Media Release

North Queensland residents will have the opportunity to have direct input into a Queensland parliamentary Inquiry into Electoral Law Reform at a citizens’ forum to be held in Cairns on Friday 31 October at the Council Civic Chambers, corner of Spence and Draper Streets from 9.30 – 11.30am.

The Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee launched the inquiry relating to both the 2004 and 2006 State elections last month and will hold two citizens’ forums and one public hearing to give Queenslanders an opportunity to have their say.

Committee Chair, Mrs Dianne Reilly MP, said the inquiry covers a broad range of topics to encourage people from all walks of life to make a submission, from academics to the average voter.

“If you’ve ever been frustrated standing in a queue waiting to cast your vote on polling day or found you’d dropped off the electoral roll, then you may have some ideas about how to improve elections,” Mrs Reilly said.

“We’re concerned about the increase of non-participation as there are signs that people are becoming less inclined to vote and find elections tedious and a chore to be undertaken to avoid a fine.

“There are many reasons behind this trend, this inquiry will just look at one of those, and that’s the way that elections are conducted. Perhaps the mechanics of elections can be improved to re-ignite voter interest and increase real participation.

“In rural and remote areas and in Far North Queensland there are even greater challenges for the electoral commission and voters to overcome when it comes to polling day.

“We want to hear from everyone who may have ideas or suggestions around improving the way elections are run or if they’ve had particular problems on polling day.

“We would hope to make recommendations to the Government in our report which would improve accessibility and transparency for all voters and particularly for people with disabilities or mobility problems and those in rural or remote communities.”

Some aspects of the Queensland electoral system that members of the community may wish to raise with the Committee include electronic voting, pre-polling, electoral advertising, public funding of elections and donations.

The Issues Paper and terms of reference for the inquiry can be viewed on the Committee’s website at www.parliament.qld.gov.au/LCARC.

Further opportunities to consult with the Committee include:

Citizens’ Forum – Mackay on Friday 14th November at the Mackay Regional Council Administration Building, 73 Gordon Street cnr Wellington Street, Mackay from 11.30am – 3.00pm.

Public Hearing – Brisbane on Monday 24th November at Parliament House, Undumbi Room from 10.00am – 2.00pm

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