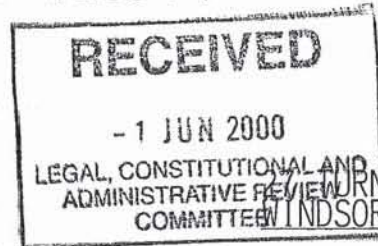


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12 MAY 2000

MS KERRY NEWTON,
RESEARCH DIRECTOR,
LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL &
ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE,
PARLIAMENT HOUSE,
CNR GEORGE & ALICE STREETS,
BRISBANE QLD 4000

DEAR Ms NEWTON,

RE: PROPOSED REFERENDUM ON 4-YEAR TERMS FOR QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENT

WHILE ONE OF MY MAIN POLITICAL CONCERNS IS THE WIDESPREAD INTRODUCTION OF THE "HARE/CLARK" PROPORTIONAL VOTING SYSTEM INTO THIS STATE, I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE SOME COMMENTS ABOUT THE PROPOSED 4-YEAR TERM FOR QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENT.

IRRESPECTIVE OF WHATEVER DECISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE ELSEWHERE IN AUSTRALIA, THREE YEARS IS DEFINITELY LONG ENOUGH BETWEEN ELECTIONS: ESPECIALLY IN THE CASE OF QUEENSLAND, WHERE THERE IS NO UPPER HOUSE TO PROVIDE "CHECKS AND BALANCES".

RATHER THAN SEEK 4-YEAR TERMS, THE ENTRENCHING OF FIXED 3-YEAR TERMS WOULD BE PREFERABLE. WITHIN THIS FRAMEWORK, ANY MID-TERM POLLS HELD TO RESOLVE ANY IMPASSE OR CRISIS, WOULD RESULT IN THE NEWLY ELECTED PARLIAMENT BEING IN OFFICE ONLY UNTIL THE NEXT NORMAL ELECTION DAY. THIS WOULD TEND TO DISUADE INCUMBENT GOVERNMENTS FROM "GOING EARLY" TO MAKE USE OF AN "ADVANTAGEOUS" ISSUE OR SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

AS TO THE "RESERVE POWERS" OF THE STATE GOVERNOR TO APPROVE ANY EARLY ELECTIONS, THESE SHOULD BE GENERALLY LIMITED TO OCCASIONS WHEN A GOVERNMENT LOSES A NO CONFIDENCE MOTION, OR WHEN (A) SUPPLY BILL(S) IS/ARE DEFEATED.

ON A DIFFERENT, BUT RELATED, SCORE, I WOULD PREFER TO SEE A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ENABLING THE INSTITUTION OF A "STANDARDISED ELECTION DAY" (S.E.D.); AS IN THE USA; WHERE, FOR EXAMPLE, ON THE LAST SATURDAY OF EACH MAY, THERE WOULD BE, IN ONE YEAR, AN ELECTION FOR THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND HALF THE SENATE; THE NEXT MAY, ELECTIONS FOR ALL STATE PARLIAMENTS AND TERRITORY ASSEMBLIES; THEN IN THE THIRD YEAR, ALL SHIRES AND MUNICIPALITIES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY; WHILE IN THE FOURTH YEAR, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE OTHER HALF OF THE SENATE. THE "S.E.D." WOULD ALSO BE THE OCCASION ON WHICH REFERENDA, INDICATIVE PLEBESITES, ETC, FOR ANY LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT, WOULD BE HELD.

THANKYOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY OF BEING ABLE TO MAKE SOME COMMENTS ON THIS CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE.

YOURS SINCERELY,

Chris Tooley

CHRIS TOOLEY