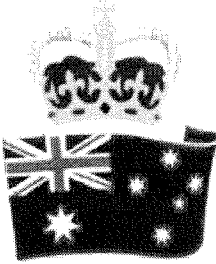


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# Australians for Constitutional Monarchy

## Supplemental Submission

To the House of Representatives Legal and  
Constitutional Affairs Committee:

# Machinery of Referendums Inquiry

*(Referendum (Machinery Provisions) Act, 1984)*

October, 2009

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This is a supplemental submission by Australians for Constitutional Monarchy ("ACM") to the Machinery of Referendums Inquiry by the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives.

1.2 This submission relates to that part of our submission that the Act retain the democratic right of every Australian to see and to read the Yes and No cases.

## **2 Submissions**

2.1 At paragraph 2.9 and 2.10 we argued that the Australian people actually rely on the Yes/No booklet. We said anecdotal evidence from talk back radio and to an extent the internet suggests there was an interest in the Yes/No booklet, and that it is read by interested electors.

To this we offer the following evidence presented at the Roundtable:

The submission by the Australian Electoral Commission to this inquiry revealed that a survey on the eve of the 1999 referendum found that 80% of respondents had received the booklet. Moreover 51% had read some or all.<sup>i</sup> Clearly Professor William's constitutional law class cannot be presented as a sample of the national population.

In addressing this Committee's Roundtable on 14 November 2009, Mr. Julian Leeser referred to polling undertaken by the 1999 Vote No Committee. He said:"

We did some polling research in relation to this in May of 1999, and 45 per cent of people at that time indicated that they wanted more information. Interestingly, 78 per cent of people wanted information delivered in booklet form directly addressed to them at their home, and another 78 per cent of people also wanted to see information on television."

The point surely is that in a democracy, the principal arguments should be easily accessible to all. In the absence of evidence of a better way to communicate, and of providing electors with a ready reference, it is difficult to understand calls for the abolition of the right of electors to see and retain a summary of the principal Yes and No arguments advanced and approved by their representatives.

1.4 In our submission we pointed out that while the internet was not available in 1912, it is generally agreed that a print version of a document is better than the web for careful reading and reflection. We pointed out that not everyone enjoys access to the internet. In addition we would draw the Committee's attention to the following evidence presented by the Australia Electoral Commission. This indicates that where they do, it seems few use it to follow politics. The Australian Electoral Commission submission to this inquiry pointed out that in a survey taken as late as 2007, only 5% of respondents followed the federal election that year on the internet.<sup>ii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Australian Electoral Commission, Submission, 9 October, 2009, para. 3.2.10

<sup>ii</sup> Op.cit., para 3.2.9