



Appendix D—‘Bipartisan Appointment of the President’ Model¹

On the question of whether Australia should become a republic, a majority of delegates supported the idea in principle. The model selected by delegates was the ‘Bipartisan Appointment of the President’ Model. This Model has the following characteristics.

The Australian people would be consulted as thoroughly as possible. This would include state and territory parliaments, local government, community organisations and individual members of the public.

Commonwealth Parliament would establish a committee that would consider nominations and report to the Prime Minister. That committee would have a balance of parliamentary and community membership and take into account considerations of federalism, gender, age and cultural diversity. The committee would be mindful of community diversity when compiling the short list of candidates for the Prime Minister. The committee would not disclose any nomination without the consent of the nominee.

Taking into account the report of the committee, the Prime Minister would present a single nomination for the office of President, seconded by the leader of the Opposition, for approval by a joint sitting of both Houses of the federal Parliament. A two-thirds majority would be required to approve the nomination.

¹ See Constitutional Convention Communique, reproduced in the explanatory memorandum to the Republic Bill, p. 38-39, paragraphs 17-29.

The President would be able to be removed at any time by a notice in writing signed by the Prime Minister. The President would be removed immediately the Prime Minister's written notice was issued. The Prime Minister's action would have to be presented to a meeting of the House of Representatives for the purpose of its ratification within 30 days of the date of removal of the President. In the event the House of Representatives did not ratify the Prime Minister's action, the President would not be restored to office, but would be eligible for re-appointment. The vote of the House would constitute a vote of no confidence in the Prime Minister.

The powers of the President would be the same as those currently exercised by the Governor-General. Parliament should consider spelling out the non-reserve powers, and making a statement that the reserve powers and the relevant conventions continue to exist.

The President would have to be an Australian citizen, qualified to be a member of the Australian Parliament. The person would have to be eligible to vote in an election for the Senate or the House of Representatives at the time of nomination, and not be a member of any political party. Current and future provisions of the Constitution regarding disqualification of members of parliament would apply to the President.

The presidential term of office would be five years.