

People's House Bill 2011

Explanatory Notes

General Outline

Short Title

The short title of the Bill is the *People's House Act 2011*.

Objectives of the Legislation

The objectives of the Bill are to reinstate an upper house without any extra politicians in Queensland, to be known as the 'People's House'. The People's House is to consist of 45 local government mayors to review legislation that has been divided upon in the Legislative Assembly by not less than five Members of Parliament.

Reasons for the Bill

On 5 May 1917, 61 per cent of Queenslanders rejected a referendum to abolish the Legislative Council in Queensland. Despite the overwhelming support of the majority of Queenslanders for the house of review, the Legislative Council (upper house) was abolished on 23 March, 1922.

Following the abolition of the upper house, Queensland has been the only state in Australia operating as a unicameral system of government. As a result, the government of the day can introduce legislation without it having to go to a second checkpoint prior to Royal Assent.

This Bill addresses concerns of a lack of scrutiny within the Parliament by restoring the People's House, while meeting community concerns over the number of politicians by drawing from existing locally elected mayors for representation.

The People's House differs from the Legislative Council in that its members are not appointed but are popularly elected. The 45 members will consist of the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, who will reside as President of the People's House, 43 mayors of the largest councils in Queensland and a mayor to represent the 29 smaller councils.

This mechanism will strengthen ties between state government and local councils. Additionally, the People's House will provide a mechanism for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to have representation within the Parliament through their popularly elected local mayors.

A further advantage of the People's House is that rural and regional Queenslanders will have increased representation within the Parliament. Currently, 61 out of 89 Members of the Legislative Assembly represent electorates within South East Queensland.