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**Submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal  
Affairs – Inquiry into constitutional reform and referendums**

Dear Committee

I am an Associate Professor of Constitutional Law at Monash University.

This submission deals with the single issue of empowering State Parliaments to propose alterations to the *Australian Constitution*.

Under present arrangements, formal proposals for constitutional alteration can originate only in either House of the Federal Parliament.

The present arrangements give insufficient respect to the States as constituent components of the Federation. Any House of a State Parliament should be able to propose an alteration to the *Australian Constitution*.

There is a relatively straight forward mechanism for allowing any House of a State Parliament to propose alterations to the *Australian Constitution*. A federal parliamentary committee (whether a new committee or an existing committee) should be given terms of reference that:

1. Enable the Committee to receive proposals for alterations to the *Australian Constitution* resolved upon by any House of a State Parliament;
2. Require the Committee to inquire into the desirability of the proposal (including a requirement to invite public submissions on the proposal); and
3. Require the Committee to table a report of the inquiry in each House of the Federal Parliament and cause a copy of that report to be transmitted to the presiding officer of the House of a State Parliament which put forward the proposal.

I trust this submission is of assistance. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

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