

The Secretary
Finance & Public Administration Committee
Parliament House
Canberra, ACT, 2600

Plebiscite for an Australian Republic Bill, 2008

In response to the invitation to make a submission on this bill, I wish to put the following points to the Committee for their consideration:

- At a constitutionally valid referendum in 1999 the motion devised by the republicans was defeated decisively.
- Since then, no new reason to revisit the question has emerged or been indicated.
- The Australian constitution lays down, for sound reasons, that the format for significant change is a formal referendum, not a plebiscite, or a cascade thereof.
- A plebiscite of the nature proposed does not inform the public of the issues on which individuals are supposed to vote.
- Would the Austrian population have voted, so emotionally and enthusiastically, in the post- Anschluss plebiscite (1938), if they could have been soberly informed how the path they chose could well have led to such destruction and utter defeat?
- Republicans have shown themselves incapable of agreeing on what format of republic they want so they cannot sensibly float an expensive, confusing, divisive and substance-lacking balloon like the plebiscite proposed.
- The nation is facing very considerable problems on the economic, environmental, and population fronts, and an irrelevant diversion of this type is an unconstructive and unhelpful distraction.

It would be appreciated if receipt of this could be acknowledged.

Dr Jocelyn RL Forsyth