 2010, p. 7.

- Committee Secretariats should be adequately resourced with the necessary skills and expertise to support the efficient conduct of each Committee's activities.

4. The effectiveness of the operation of the committee structure of the 53rd Parliament following the restructure of the committee system on 23 April 2009

In the 21st century, Parliament is subservient to the numerically strong Labor Executive Government²⁸ with the Parliamentary Opposition largely ignored on matters fundamental to the operation of Parliament. The restructure of the parliamentary committee system following the 2009 State Election, without consultation with the Parliamentary Opposition, but announced by media release by Premier Bligh²⁹ is testament to this point. There was no initial review by an independent third party or careful reference to and consultation with a Parliamentary Committee.

With breathtaking hubris, the Labor Premier's media statement said: *"Just as governments require renewal, institutions like Parliament need to be refreshed to make them more effective and this is the most significant shake-up of these committees in decades,"*³⁰ and it was the Premier's *"belief that this system will produce better policy and better legislation for the people of Queensland."*³¹ The Leader of the Opposition John Paul Langbroek said that the foreshadowed changes were *"a case of the executive controlling the parliament"*³² and unilaterally deciding what is going to happen with the committee structure.

The evidence suggests that the changes to the Parliamentary Committee structure and *"many of the improvements implemented post-Fitzgerald, have proven to be faux improvements and must now be revisited"*.³³ The restructure of the committee system in April 2009 has not in any way addressed its inadequacies, or created the system envisaged by the Fitzgerald Report. In fact, in direct contrast to the comments of the Chair of PEARC, the restructure has created a system of committees as 'policy units' at the expense of assisting the Parliament to meet its core constitutional responsibilities of scrutiny over legislation, appropriations and public administration performance.

The LNP agrees with the Clerk of the Parliament, Neil Laurie that despite the changes to the Committee system in April 2009, *"it is still defective in terms of its ability to scrutinise government."*³⁴

It is fundamental that *"a unicameral parliament should have a committee system that encompasses and scrutinises the array of functions/portfolio of government."*³⁵ It is not surprising that successive Labor governments have wanted to maintain their control of the Parliament and not be subjected to any accountability but until recently, there were no committees with responsibility for health, economics and education. In contrast, an LNP government would ensure that the Committee structure of each Parliament reflects the business of the government so that the activities of all

²⁸ The ALPQ 51 Members of Parliament (of which 18 are Ministers and 9 Parliamentary Secretaries), LNP 32, Independents 6.

²⁹ Bligh, A, Premier The Hon, "Premier Announces Parliamentary Committee Shake-up", April 20, 2009, Ministerial Media Statements, <http://statements.cabinet.qld.gov.au/>.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Langbroek, J-P, "Parliament of Queensland Amendment Bill", a Speech by John-Paul Langbroek extracted from Hansard Tuesday, May 19, 2009, www.jplangbroek.com.

³³ Neil Laurie, Clerk of the Queensland Parliament, *Submission to Review of Integrity and Accountability in Queensland*, p. 11.

³⁴ Ibid, p 21.

³⁵ Ibid, p 20.

areas of government fall within the responsibility of the relevant Committee and are subject to scrutiny.

It should be observed that the 2006 decision of the Labor government to remove section 57 of the *Criminal Code (Qld)*, substantially undermined the seriousness of the work of committees. That section, prior to its repeal, had made it a criminal offence to knowingly give a false answer before the Legislative Assembly or a committee of it, with a maximum penalty of 7 years of imprisonment. The reinstatement of this provision would increase the value of the information presented to committees, and help to prevent the government and senior bureaucrats from avoiding their obligation to be frank before these bodies.

The procedures for the Committee hearings are complex, and they are currently manipulated by the government to cause maximum delay and thereby starve the Opposition of the chance to spend the time it needs asking questions it must do its job effectively.

The LNP supports the recommendations of the Clerk, Neil Laurie in his response to the Government's Review of Integrity and Accountability in Queensland, that:³⁶

- **A unicameral parliament should have a committee system that encompasses and scrutinises the array of functions/portfolios of government.**
- **Fitzgerald's vision for a comprehensive system of parliamentary committees should be finally realised.**

In addition, the LNP recommends:

- **The establishment of a committee structure of legislative and general purpose standing committees that mirrors the business and activities of the government of the day.**

The LNP also supports the Clerk's final recommendation in this area that "*such a system should not be designed by executive government and foisted on the Parliament*".³⁷ However, the Clerk suggested that the new system should be recommended after careful examination by a bipartisan select committee but the LNP believes that this would not be sufficient under the current arrangements because any select committee would still be dominated by the Government.

It may not be protocol to pre-empt the outcomes of this Committee's inquiry. It is likely however (given that it is systemic in our current parliamentary committee system), that this Committee's final report will merely be another front that is dominated by the will and political opportunism of the Executive.

As stated above, it is the LNP's preference for a committee model akin to the Commonwealth Senate and the establishment of a Selection of Bills Committee. In government the LNP would institute a Royal Commission with specific terms of reference to examine governance, electoral and parliamentary practice. It is through this Royal Commission that an LNP Government would ultimately seek recommendations on complete reform of parliamentary processes, including its committee system.

³⁶ Ibid, p 22.

³⁷ Ibid.