

11 May 2016

The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP  
Prime Minister of Australia  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600



I am writing to encourage you, as Leader of the Federal Coalition, to make a public commitment during the upcoming election campaign to support a referendum in 2017 that would move the Commonwealth Parliament to fixed four-year terms.

The Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) is committed to excellence in governance. We make a positive impact on society and the economy through governance education, director development and advocacy. Our membership of more than 38,500 includes directors and senior leaders from business, government and the not-for-profit sectors.

We are strongly committed to the good governance of the nation in order to achieve long-term policies in the interests of the nation's future.

On average, Australia's last 15 federal governments have served terms of only two and a half years. These variable and brief terms drive a short-term focus for our national government and work against policy decisions with longer term results.

Our governments operate in a political system that was designed over 100 years ago and has changed little since. The machinery of government needs to adapt to the expectations of modern Australia.

As you would be aware, the Commonwealth Parliament is now the only parliament in Australia with a variable three-year term. Internationally, Australia is also in the minority - very few national governments in advanced western nations have terms as short as Australia's.

Australia urgently needs long-term public policy and a willingness to reform. Governments that last for an average of two and a half years all but guarantee short termism in the current environment.

This is not a criticism of political parties or individuals, past or present. Rather, it reflects the need for structural changes to support long-term decision-making and lift public confidence in national democratic systems.

**AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE**  
*of* **COMPANY DIRECTORS**

A move to fixed four-year terms for the House of Representatives and eight year terms in the Senate is overdue and existing evidence shows that a referendum on this issue would have widespread support.

However, noting the lessons of the failed 1988 referendum on this issue, bipartisan support for reform is crucial.

We strongly encourage you to support this significant public policy issue for the nation.

If you would like to discuss this matter further please contact me on 02 8248 6600.

Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Brogden', is written over a large, light blue circular scribble.

**JOHN BROGDEN AM FAICD**  
Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer