



Australia United Queensland

Incorp No:1A28856

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The Research Director
Legal, Constitutional & Administrative Review Committee
Parliament House, George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

11 MAY 2000
LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL AND
ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW
COMMITTEE

Re: Submission for a four year Parliamentary term
Q.C.R.C.'s Recommendation 5.2

Submission No 30
Spec 28-1

Dear Sir/ Madam

- 1.0 Australia United Inc. membership, want a fixed three year parliamentary term for the Queensland Legislative Assembly.
- 1.1 No further changes should be made to the Queensland Constitution unless agreed upon at a referendum passed by a majority of the voters of Queensland.
- 2.0 Good government is achieved by having a strong Opposition. Should a rogue be elected with a large majority, there would be a depleted and weak opposition. A rogue government could pass bad legislation and bring havoc to Queensland. Even three years would be too long in such a situation, but at least the people would only have to tolerate the circumstances for a minimum period if the status quo were to remain.
- 2.1 As there is no Upper House in the State of Queensland to effect the normal checks and balances implicit in the Westminster System, it becomes more necessary for the voters to show their approval or disapproval at the Ballot Box.
- 2.2 The premise of " Government of the people, for the people, by the people " will be eroded further and thereby denying the people the earlier opportunity of voting out a government not to their liking.
- 3.1 Their argument of financial stability bears some merit, but as elections are not always clear cut and often take some time to determine a clear outcome, even disregarding any Electoral Appeal, the functions of government carry on through the endeavours of Queensland Public Servants.
- 3.2 Legislation is only passed through the sittings of duly elected Members of the Legislative Assembly. If a four year term argument turns on the lack of attention to duty under a three year term eg.
 - a) The first budget is devoted to paying off the promises made at the previous election.
 - b) The third budget is devised with the anticipation of promises to be made at the forthcoming election and
 - c) the second budget is the only one likely to be devoted to important long term policies.

We suggest that our legislators sit in Parliament more often and devote themselves to the tasks at hand, rather than extend their term of Office.

- 3.3 Budgets should be laid down for the good governance of the people, not to be used as a financial form of bribery to pay off electoral promises or anticipated electoral "sweeteners".
- 3.4 Consequently, the voters should be able to judge a government on its performance over a three year period and vote accordingly, rather than vote on the budgetary sweeteners made at the end of a four year period.
- 3.5 We consider a four year period would give any government an extra year to save up and make bigger financial promises to court the votes of voters who may not have been satisfied with the performance of the government, but would be enticed by the bigger electoral "sweeteners".
- 4.0 If all voters were able to observe, all the time and at any time, the performances of Parliamentarians during Parliamentary Sittings, and see how often the Chamber is virtually empty, or how often the Chamber is reduced to an unruly playground squabble, it would not be difficult to draw the conclusion that three year terms are more than sufficient for those Parliamentarians who are dedicated to both government and opposition.
- 4.1 The achievements of government via the Parliament are sparse in comparison with the Board of Directors of a private enterprise organisation whose Directors can change more often than Members of the Legislative Assembly without upsetting the budget and financial planning and profits of such an organisation.

Conclusion

A four year term has already been defeated by Referendum in recent times i.e. 1991 and therefore there does not appear to be any compelling reasons why this topic should be raised again. However, if the proposition of a four year term of government is revisited, there should be no change without a Referendum being passed by a majority of Queensland voters.



John Mackintosh,
President,
Australia United Bayside Branch,
PO.Box 8107 Wynnum North 4178.
Email clanchattan@ozemail.com.au
Fax. 07 39011016