



PARLIAMENTARY committees
as channels for rural and regional
voices to parliament

Bernice Watson

First Clerk Assistant (Committees)
Queensland Parliamentary Service

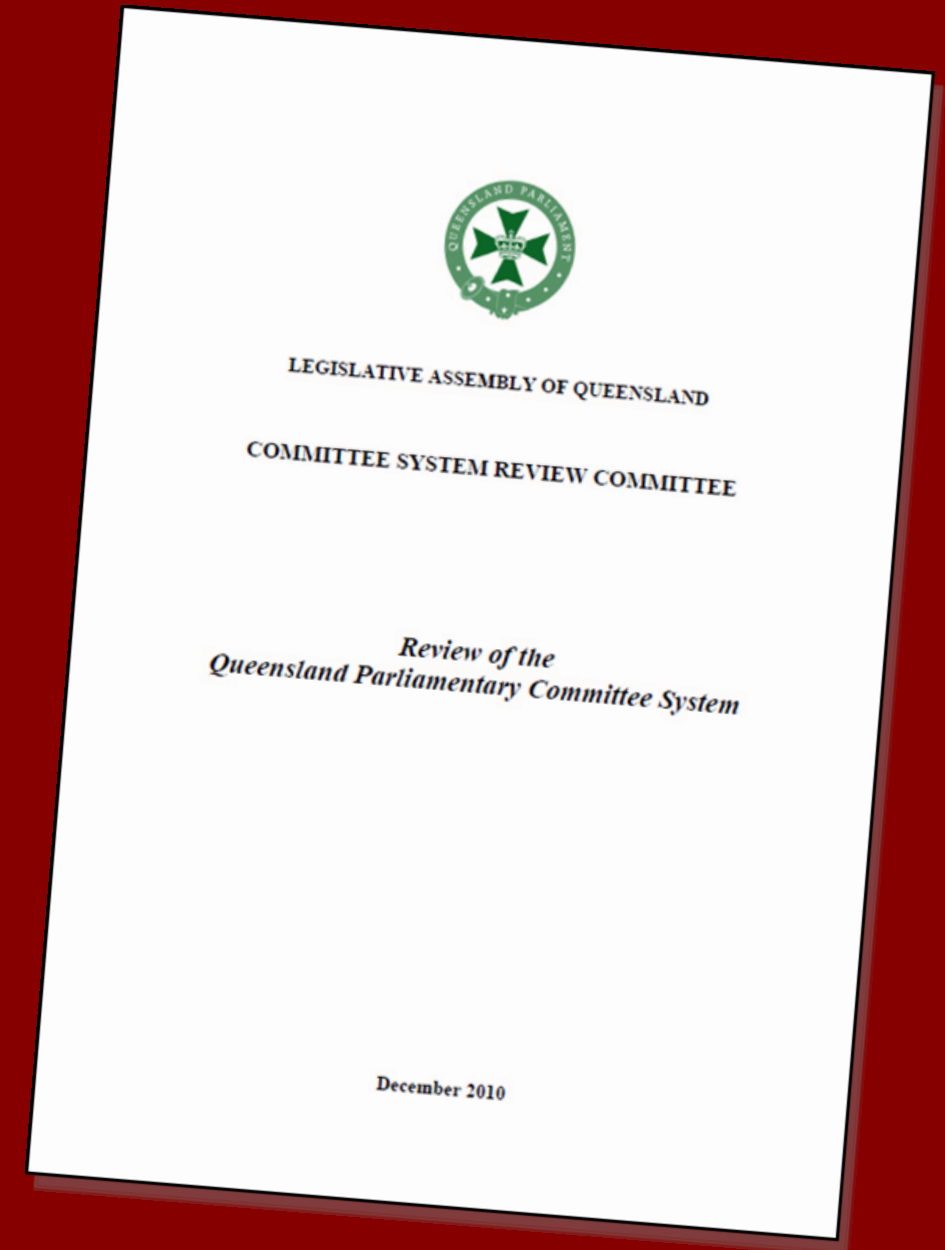
reforms to committees

2010

Parliamentary Committee System Review Committee recommends a new committee system for Queensland – stronger links to the work of the House

2011

- seven bipartisan, portfolio-based committees
- Separate Scrutiny of Legislation Committee, Public Accounts and Public Works committees abolished
- each committee responsible for examining all bills and subordinate legislation, and public accounts and public works within its portfolio area



reforms to committees

2011

- Policy inquiries referred by the House
- Recommendations made to the House
- Government responses to recommendations mandated through legislation
- Can conduct inquiries as they see fit, but some basic expectations:
 - Stakeholder engagement via submissions
 - Public proceedings (but not deliberations)



Parliament of Queensland Act 2001

Current as at 1 July 2019

reforms to committees

2016

- 'Own initiative' inquiries within portfolio
- Constitutionally recognized
 - Minimum of 6 portfolio committees
 - All bills must be referred
 - Ability for Parliament to declare Bills urgent
 - Minimum 6 weeks referral period



56th Parliament:

Seven portfolio committees

Economics and
Governance

State Development
Natural Resources and
Agricultural Industry
Development

Legal Affairs
and Community Safety

Transport and
Public Works

Innovation, Tourism
Development and
Environment

Health, Communities
Disability Services
and Family Violence
Prevention

Education,
Employment
and Small Business

Activity since 2011 reforms

Number of public briefings, public hearings and private hearings of all parliamentary committees:

2009-10	2010-11	2011-12*	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
42	44	121	195	212	183	307	292	165	490

* New committee system commenced in August 2011

Activity

During the 56th Parliament (February 2018 to September 2019) to date there have been appearances by:

- 1009 representatives of stakeholder groups
- 481 individual community members

During the 55th Parliament (2015-2017) there were 2,449 appearances by community members and stakeholder group representatives.

Impact OF COMMITTEES 2012 - 2019

Parliament	54 th Parliamen t	55 th Parliamen t	56 th Parliamen t
Bills introduced	203	192	90 (to date)
Bills referred to committees	185	183	79
Bills examined by committees	161	143	69
Legislative amendments recommended	308	139	15
Legislative amendments accepted	162	118	13
Percentage legislative recs accepted	52%	85%	87%
Other recommendations	242	186	47
Other recommendations accepted	202	160	45
Percentage other recs accepted	83%	86%	96%

OUTCOMES

Committee recommendations accepted by Government during the 56th Parliament*:

Bills reported on 69	Legislative amendments recommended 15	Legislative amendments accepted 13	Percentage accepted 87
	Other recommendations made 47	Other recommendations accepted 45	Percentage accepted 96

*February 2018 – 30 September 2019



Hearing rural and regional voices

QUEENSLAND'S POPULATION

- Third most populated Australian state
- 5 million people
 - 2.5 million in Greater Brisbane
 - 2.5 million in rural and regional areas
- 4.6% of the population are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people
- 15.4% of the population is aged 65 years and over

QUEENSLAND'S PARLIAMENT

- 93 Members
 - 50 Greater Brisbane / Gold Coast
 - 43 Rural and regional
- Geographical size variations in electorates
 - Traeger, covering 406,430 square kilometres, takes in 11 local government areas and is nearly twice the size of the entire state of Victoria.
 - McConnel, in inner Brisbane, covers 13 square kilometres and is one of 24 state electorates within the Brisbane City Council local government area.

QUEENSLAND'S POPULATION

includes

- Discrete Indigenous communities / LGAs
- Other unique rural and regional issues such as:
 - Resource communities / FIFO populations
 - Agricultural interests
 - Tourism interests

REGIONAL PARLIAMENT – Townsville, 3- 5 september 2019

- 5th regional sitting of Parliament



➤ Public gallery

➤ School tours

➤ Education programs



COMMITTEES

- Hold formal hearings in rural and regional communities.
- In 2018-19:
 - 21% of hearings held outside of greater Brisbane
 - Topics of inquiry are key determinants of decisions to expressly target rural and regional communities:

COMMITTEES

Committee inquiries with regional and rural hearings in 2018-19 included:

- Safer Waterways Bill (crocodiles)
- Termination of Pregnancy Bill
- Waste Reduction and Recycling Bill
- Sustainable Fisheries Strategy Bill
- Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill
- Mineral Resources (Galilee Basin) Amendment Bill
- Environmental Protection (Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures) Bill

AND: Aged, Palliative and End of Life Care and Voluntary Assisted Dying; Wage Theft; Intrastate Shipping industry, Job opportunities in the Space Industry, and Pharmacy Regulation.

WHAT COMMITTEES do

- Hold formal hearings in rural and regional communities



WHAT COMMITTEES do

- Hold formal hearings in rural and regional communities



WHAT COMMITTEES do

- Engage with Indigenous communities



WHAT COMMITTEES do

- Visit remote communities to meet with community representatives



WHAT COMMITTEES do

- Site visits



CHALLENGES

- Inquiry timeframes
- Distance
- Cost
- Cultural communication
- Climate-imposed limitations
- Unreliable internet access

Addressing challenges

Technology:

- Videoconferencing
- Broadcasting via ParliamentTV



Economics and Governance Committee - Public hearing
Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of...
Commencing 1.00 pm to 4.45 pm

Economics and Governance Committee
Public hearing - Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 -
via videoconference with Townsville (27/5/2019)



Economics and Governance Committee - Public hearing
Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of...
Commencing 1.00 pm to 4.45 pm

Economics and Governance Committee
Public hearing - Local Government Electoral (Implementing Stage 2 of Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 -
via videoconference with Townsville (27/5/2019)

Addressing challenges

- Indigenous liaison officer
- Flexible approaches to hearings
- Connecting with culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- Regional education activities



QUESTIONS?

CONTACTS

Committee webpages:

<https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/work-of-committees/committees/>

Subscribe for committee updates:

<https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/get-involved/how-do-i-get-involved/email-alert>

Email:

CommitteeOffice@Parliament.qld.gov.au