



The Honourable Rod Welford MP



Queensland
Government

In reply please quote: 2001/03579

Your reference:

Attorney-General
Minister for justice

04 JUN 2001

Mr R D Doyle
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Doyle

On behalf of the Premier, the Honourable Peter Beattie MP and myself, I provide this final response to the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee Report No. 28, November 2000, *The Prevention of Election Fraud: Interim Report* in accordance with s.24 of the *Parliamentary Committees Act 1995*.

Yours sincerely

[Original Signed]

ROD WELFORD MP

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**THE HONOURABLE PETER BEATTIE MP
PREMIER OF QUEENSLAND**

**THE HONOURABLE ROD WELFORD MP
ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE**

Response to Parliament

**LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW
COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 28, NOVEMBER 2000, THE
PREVENTION OF ELECTORAL FRAUD: INTERIM REPORT**

RECOMMENDATION 1

To facilitate and expedite the development of CRU as a means of preventing electoral fraud in Queensland and to provide the State with an enhanced capacity to detect and deter enrolment fraud through conducting 'fraud audits', the committee recommends that:

- (a) the Premier (as the Minister responsible for the coordination of government administration) and the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for The Arts (as the minister responsible for the *Electoral Act 1992*) authorise the development of a State-based enrolment verification computer system capable of capturing and interrogating a range of data from State Government departments and agencies for the purpose of verifying and providing the updated enrolment details to the Australian Electoral Commission;
- (b) such a system be developed and maintained by CITEC under the management and control of the Electoral Commission Queensland;
- (c) the system be developed with appropriate legislative safeguards ensuring the protection of individuals' privacy and additionally, in the case of silent electors, their safety. Such safeguards should include privacy principles relating to the use, collection, storage and disclosure of data for electoral roll maintenance purposes;
- (d) the system be developed in close consultation with the Australian Electoral Commission and be subject to the overview of the Joint Roll Management Committee;
- (e) before the system is put in place, CITEC (in conjunction with the Electoral Commission Queensland) be funded to conduct a preliminary study to:
 - identify the information that is available on State databases and determine cost effective means of using the information to verify and update enrolment details;
 - determine the most effective ways to audit the accuracy and integrity of enrolment details as a means of preventing and detecting electoral fraud;

- estimate the cost of establishing and managing a State enrolment verification computer system and whether such a system is useful to other Government services and whether there is potential to offset operating costs against such services;
- (f) the preliminary study also consider and report on the advantages and disadvantages of:
- (i) continuing to forward the change of address data to electoral authorities to trigger the mailing out of AEC enrolments cards (to effect possible subsequent changes to enrolment details); and/or
 - (ii) introducing a system of automatic enrolment whereby electors filling out government forms (eg; application and renewal forms; change of address forms) are given the option on that form to authorise the direct/automatic updating of their enrolment details;
- (g) once the State Government chooses to support option (i) and/or (ii) above, the system be accordingly created with the capacity to accommodate that option; and
- (h) the system be developed with 'spot on the earth' as its basis rather than either elector name or address as its basis, if feasible to do so.

The Government has authorised funding for the conduct of a feasibility study by the Electoral Commission Queensland, in conjunction with CITEC, to determine the feasibility of establishing the computer system and the cost. The remaining recommendations will be examined in light of the outcome of the study,

RECOMMENDATION 2

In terms of the Electoral Commission Queensland's role as manager of the State enrolment verification system outlined above, the committee further recommends that:

- **The Electoral Commission Queensland's charter contained in the *Electoral Act 1992 (Qld)* be amended to provide for corresponding Electoral Commission Queensland duties and responsibilities in this regard; and**
- **Once the system is in place, the Electoral Commission Queensland's funding be increased to specifically support its role as manager of the system.**

This recommendation will be examined in light of the outcome of the feasibility study.

RECOMMENDATION 3.

The committee further recommends that in addition to the actions suggested by the Committee above, the Premier and the Attorney-General and Minister for

Justice and Minister for The Arts, in conjunction with the Electoral Commission Queensland, initiate immediate discussions with the Australian Electoral Commission to explore options to escalate fraud audit procedures prior to the next State election.

This recommendation is adopted.