

Dear [REDACTED] ,

I am writing concerning the surprising suggestion by the Australian Republican Movement at the hearing and in their submission that: " the Committee may wish to consider the introduction of a register of political campaigners Foreign influence campaigns should not be allowed to undermine Australian democracy or subversively attempt to amend Australia's Constitution. Australians should have the confidence that those seeking to inform them about constitutional change represent Australians' interests, not those of a foreign nation."

ACM finds this proposal curious.

There was in fact only one instance of foreign intervention in the 1999 referendum.

That was by Gerry Adams who came to Australia to campaign for the Yes case.

The following is a longstanding summary on the ACM site of the relevant events:

Gerry Adams emerged as the only prominent foreigner to intervene on either side in what was a purely domestic matter, the republican referendum. He came out strongly in favour of the Yes case, and called on Australians to vote that way.

His intervention as a foreigner was of course in itself inappropriate. It was supremely ironic that the republican movement was campaigning on the spurious and wholly incorrect argument that our sovereigns are foreign. Supporters of the existing constitutional system were being accused of being attached to a foreign institution, unpatriotic and un-Australian.

All of this should have been enough for the republicans to distance themselves from this intervention by a foreigner telling Australians how to vote.

But what made it absolutely imperative that the local republican movement publicly reject Adams' support was the brutal murder of the two Australians by the Irish Republican Army. This was exacerbated by their refusal to hand over their murderers to Netherlands justice....In the light of this, all Australians, wherever they stand on the constitution, should even now reject any support from Adams. The republican movement should have followed Bob Hawke's example when the Irish Republican Army "apologised" for murdering the Australians. He contemptuously rejected that.

In referring to the channel 7 programme (concerning the murder), and before, ACM has never attempted to associate the ARM with terrorism.

Accordingly, ACM submits that there is no justification whatsoever in the expense and the burden of a register of political campaigners.

Sincerely,
David Flint