



Speech by

GARY FENLON

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

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LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes—ALP) (10.24 a.m.): As Chair of the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee, I rise at the request of the committee to inform the House of the committee's progress in relation to our current inquiries. Next week we intend to table our report on the preservation and enhancement of individuals' rights in Queensland, which specifically considers whether Queensland should adopt a bill of rights as recommended by the former EARC. We also hope to complete this year a short report on two issues of electoral reform arising from the Mansfield decision. These issues relate to how-to-vote cards and appeals from the Court of Disputed Returns.

Our third inquiry concerns a consolidation of the Queensland Constitution. Public submissions on the former committee's draft legislation have closed and we are currently receiving advice on some suggested amendments to those Bills. We hope to table our report on this issue later this year or early next year.

Our other current inquiry relates to a review of the Strategic Review of the Queensland Ombudsman. Strategic reviews are basically external reviews of the purpose, organisational structure, strategic direction and resourcing of the office. The Ombudsman is an officer of the Parliament and this committee is the conduit through which that accountability to Parliament takes place. The inaugural strategic review of the Ombudsman was conducted by Professor Kenneth Wiltshire and his report was tabled in May 1998. We are evaluating the recommendations made in the report, commenting on other findings of the review where appropriate, and evaluating the strategic review process.

We intend to shortly turn our dedicated attention to this inquiry by conducting a substantial amount of research and carefully analysing submissions received by the committee. We hope to meet with Professor Wiltshire and the Ombudsman next month to discuss relevant issues. We will then focus our energies on conducting the body of this important inquiry over Christmas and the early new year. Professor Wiltshire has made 30 recommendations, some of which relate to how this committee's role in relation to the Ombudsman should be enhanced. We hope that our review may now be completed in a timely fashion so that our recommendations may assist the Ombudsman in implementing any of Professor Wiltshire's recommendations.

Time expired.
