



Speech by  
**Mr DENVER  
BEANLAND**

**MEMBER FOR INDOOROOPILLY**

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Hansard 16 March 2000

**LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
**Report**

**Mr BEANLAND** (Indooroopilly—LP) (10.22 a.m.): I rise to speak to this report. As members have already indicated, there are a couple of areas of concern, that is, the overenthusiastic requirement for people to provide proof of identification when seeking enrolment; and, secondly, the requirement for someone to witness the signature on the enrolment form of those people. On the issue of enrolments, I think it is of concern that justices of the peace were not even going to be considered as appropriate people to witness a person completing an enrolment form.

There is a need to tighten up some of these areas. We have seen some voting fraud previously in Townsville, which one of the previous members mentioned. This does occur from time to time, but we must not be overenthusiastic in the approach that is taken. If this issue is tightened up too much, a number of people could be affected by this, particularly people in remote areas of the State. The committee report states—

"The committee notes that the new Commonwealth witnessing requirements are even more onerous than those associated with applying for an Australian passport. The new passport application form simply requires a witness for passport application purposes to be 18 years of age or over, to have known the applicant for the past 12 months and not to be related to the applicant by birth or marriage. There is no longer a requirement that the witness come from a certain prescribed class."

I think that is one of the problems in the regulations which are still in the process of being formulated. The Commonwealth public servants who are doing this need to be aware that care needs to be exercised in this. Sure, people's signatures need to be witnessed—no-one is suggesting for a moment that they should not be—but that needs to be done in an appropriate way and there needs to be a broad range of community people who can carry out that witnessing.

The second issue, of course, is that of identification. I believe that there are appropriate ways in which to handle that, again without going over the top or being too enthusiastic so that those people who seek to enrol or change their enrolment are not discouraged from doing so.

The previous speaker raised the issue of voluntary voting. I do not believe that this is a process of voluntary voting. If the Government wished to go down the track, there are other ways of handling it instead of this ham-fisted way. I do not believe that that is part of the process at all. As I say, I think there is a need to make some changes, but this is quite overenthusiastic and over the top.

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