



Speech by

DESLEY BOYLE

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

Hansard 16 November 2000

LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Ms BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (10.17 a.m.): I second the motion. Since becoming a member of the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee in 1998 it has been my view that there has been no more important and difficult task given to the committee than this review of the prevention of electoral fraud. The prospect of electoral fraud strikes at the very heart of our democracy and, accordingly, generates strong reactions and opinions from all involved.

At the outset of this review, the committee quite rightly called for submissions and also reviewed available evidence of actual cases or even indications of potential electoral fraud. The outcome in this regard is good. The number of cases proven or even unexplained is small, both in Federal and State jurisdictions. Considering the many millions of enrolled voters and the many, many millions of votes cast in local, State and Federal elections even over the last 10 years, this is confirmation that we have one of the finest democratic systems in the world. There are those who, whether through emotion or out of another agenda, are taking the doomsdayer's position. They say that even a small number of cases is an indication of widespread and extensive fraud and that fraud is rife. This is not based in fact, and were this thinking to gain momentum it could lead to the proverbial tossing out of the baby with the bathwater.

One outcome of this review has been the discovery, as it were, of the new system of continuous roll updating, the establishment of which is well under way thanks to the committed and quality work done by the QEC. This is an initiative of which all Queenslanders can feel proud and from which they can take comfort that there is a continuing drive to ensure and improve the integrity of our enrolment and voting systems.

There are a number of recommendations in the report, though there is one in particular that I would like to draw to the attention of members today. The recommendation is that, in addition to the action 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 of Queensland, initiate immediate discussions with the Australian Electoral Commission to explore options to escalate fraud audit procedures prior to the next State election.

I put before all members of this House the recommendations in the report, but the bottom line is this: the very best and most effective means of preventing electoral fraud is for every eligible adult to ensure that they are enrolled correctly, to check their enrolment from time to time and, when an election is called, to vote. If we each took this privilege and responsibility seriously, we would do better than any other technical or other system change would prevent electoral fraud as well as ensure that any attempts at fraud were rapidly identified. In this way we can protect our democratic system, of which we can be proud. The LCARC report is a good report. I hope it is one which all honourable members will take the time to read from cover to cover.

Time expired.
