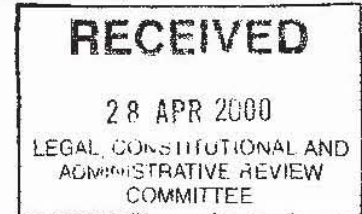PERSONAL SUBMISSION
"Four Year Parliamentary Terms"
Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee,
Queensland Parliament.

From: L. Nightingale,

23rd April 2000.

I oppose a four year Parliamentary term for the Queensland
Parliament for the following reasons:
(1) Insufficient time has passed since the last Queensland
referendum on four year terms. I suggest that a referendum should
not occur until another five or ten years.
(2) The present three year unfixed terms have been abused by
politicians who have called early elections for political
purposes.
(3) Three year fixed terms should be tried first before
considering four year terms. Politicians are responsible for
undermining the present Parliamentary terms by not allowing terms
to run their full time.
(4) Four year terms will give too much political power to
politicians operating in a unicameral Queensland Parliament.
(5) Because power has a corrupting effect, there will be a
greater tendency towards corruption with the increase in
political power resulting from four year terms. This is even more
pronounced in a unicameral Parliament.
(6) Provides extra power with no corresponding checks, balances
or sanctions mechanisms necessary for a healthy democracy. There
are numerous examples of abuse of executive power in Queensland.
The most recent was introducing four year terms for local
governments in Queensland without having a referendum of
Queensland voters. The past abuse of political power in
Queensland is legendary.

I support three year fixed terms for these reasons:
(1)This alternative provides the best balance between the
interests of all involved considering our unicameral
parliamentary system.
(2) There is a good prospect that this alternative would receive
cross party support. In my view in comparison to four year terms
there would be more chance of cross party support for fixed three
year terms.
(3) More support by Queensland voters than four year terms.
(4) Has the advantages of the four year term because the length
of Parliament would be extended, because there would be no early
elections called.
(5) Overcomes the main problems associated with the present three
year unfixed term.
(6) Is more appropriate for a unicameral parliament. Overcomes
the problems outlined in the arguments against four year terms in
4,5 and 6 which deal with power and corruption with four year
terms.
(7) Three year fixed terms should be tried first before
considering four year terms. Politicians are responsible for
undermining three year unfixed terms by not allowing terms to run
their full length.

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With my proposal for a three year fixed term, I would propose
that elections be held in September because this avoids the
Christmass period and the financial year changeover and the local
Government elections in March.

I would support full reserve powers for the Governor to dissolve
Parliament.

I would propose the same "no dissolution" provisions for the
three years of a fixed term as stated on page 4 of the background
paper in 5, R5.2.

Any changes to the present system should be entrenched in the
State Constitution.

I would ask the Committee to recommend that a three year fixed
term be recommended to the Queensland Government as a preferred
option to four year terms. If this is not possible then I would
ask the Committee to give equal support to both options to be run
concurrently at a referendum so that the People of Queensland
would have the widest choices. If we are serious about democracy
then this must be the minimum outcome if change is recommended. I
challenge the Committee and Government on this point!

To only put the one option of four year terms to Queenslanders
and to exclude the three year fixed term option can only be
interpreted in one way; as a balant move for more Political Power
by the Government of the day.

Finally, I wish to advise that I am not a member of any political
party.

Yours Sincerely,
L. Nightingale.