



8/205 Montague Rd WEST END, QLD 4101

tel +61 7 3211 4466 fax +61 7 3211 4655

edoqld@edoqld.org.au www.edoqld.org.au

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Committee Secretary
Economics and Governance Committee
Parliament House
Sent via email: egc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Chair and Committee Members

Submission on the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission on the Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 (**Electoral Bill**).

About EDO Qld

EDO Qld is a non-profit community legal centre with 30 years of experience providing legal assistance to clients from around Queensland, both rural and urban areas, on environmental law matters that are in the public interest. Our solicitors provide legal advice to over a thousand individuals every year in total, through our educational events and in response to specific advice requests by clients. We also provide representation on public interest environment matters and undertake work to improve our environment and governance laws for the better health of our environment and communities. Our legal work covers a range of planning, environmental and resource law topics, including accountability and transparency in governance. A key function of EDO Qld is to provide assistance to the Queensland Parliament and government in improving the drafting of Bills relevant to EDO Qld's areas of practice.

Overall comments on the Bill

Overall, we support the policies proposed to be implemented in this Bill. Elections at all levels of government that are free from corruption and which hold the confidence of the people are fundamental to the functioning of our democracy.

We particularly support the proposed provisions which:

- expand the ECQ's statutory functions to include administering and promoting compliance with the election funding and financial disclosure provisions of the Electoral Act and the corresponding provisions of the LGEA (recommendation 31 of the Belcarra Report);
- place an obligation on donors to notify a recipient of the true source of a gift (recommendation 6 of the Belcarra Report);
- amend and introducing new offence and penalty provisions within the Electoral Act to improve consistency with the LGEA and the Referendums Act 1997 (the Referendums Act) to support compliance (recommendation 30 of the Belcarra Report);

- increasing the period over which funding and disclosure prosecutions can be brought from three years to four years from commission of the offence;
- improving fairness for those in shorter periods of detention by aligning Queensland's position on prisoner voting with the Commonwealth position post the High Court decision in *Roach v Electoral Commission* [2007] HCA 43;
- requiring the ECQ to publish election information in relation to first preference votes and the distribution of preferences, and provide elector information to a registered political party or independent member on request for a purpose related to an election;

We also note that more needs to be done in Queensland to increase integrity, accountability and transparency of decision making to ensure it is in the public interest.

We refer to our submissions to the Committee's inquiry into the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 which provide recommendations for further action that could be taken by the Queensland Government to increase accountability and transparency and reduce the risks of corruption in Queensland.

Yours faithfully



Revel Pointon
Senior Solicitor
Environmental Defenders Office (Qld) Inc