

Finance and Administration Committee

From: anne boccabella [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 20 October 2015 1:59 PM
To: Finance and Administration Committee
Subject: Submission on Fixed Terms of the Queensland Parliament

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Attention: Finance and Administration Committee

via Email

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.

I do not support 4 year fixed term elections

- > From my experiences of previous elections , it is clear that the public deserves to have elections held at a time that is convenient to the general population, not elections sprung on them while they are mid-holiday.
- > Elections should not be held at a time that suits the government's immediate political agenda.
- > If we have to have a fixed term 3 year fixed terms will suffice. Certainly I can see the value of fixed term to ensure people can better accommodate elections into their general activity, helping to avoid key holiday periods and other important events. However, with good voter education campaigns through better funding through the Electoral Commission Queensland the same could outcomes could be achieved.

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.
- > Poor Governments need to be held to account sooner rather than later.
- > There is no evidence to support the argument that extending government terms to four years would provide any additional security to business. In fact, if a poor government is talking down business or fails to provide policy that supports small business a longer term may be detrimental to most business and employment opportunities. Further, 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 changes experienced pre and post-elections is not without issue. So until there is greater accountability in government through proper consultation and transparency, and possibly proportional representation, a fixed term will do little to offer the public a 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 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 consultation methodology (I draw your attention to research, blogs, a parliamentary paper, and government document produced that reflect worlds best practice <https://placing.wordpress.com/2011/08/19/report-south-east-queensland-community-attitudes-to-consultation-engagement/>; https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/explore/education/APEC_2011/01_GlendaEmmerson_EngagingQueensland.pdf; <https://www.qld.gov.au/web/community-engagement/guides-factsheets/documents/engaging-queenslanders-methods-and-techniques.pdf> and true public representation through proportional representation.
- > Political campaigns and political relationships especially those involving property developers affecting planning and zoning changed need far greater scrutiny and accountability. We continue to lose heritage buildings and heritage parks. These wonderful historic and places of heritage are being severely impacted by new and inappropriate developments that devalue the heritage of those places/buildings. All political fund raising should be totally transparent. Queensland politicians ought to ensure their good standing by ensuring anti-corruption practices strengthen our political system. Lately there is example after example where political leaders misread the public position to such an extent they or their party representatives think it is ok to charge or offer \$X,000 for a seat at a dinner where the payers are guaranteed a meeting with a politician. This is the thin edge of the wedge of corrupt practices seeping to gain a toe-hold and the beginning of more entrenched corrupt practices that if current politicians do not make every effort to stamp out will taint their good reputations.

Thank-you for allowing me to make this submission.

Sincerely

Anne Boccabella

Anne Boccabella
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