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**Submission to:**

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs examining the 2019-20 annual report of the Attorney-General's Department, having particular regard to constitutional reform and referendums.

**From: Citizens for Democratic Renewal**

**Submission:**

We would like to take the opportunity to make the following submission to the inquiry into Constitutional issues and the conduct of Referendums:

It is our belief that background relevant to the Committee's inquiries are inherent in our submission to the Australian Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Reference Committee's Inquiry into Nationhood, National Identity and Democracy. A copy of this document is supplied with this submission.

Specifically, we recommend that the Australian Parliament considers:

"Establishing a permanent Constitutional Council of esteemed community leaders to consider the constitution in the light of contemporary society and advocate appropriate change. The Council to be responsible for drafting any referendum questions and publicly presenting these to the parliament for action."

We believe that by so doing Australians would be far better informed about our Constitution, and any needed changes prior to a referendum being run.

Having a council separate from the body politic being the prime advocate for the Constitution and any proposed changes would avoid the cynicism toward, and lack of trust in, changes put forward by politicians. Once an issue has received broad public discussion and support the Council could draft a referendum question to pass through the prescribed parliamentary processes before being put to the electorate.

The process of nomination for and selection of the members of a Constitutional Council will need to be carefully thought through to ensure public confidence in the capability and independence of the council.

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