



**Legal, Constitutional and
Administrative Review
Committee**

CHAIR

Ms Karen Struthers MP
(Algeria)

DEPUTY CHAIR

Miss Fiona Simpson MP
(Maroochydore)

MEMBERS

Mrs Liz Cunningham MP
(Gladstone)

Mr Peter Lawlor MP
(Southport)

Mr Ronan Lee MP
(Indooroopilly)

Ms Rachel Nolan MP
(Ipswich)

Mrs Dorothy Pratt MP
(Nanango)

SECRETARIAT

LCARC

Parliamentary Annexe
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Phone: (07) 34067307

Fax: (07) 34067070

Email: lcarc@parliament.qld.gov.au

The Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee is a committee of the Queensland Parliament with a broad range of law reform responsibilities. The committee is established under the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*.

Media Release

HANDS ON PARLIAMENT – DEMOCRACY AND INDIGENOUS QUEENSLANDERS

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples represent more than 3% of the Queensland population, yet only one Indigenous person has ever been elected to the Queensland Parliament – Mr Eric Deeral.

The Queensland Parliament's Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee (LCARC) seeks the views of Queenslanders on how to ensure the voices of Queensland's Indigenous people are heard in the state's democratic process. LCARC has released an issues paper to generate discussion on relevant issues.

LCARC Chair, Karen Struthers MP, says, "We consider this inquiry to be an important step towards ensuring that the interests of Indigenous Queenslanders are fully represented in Queensland's system of government. We invite individuals and groups from all sections of the community to write to us and tell us their views."

To give people ideas about what might be possible the committee has included some suggestions in its issues paper, as follows:

- enhancing participation in existing processes through increased voter and civics education, mentoring and political party encouragement
- giving a representative body (such as the federal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission or the state Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Board) direct input into Parliament, for example through participation in question time or debate on bills
- establishing an Indigenous Assembly similar to the Sami Assembly in Norway
- dedicating seats to indigenous peoples in the Queensland Parliament similar to Maori seats in the New Zealand Parliament
- making changes to Queensland's electoral system which might promote greater representation of minority groups.

There are advantages and disadvantages to each of these suggestions. The committee wants to hear people's views on these strategies as well as any other suggestions people have.

Over the coming months the committee will undertake face to face consultation with relevant organisations and in communities throughout Queensland through public hearings, community meetings and visits to some regional areas.

Submissions to the inquiry close Friday, 28 March 2003.

Ms Struthers will be available for interviews from 21 January 2003.

Information about the inquiry, including the issues paper is at <http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Committees/LCARC/LCARCHandsonParl.htm>.

For further information contact: Veronica Rogers at the committee secretariat on 3406 7909.