



Premier of Queensland
Minister for Trade

For reply please quote: CAPS/AT – TF/21/8664 – DOC/21/96760

11 JUN 2021

Mr Neil Laurie
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Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to Petition 3438-20 about a referendum for the restoration of the Legislative Council in the Queensland Parliament, which was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 11 May 2021.

Queensland's electoral laws were significantly reformed in the early 1990s in the wake of the Fitzgerald Commission of Inquiry.

A significant part of these reforms was the abolition of the zonal electoral system in favour of a system in which all electorates should contain an equal number of electors. The one exception to this requirement is where an electoral district has an area greater than 100,000 km², in which case a lesser number of electors in those electorates is allowable.

My Government supports these principles of our electoral system, and has no intention of moving to change them.

In relation to the restoration of an upper house, as you and the petitioners will know, Queensland's Legislative Council was abolished in 1922 and cannot be re-established unless it is supported by Queenslanders at a referendum.

The reintroduction of an upper house in Queensland is not a policy I have taken to the people of Queensland at successive elections and is not a policy my Government intends to pursue.

Queensland's parliamentary committee system, consisting of committees with both government and non-government members, plays an important role in enhancing legislative processes and providing oversight and scrutiny of government actions.

Since taking office, I have ensured the Parliament, through its budget estimates committee process, has been able to undertake full and proper scrutiny of my Government's annual budgets.

Furthermore, my Government has strengthened the Parliament's ability to scrutinise the actions of government by giving parliamentary committees a general power to initiate inquiries as they see fit.

We have also acted to provide statutory recognition of the core matters of the parliamentary committee system in Queensland's Constitution. This constitutional recognition has emphasised the importance of the committee system.

Bills introduced into the Parliament by my Government are also routinely referred to a parliamentary committee for inquiry before they can be further debated. As part of their inquiries into government Bills, committees call for public submissions, hold public hearings and question witnesses. From the information gathered, the committee then prepares a report back to the Assembly on the Bill, outlining recommendations to the Government.

All members of the Legislative Assembly, whether from electorates in South East Queensland or other regions of our State, have the ability to fully participate in all of the debates and processes of the Parliament. All members also have an equal vote on each question before the Legislative Assembly, with matters only being agreed to if a majority of members vote in favour of the question.

Additionally, the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal is also in place, to ensure all members are provided with adequate resources to enable them to provide proper representation to their constituents. This generally results in rural and regional members receiving additional travel and other allowances as recognition of the size and distance of their electorates from Parliament House in Brisbane.

As I have outlined, integrity, accountability and proper consultation and parliamentary processes are key principles my Government has been following since taking office in February 2015.

I hope this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized initial 'A' followed by a long horizontal line.

**ANNASTACIA PALASZCZUK MP
PREMIER OF QUEENSLAND
MINISTER FOR TRADE**