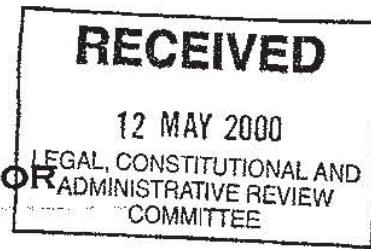




OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



11<sup>th</sup> May 2000

YOUR REFERENCE:  
OUR REFERENCE: #177198

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

FAXED  
12/5/2000

Dear Ms Newton

**FOUR YEAR PARLIAMENTARY TERMS - SUBMISSION**

On behalf of Cairns City Council I am pleased to be able to submit this local government's views on the QCRC's recommendation 5.2 of a "four (4) year Parliamentary term" for the Queensland Legislative Assembly with a fixed minimum period of three (3) years.

As you know, the term for Local Government has just been increased from three (3) years to four (4) years which provides a better opportunity for the Council of the day to implement its policies to be progressed and fully assessed. Like in Government, the three (3) year term was not long enough to give the governing body the chance to provide certainty and stability.

The certainty of working with a government over a longer period enables the private sector and other agencies to plan their business cycles with greater predictability.

Apart from encouraging genuine leadership, further time is often required in order to plan the best approach in resolving difficult economic and social issues. It is important to note that Queensland is now the only State that still has a three (3) year term. It is also of significance that three (3) of the five (5) States that have the longer term have coupled it with a fixed term element, the so-called "maximum term with a qualified fixed term component".

The QCRC's recommendation is that the proposed provisions should be referendum entrenched. It is understood that this provision has been proposed, for unless entrenched, any extension of the parliamentary term and any restrictions on an early dissolution of the legislative Assembly, could be changed by statute at any time by the Government of the day.

It is deemed important that appropriate measures be taken to give the proposal the opportunity to allow it to be tested, otherwise exploitation could still be available for the calling of an early election on the issues of the day.

The longer term would also provide other cost benefits such as a saving on the cost of holding elections.

The obvious argument against the longer term is the longer period in which the electorate must wait to register its approval or disapproval of the Government. History shows that Governments are elected to more than one (1) consecutive term (with very few exceptions), which clearly demonstrates a strong argument in favour of the four (4) year terms. As the last year of the term is clearly focused on planning the for next election, the three (3) year term just does not give the opportunity for long term planning and implementation.

#### **SUPPORT THE QCRC'S RECOMMENDATION:**

From the comments made, this Council supports your Committee's recommendation:

- R5.2 That the maximum term of the Legislative Assembly be extended to four years subject to a provision that a dissolution may not be granted during the first three (3) years unless (a) a vote of no confidence is carried or a vote of confidence fails to be carried, or (b) an appropriation bill is defeated or fails to pass. The provisions should be referendum entrenched.

It is believed that the extended term will give the Government of the day the opportunity to consider, plan, implement and be tested. The present term often does not allow the chance to fully implement the policy proposals so that the benefits or otherwise, can be properly assessed.

Yours faithfully,

  
Kevin Byrne  
Mayer