

Research Director  
Finance and Administration Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane Qld 4000

Re: Inquiry into the *Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015*

I make this submission in response to the Committee's invitation to the Accountability Round Table (ART) to do so. I am the chairman of the Queensland Committee of the ART.

The ART welcomes legislation designed to restore the traditional role of the Speaker in the administration and management of the Parliament, its buildings and ancillary services. The previous legislation that displaced the Speaker from this role and gave it instead to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly (CLA), in fact gave the government of the day control over the management and operations of the Parliament, because of the way the CLA was then structured. Removal of the Speaker from this role was never justified. It was contrary to the historical role of the Speaker and provided the executive government with control of the seat of the legislature. The new amendments will fortify the autonomy of the Speaker and provide an important element of the separation of the powers of government and the legislature – one of the few such remaining in our modern parliaments.

The ART also welcomes the restructuring of the CLA, and the enhancement of the role and power of the Speaker. The Speaker will now have a primary role in the work of the CLA, be able to set its agenda, and have a deliberative as well as a casting vote.

However one aspect of the reorganization of the CLA is of concern. While the addition of a member of the cross-bench members of the House is welcome, we consider that this person should be a representative of those members, and not a person selected (for whatever reason) by the Leader of the House. We consider that the cross-bench members should decide for themselves (by lot if necessary) who should be chosen from among their number to sit on the committee.

Dr David Solomon AM  
Chair, Queensland Committee of the Accountability Round Table.