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Sent: Tuesday, 20 October 2015 4:42 PM
To: Finance and Administration Committee
Subject: four year terms

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THREE OR FOUR YEAR TERMS FOR STATE PARLIAMENT.

THREE YEAR TERMS.

With three year terms, there is a period of settling in, particularly for a new government, and in less than two years, the need to start preparing for the next election.

The fear of introducing any new reform too late in the electoral cycle renders government ineffective for the last year of the term.

FOUR YEAR TERMS.

I firmly believe that fixed four year terms are far preferable in that any government has far more scope for fulfilling their stated agenda.

Four year terms provide a much longer period of stability, and most governments are able to achieve their objectives.

The fixed term, with the next election date known, obviates the nervousness for all involved – government, business, and all those involved in forward planning.

It also does away with the rot that goes on where media continually speculate about election dates. This speculation is a complete turnoff for members of the public, and destroys respect for all politicians.

The fixed term (with provision for an election to be held with a loss of confidence in the government etc.) eliminates the rotting of the system by one individual (the State Premier) to gain unfair advantage for his Party.

OTHER JURISDICTIONS.

All other States in Australia have moved to four year terms, most of them with a fixed date for the next election. Since their introduction, we have seen far more stability and certainty, whereas there has been obvious instability in Queensland and Federally.

MECHANISMS.

We have witnessed the failure of referenda many times over the years, often due to wording deliberately designed to result in rejection. The 1998 referendum on the Republic, where the Question was complicated by insertion of wording about the means of selection of a President, is a classic example.

I submit that the question should simply be “Are you in favour of four year terms for the Queensland State Parliament?” There should be no reference to starting dates or other confusing wording.

Obviously, the case for a yes vote may include further information by way of explanation.

STARTING DATE.

I strongly urge that the referendum be conducted in late 2016, or very early in 2017.

It could be timed to coincide with the Federal referendum on Aboriginal Recognition scheduled for sometime in 2017 (April?) to save costs, but that is rather late.

If the poll is favourable to the change to four years, the necessary legislation could be enacted to take effect for the ensuing term of the Queensland Parliament from early 2018.

I cannot think of any logical reason to delay the process beyond that election.

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Prepared 19 October 2015