



Committee of the Legislative Assembly Parliament of Queensland

Media Statement

Wednesday, 3 August 2011

TODAY A NEW ERA OF POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY BEGAN IN QUEENSLAND

Today a new era of political accountability began in Queensland with the first meetings of all of the Parliament's ten committees.

Meetings were held by all seven of the Parliament's new portfolio-based committees who will examine legislation and get the public's views before a bill is debated and voted on in parliament.

The committee meetings were held concurrently in the parliamentary complex this morning and they included two public hearings as well as two public briefings.

A new parliamentary sitting schedule allows the committees to meet in the morning with the normal parliamentary sitting commencing at 2pm every Wednesday.

This is the first time that the Parliament's Wednesday sittings have allocated the morning for committee business since the recently approved changes to the parliamentary committee system under the *Parliament of Queensland (Reform and Modernisation) Amendment Act 2011*.

Each Wednesday of sitting weeks will now follow this schedule of committees meeting in the morning and Parliament then commencing at 2pm.

Chair of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, Hon Judy Spence, MP said that today's new sitting schedule, supported in a bi-partisan agreement in the Queensland Parliament, had been a success.

"I have been around to each of the public hearings and briefings and noticed that they were attended by departmental officers, the media and the public.

"The work of parliamentary committees is vital to the Parliament's scrutiny function and having a dedicated time set aside during each sitting week for committees to meet and hold public hearings will assist with this process," Ms Spence said.

"The new schedule should help improve public accountability and build a stronger democracy for Queensland, as the reforms encourage the involvement in Queenslanders in the parliament's important decision-making and scrutiny practices.

"Committees can also meet outside of Wednesday mornings of sitting weeks but allocating this dedicated time as has occurred for the first time this morning better allows for committees to undertake their important responsibilities such as scrutinising Bills," Ms Spence said.

"The public are welcome to attend public meetings and briefings and it was pleasing to see that some availed themselves of the opportunity today."

A full list of all current and confirmed upcoming committee meetings is published on the Queensland Parliament's website—

<http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/work-of-committees/Upcoming-Committee-Business>

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