

Media Release



Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee

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(Barron River)

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A parliamentary committee has today released a discussion paper into the accessibility of freedom of information (FOI) and judicial review mechanisms in Queensland.

An inquiry by the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee will assess the effectiveness and accessibility of laws allowing the people of Queensland to:

- access government-held personal information and amend that information where it is inaccurate, out-of-date or misleading;
- access information about a government decision; and
- challenge the legality of government decisions.

Dr Lesley Clark MP, the Chair of the Committee, says that, since the enactment of the FOI Act and the Judicial Review Act in the early 1990s, government has changed in nature and become more complex. There have also been additional, complementary developments in public sector accountability during that time.

Dr Clark says, 'The mechanisms in the FOI Act and the Judicial Review Act may no longer be as effective or as accessible.'

'The committee is conscious that legislation providing 'administrative justice' won't fulfil its functions unless mechanisms are accessible to the people who need to use them, and unless those people receive relevant information and assistance.'

The discussion paper, available from the committee, provides information about five key issues the committee wants people to discuss:

- FOI fees and charges;
- the costs associated with proceedings under the Judicial Review Act, and concerns relating to self-represented litigants;
- access to available information about government decisions and actions;
- whether a diversity of people can access administrative justice; and
- resolution of genuine grievances about government decisions in an effective and timely way.

Dr Clark urges the people of Queensland to send the committee their views by 17 March 2006.

In April 2006, the committee will invite the people of Queensland to participate in a conference to discuss issues relevant to the inquiry.

Editor's notes:

- The Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee is a permanent statutory committee of the Queensland Parliament with a broad range of law reform responsibilities including administrative review reform, constitutional reform, electoral reform, and legal reform.
- Further information, including committee publications, is available from: www.parliament.qld.gov.au/LCARC.
- Although she will have parliamentary commitments on Thursday and Friday while Parliament is sitting, Dr Clark will be available for interview - please call the committee's secretariat on 07 3406 7307.
- For further information about the committee's inquiry please contact Julie Copley at the committee's secretariat on 07 3406 7244.