

Kirsten Lovejoy



Attention: Finance and Administration Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the Finance and Administration Committee inquiries into possible changes to the duration of terms for the Queensland Parliament.

Support Fixed Term Elections

- After the 2015 State election, it is clear that the public deserves to have elections held at a time that is convenient to the general population.
- Elections should not be held at a time that suits the government's immediate political agenda.
- Having fixed terms will ensure people can better accommodate elections into their general activity, helping to avoid key holiday periods and other important events.
- Fixed terms will also support new, emerging voters to enrol and participate in the election process, encouraging greater engagement in the political process.

Support Three Year Terms – Government Accountability

- With no upper house or proportional representation in parliament, three year terms provide the voting public with the most immediate opportunity to exercise their democratic right to hold government to account.
- There is no evidence to support the argument that extending government terms to four years would provide any additional security to business. However, should it be the case, it is unclear why the interests of business should override those of the general public. The general public includes business interests and therefore business lobbyists should be afforded the same weight as everyone else.
- The bureaucratic inertia experienced pre and post-elections is not without issue. However, until there is greater accountability in government through proportional representation, the three year fixed term offers the public the greatest level of government scrutiny.

Retain the clause requiring a referendum to extend terms

- The length of term is a decision that should rest with the people, not the Executive Government of the day who will have specific objectives and vested interests.

Support the introduction of fixed terms outside of a referendum

- There is no need to go to a referendum to apply fixed terms.
- A referendum should be reserved for real government reform and the design of the Queensland electoral system, such as on the issue of proportional representation.
- Referenda are usually held for significant, politically contentious issues.
- The scope and form of a referendum question can deliver an undesirable result, for example where more than one issue is addressed but only one answer can be given.

Support genuine reform to improve government accountability

- While deeper reform is not being considered as part of this consultation process, it is important to recognise that it plays a part.
- Steps should be taken to shift parliament into a more accountable system that more effectively supports democratic decision-making and which provides true public representation through proportional representation.

Sincerely

Kirsten Lovejoy