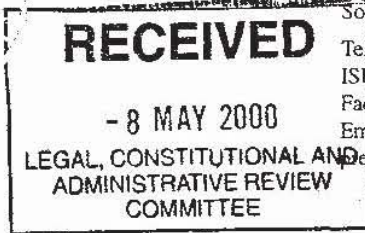


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Submission No 18
Spec 28-1

Mr Gary Fenlon MLA
Chair
Legislative Assembly of Queensland
Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Fenlon

Review of the Queensland Constitutional Review Commission's recommendation for four-year parliamentary terms

You have asked for our comments on your plan to adopt a maximum parliamentary term of four years, with a fixed minimum period of three.

The details of your proposal are similar to those adopted by this State in 1985, except for those provisions of South Australia's *Constitution Act 1934* which relate to the Governor's ability to dissolve the House of Assembly in the first three years. The associated checks and balances which characterise a bicameral parliamentary system will necessarily differ from those of a unicameral system such as Queensland's.

South Australia introduced the new arrangements (with bipartisan support) for a number of reasons. The most significant was to provide governments with the opportunity for a more strategic and long term approach to policy making, one which would also benefit all sections of the community, including the business sector.

In effect it would allow new governments a 'settling in' period and a chance to put their policies into practice without the threat of an impending election. It would also ensure the stability needed for taking 'hard' decisions, which may be in the interests of good government in the long term but may be electorally unpopular in the short term.

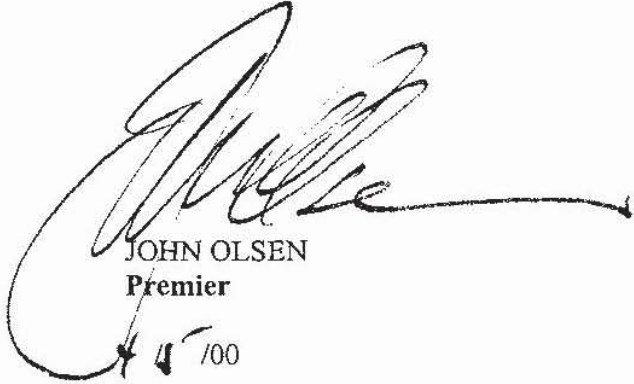
There was also evidence of the electorate's disaffection with too frequent elections.

It is not possible to evaluate the success of these arrangements definitively, but I believe that the guaranteed three year term provides a more stable electoral cycle in terms of government planning and policy implementation, for business planning and for party campaign planning.

I believe that it also ensures that people can view a government's achievements over a longer period and thus judge its success (or failure) more appropriately.

I hope that this will be of some assistance.

Yours sincerely



JOHN OLSEN
Premier
4/00