

Accountability & Transparency Come First ... For Any Government

A Policy of Family First Queensland

Government accountability is at an all time low in Queensland.

Spin doctoring has become a clear priority for politics in general so that now serious problems are not acknowledged or fixed in a timely manner.

The lack of accountability is a huge problem for Queensland families as decisions are taken without proper consideration for their impact on people in the community.

We simply cannot have a state where Government Ministers were being evaluated by the number of “media releases” they were churning out rather than other actual outcomes that matter to families.

ALL of the problems facing Queensland families with electricity, child protection, water, health etc can be in part traced back to a very serious lack of accountability and reasonable transparency in government.

There **are seven (7) key things** that Family First believes must be implemented if any Queensland Government is to serve the people in a more accountable and transparent way.

They are:

- 1. Immediate reversal of legislative changes allowing MP's to lie without appropriate penalty**
- 2. Appointment of an “Independent Speaker” for Parliament**
- 3. Make all Directors General accountable to the full parliament (and not personally to a Premier)**
- 4. Re-establish an upper house in Queensland Parliament with 30 members and rationalise the lower house to 60 members (although we are agreeable to looking at a different mix)**
- 5. Introduce fixed four (4) year parliamentary terms to bring Queensland into line with other states**
- 6. Freedom of Information legislation needs to be revisited**
- 7. Restore compulsory preferential voting (not optional)**

Family First challenges any candidate or sitting member to explain why any of these changes are not worthy of support or a referendum where necessary.



QUEENSLAND

1. **Reverse the Lying Legislation**

Family First considers recent moves to alter the Criminal Code Amendment Bill to be an insult to the integrity and intelligence of any person involved in upholding a high standard of government discussion and investigation at State Budget Estimates hearings.

The legislation should be re-instated so that lying to Parliament does result in criminal charges being laid, and not the dubious alternative of looking to Parliament (controlled by one side) to deal in an uncertain way with supposed “contempt” issues.

Surely the truth is what matters to all Queensland families.

2. **Appoint of an Independent Speaker**

Parliament has always struggled to maintain a fair and well-behaved environment for debating important issues.

The Speaker is a key player in this.

Many speakers over the years can statistically be shown to have favoured the Government over the opposition.

Many Speakers have stood accused of (at best) inconsistency and (at worst), bias.

The Independent Speaker would not be a sitting member but rather would be professionally recruited and appointed by the Governor on the advice of a Parliamentary Committee that would have equal representations from all parties and recruitment experts.

The Speaker would be charged with the necessary authority to consistently enforce high standards of conduct and fair and open debate.

3. **Make all Directors General accountable to Parliament (and not personally to the Premier)**

The politicisation of the executive levels of the Public Service has to stop and Queensland needs to return to a model where the intent of the Public Service Charter is properly respected and applied.

Family First will support any policy where the Directors General are made properly accountable (through the Speakers office) to the full 89 member parliament so that Queenslanders can have confidence in the chain of accountability.

This would be an important first step in de-politicising the upper leadership of the public service and ensure that what senior bureaucrats are paid is approved by parliament and not in secret deals with a Premier.

Crucially, it also ensures that all Directors General and their departments are positively motivated by the publicly accountable results they deliver for the tax payer dollars that fund our public service.

4. **Re-establish an Upper House in Queensland Parliament**

The re-establishment of a Queensland Senate would give Queenslanders a better ‘brake’ on bad legislation and a more effective investigatory body to deal with serious matters that always arise.

Family First would support an upper house with 30 members and a rationalisation of the lower house to 60 members so that the overall number of politicians doesn’t change.



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5. Introduce fixed four (4) year parliamentary terms

Every other state and territory has four-year terms. Queensland should go to a referendum on this as soon as possible. Fixed terms prevent the manipulation of election dates to suit the political agenda of the government of the day.

In 2000, the Constitutional Review Commission recommended that Queensland adopt fixed four-year terms to bring it into line with all the other states and territories.

There would still have to be provisions for an early election to deal with problems that might be caused by an upper house when one is in place.

6. Freedom of Information Reform

Current Freedom of Information legislation needs to be revisited so that trolleys of documents cannot be wheeled through Cabinet rooms by any Government.

The current guidelines allow for significant abuse of the system and run the risk of allowing important issues to be kept secret until they have a devastating impact on innocent Queensland families. We already have major examples of this with hospital waiting lists.

7. Restore Compulsory Preferential Voting

Optional preferential voting is unfair and ensures that all Queenslanders votes might not be properly valued in determining the winners of elections. Optional preferential voting is simply a less democratic option than compulsory preferential voting.



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