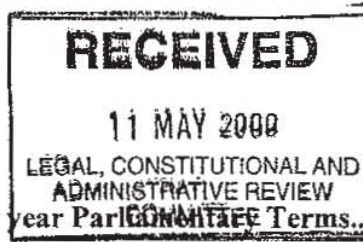


Submission No 31
Spec 28.1

The Research Director
Legal, Constitutional and
Administrative Review Committee
Parliament House
George St Brisbane Q 4000



Paul Carew

May 10 2000

Submission Re four year Parliamentary Terms..

A proposal to extend the Parliamentary term to four years was rejected by the People of Queensland in 1991 and to say that the case for longer terms of Parliament is still valid does not bear scrutiny. Such statement is a politician's statement who by his very occupation has a conflict of interest.

This is clearly demonstrated by the fact as stated in the Commission's position paper that Premier Peter Beattie has already indicated he will not wait for release of the Commission's report but introduce the 'Bill' anyway. Predictably, if Beattie or indeed any other incumbent politician was asked why they supported a longer term of Parliament/Government, their answer will be and always has been 'but I want to do more good for the people and implement my policies etc'.

These are the danger signals. It means and is particularly applicable to the incumbent Leader, that power and ego has replaced common sense, and any feeling or real knowledge of how the ordinary people, the battlers are suffering. The incumbent has forgotten if indeed he ever really knew that a truly democratic Government/Parliament is one of by the people for the people. The top end of Town, the successful Professionals and successful business patrons don't need the help of Government much other than for approvals for worthwhile projects and development, they can look after themselves. The Governments role is to keep them honest. Not kow tow to them or be influenced into unworthy political decision making just because the 'Party' received some significant donations.

A Governments real and proper role is to look after the majority not take away from them as now seems to be the norm. The majority of course is not the top end of Town nor the successful people but the ordinary person who for the last 30 years is the Aussie battler. The People no longer trust their Governments.

Another Government role is to seriously encourage small business the operative word being small, not small as defined by unknowing, inept or incompetent bureaucrats who now tell us a small business is one that turns over a minimum of \$3 million dollars per annum. Its small business who provide employment for the less skilled or educated members of our society, and the tradesmen and the apprentices, who seem to be a disappearing species.

A Governments role is not to be dictated to by other Countries, or Global organisations, and to do so, which again seems to have become the norm is to make a mockery of democracy. Surely it is better to be poor and free with ones' pride and dignity in tact than to become a slave to foreign corporations or organisations like the UN for example who don't really have the best interests of Australians at heart. If a Parliament/Government is doing its work ethically, honestly, and by deed not by hollow self serving words, the majority who may be battlers but they are not stupid will re-elect a good government. In fact they will even elect a bad Government if they become influenced enough to think that the opposition would be worse. This is known as the 'Gobbels' syndrome. Tell the people a porky often enough and they will come to believe it. (Nazi Germany 1930's). Sadly this syndrome has become part of the Australian Political scene for far too long now. Hitler granted himself open ended terms of Government and look what happened then.

No, there is no valid case for longer terms of Parliament, indeed there is a case for citizens initiated referendums, so that a really bad Parliament can be dissolved before its term of Government expires.

I am an older mature age person and I was 'there' and have seen how the people of Australia and in my parent country have been lied to, cheated out of their birthrights, had their hard won Public assets sold off, even their country's Gold reserves, the rise of racial discrimination, the enormous rise of a drug culture, all which could have been stopped by a series of caring and ethical Governments 30 years ago, and all of this with 3 or 4 year terms of Government. Just imagine how much worse it could be with automatic longer terms of Government.

In regard to self interest of incumbent or serving Politicians which naturally enough would always be denied, the very committee conducting the review and consolidation of a Queensland Constitution and the review for a four year Term of Parliament is comprised of mostly politicians. Even the budget for informing the Public about these reviews is clearly intended to do the opposite, the Committee itself is bemoaning the fact that so few persons attended the 10 Public meetings held or the Public response with submissions to earlier reviews in regard to such important matters like the operation of Parliament and the Constitution consolidation review. The New Bill of Rights, being promoted in 1999, even though it was a Parliamentary Bill of Rights, received less than 100 submissions.

If the commission want any confirmation as to how the Public should be informed on important matters which will effect them and their generations to come, just consider the recent Republic referendum campaign, with the distribution of a booklet to every household in Australia which despite the fact that it was seriously flawed and loaded in favour of a Republic, the Australian People were for perhaps the first time informed of a major issue, and saw through the intent of the flaws and voted for the result we all know. If Australia had become a Republic, and adopted say six year terms of Parliament like the USA, which would have happened sooner or later, the voice of the people, would have become fainter and fainter.

If any change is to be made regarding the term of the Queensland Parliament, it has to go to the People of Queensland by referendum and in my considered opinion an alternative provision should be included in such referendum which provides the People of Queensland with a mechanism to sack their elected Government if required, either by a Citizens Initiated referendum or some other means loaded in favour of the people. The people of Queensland and indeed the People of Australia deserve and should demand a much improved system of checks and balances of their Parliaments and accountability of their Political representatives and the bureaucrats who should be at service of the people who employ them. Eg. The Public. I reject the notion of any longer term of the Parliament of Queensland.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Owen', written over a horizontal line.