

9 December 2024

Mr Tim Horne, Committee Secretary
Governance, Energy and Finance Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000
Email: GEFC@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Horne,

RE: Queensland Productivity Commission Bill 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to make a brief submission on behalf of the members of Australian Energy Producers in support of the *Queensland Productivity Commission Bill 2024* (the Bill).

Australian Energy Producers is the peak national body representing Australia's upstream oil and gas exploration and production industry. The oil and gas sector plays a fundamental role in our nation's economy, providing essential energy to power businesses and homes in Australia and across the world. Our sector invests billions of dollars to generate reliable, secure and cleaner energy, creating jobs and economic growth for the communities in which we operate.

Australian Energy Producers supports the establishment of the Queensland Productivity Commission as an independent statutory body. The former Commission, along with the Office of Best Practice Regulation, did much to improve the quality of public analysis, the standard of public debate and the expectations of good consultation on public policy in Queensland.

Conducting formal public inquiries is a specialist skill – it requires time and experience to build trust with the community that their views will be respected, heard and considered. Line agencies don't always have the time to continue developing new and better ways to consult, so the Productivity Commission, if properly resourced, can play an important role in rebuilding confidence in policy consultation in Queensland.

The proposal that the Productivity Commission can establish Committees (Section 31), to assist in the performance of research is a useful structural innovation and one that Australian Energy Producers supports.

Independent advice to Governments lifts the standard of fact-based decision making and policy discussions and can facilitate a balanced tenor of public debate. Australian Energy Producers supports the dual role for the Productivity Commission in conducting research at the Minister's direction (Section 38) and also to suggest research on the Commission's initiative (Section 37).

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To help maintain the independence of the Commission, Australian Energy Producers suggest that the Commission be allocated a distinct budget allocation, in terms of staffing numbers and funding, in order to be able to meet both categories of research without compromise. It would be useful if the Minister's direction (Section 38) or Commission's research proposal (Section 38) also considered the resources necessary to do justice to the proposed scope of the work. The Commission should not be put in a position where a future Government decides to narrow the scope or impact of the Commission's research by being overly parsimonious with budget resources.

The only other suggestion that Australian Energy Producers would offer on the Bill is that Section 15 potentially allows for an oddly structured Board of just one lone Commissioner. It is unclear if such an outcome would be in keeping with best practice public Governance structures. We'd suggest that the drafting of section 15(1) be amended to clarify that the Board is composed of at least two (2) persons, or that the appointment of the Commissioner to the Board (Section 15(2)), should be an ex officio appointment under Section 15(1).

Australian Energy Producers have reviewed the Bill and in the limited time available for comment, we are satisfied that the Bill is consistent with fundamental legislative principles.

There are many complex and important reform tasks facing Queensland on policy issues of social, economic, regulatory, and legislative matters. Australian Energy Producers applauds the establishment of the Productivity Commission to conduct public inquiries into these challenges and make evidence-based recommendations to the Government on how they might be best addressed.

If you have any questions about any matters raised in this submission, please contact Andrew Barger on 0417 403 822 or abarger@energyproducers.au

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Keld Knudsen".

Keld Knudsen
Queensland Director
Australian Energy Producers