



Andrew Barr MLA

CHIEF MINISTER

TREASURER

MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MINISTER FOR URBAN RENEWAL

MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND EVENTS

MEMBER FOR MOLONGLO

Mrs Vicki Dunne MLA
Speaker
Chair
Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure
Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Madam ~~Speaker~~ ^{Vicki}

I am writing in response to a letter of 23 April 2015 from the Acting Speaker inviting me to provide comment on the Report on the Implementation of the Latimer House Principles in the Australian Capital Territory (the Report).

I welcome the overall findings of the Report and am particularly pleased that the ACT has been recognised as a leading legislature in terms of governance and accountability.

I would ask that as the Committee explores the recommendations of the Report you bear in mind the Government's agenda to reduce red tape and duplication in the legislative process.

In principle, I support each of the recommendations contained in the Report. I believe we can build on the strong existing platforms to enhance existing consultation frameworks.

I would point out that the current primary consultation mechanisms including the *Time to Talk* website, *Community Cabinets* and *Chief Minister's talkback* are well used and effective community engagement tools. I would ask that the Committee consider the already high level of community consultation that is occurring and carefully balance this against any proposed expansion of consultation arrangements. The benefits of any increased consultation will need to be clearly articulated and not create obstacles or unduly delay the legislative process.

I am of the view that we have a robust accountability and integrity framework in place for MLAs. This includes established standing orders and the introduction of an MLA Code of Conduct. I am open to any suggestions and recommendations you may have to strengthen these arrangements and increase public confidence in our elected representatives.

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The Report suggests that there is benefit to be derived from a higher incidence of the introduction of private members bills into the assembly. I would welcome any strategies or initiatives that encourage members to participate more regularly in this important aspect of the legislature's operation.

I believe the current system of Standing Committees is an appropriate and effective method of scrutinising proposed legislation. I would ask that the Committee be mindful of the difficult economic environment the ACT is likely to face for the next few years in considering any proposal for increased funding for these important bodies.

I would like to thank the Committee for its work so far and look forward to receiving a report on your findings. I envisage the Report will contribute further to our ongoing commitment to providing open government and in demonstrating a genuine commitment to the Latimer House Principles.

Yours sincerely


Andrew Barr MLA
Chief Minister

26 MAY 2015