




Speech By  
**Michael Crandon**

**MEMBER FOR COOMERA**

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Record of Proceedings, 4 December 2015

**CONSTITUTION (FIXED TERM PARLIAMENT) AMENDMENT BILL;  
CONSTITUTION (FIXED TERM PARLIAMENT) REFERENDUM BILL**

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (11.12 am): I rise as the deputy chair of the committee to make a small contribution to the debate in relation to the inquiry into the introduction of four-year terms for the Queensland parliament, including consideration of the Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Amendment Bill 2015 and Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Referendum Bill 2015, and of course there have been some changes to those bills.

The inquiry process included calling for public submissions, holding public forums around Queensland, briefings with the member for Mansfield—who is the architect of the two bills that I referred to a moment ago—officers of the Electoral Commission of Queensland and public hearings. We also, as was alluded to by the chair of the committee, had an online survey. We considered expert advice on the bills' conformance with fundamental legislative principles. Our public forums were in a number of metropolitan and regional areas including: Brisbane, Toowoomba, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Mount Isa, Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Emerald and Maryborough.

The committee used a variety of local and regional print and radio advertising media to promote the consultation forums. We had many Queenslanders appear before us, including a number of past members of this House. Indeed, local councillors were also in attendance at some of our forums, and I think it is important for us to reflect on the fact that councillors have had four-year terms since 2000. So we were able to get very good advice from them in relation to what their feelings were, particularly if they were in three-year-term councils prior to that. A number of them were, so they were able to give us a contrast between the two. A number of previous members of this House were also prepared to give us their views on things, and they had nothing to gain by it other than coming along to give their strong views. I have to say that by and large across-the-board with very few people against the concept, the support was there for four-year terms, and in particular fixed four-year terms.

All in all, it was a comprehensive inquiry given the limited time available. That is really the only criticism that I have of the process that we went through. I note that our recommendations 9 and 10 are now being sent off to the CLA for further consideration. They, of course, relate to the entrenchment of the committee system. Our recommendations around the minimum six weeks that we refer to in recommendation 9 would, I suggest, be along the lines of fairly simple, straightforward legislation and perhaps legislation that would not be contentious. The more complex legislation certainly deserves more time and more effort by the committee system to give the people of Queensland that voice and that opportunity.

A total of 12 recommendations were made, and in the interests of time I will refer those who are interested in the particular detail of those to Report No. 16. It is a very comprehensive report, as was alluded to by the chair of the committee. There are over 60 pages of material. Those 12 recommendations are quite involved in themselves, quite technical in nature in some parts, and on that

basis I do acknowledge that both sides of the House have accepted, for all intents and purposes, 10 of our 12 recommendations with just some technical detail around bits and pieces of those various recommendations that were accepted. I fully support the concept of the CLA doing a further review of the committee system, because I note that that is due back at the end of February next year. So it will not be any surprise to people as to what the outcome will be; it will all be known before any referendum could possibly be had in relation to the matter.

I think that I am going to pretty much leave it there. I thank the Attorney-General and I thank the shadow Attorney-General for his effort in bringing these two bills to the House. I know that there has been a lot of discussion and negotiation between both sides to make sure that we had it absolutely right for the purpose of coming here today to debate these issues. Of course I thank my colleagues right across the House. We had some very interesting times. We had a cancelled flight on one occasion and it caused a bit of disruption.

**Miss Barton:** And for us!

**Mr CRANDON:** Yes, I must admit that the chair and I managed to find a flight that would take us directly to Cairns and we had to leave the rest of the committee where they were, but there were very good reasons for doing that. In the end it all worked out, and we were able to get back to Townsville to give the people of Townsville an opportunity to give us their views as well.

I particularly thank the expert witnesses. I think it is important to note that the expert witnesses we spoke to were from the academic sphere. They were very open and capable expert witnesses with credentials of their own that gave them a lot of support. Also, the input of the Clerk of the Parliament, who has a vast amount of experience in these areas, was absolutely invaluable to us as a committee. Finally, I thank the people of Queensland who took the time to come and see us, took the time to write to us and took the time to put their questions forward to us and give us their frank views on the matter. It gives me great pleasure to commend the bills and the inquiry to the House.