

Dear Sir

Re: Plebiscite for a Republic Bill 2008

The public have been asked to comment on the above and under three headings of ***Plebiscite, Politicians Republic*** and ***Head of State*** I would make the following comments for consideration by the Committee.

Plebiscite

Plebiscites have been and are basically nothing more than expensive opinion polls often misused in many countries by politicians to gain more control and even establish dictatorships. Fully aware of this our Founding Fathers chose the Swiss referendum model as the only way in which to consult the people on questions concerning the Constitution. In putting forward this Plebiscite Bill, Senator Brown in my opinion displays an arrogant contempt for the State of Tasmania and its people whose interests he was elected to protect and further. In the 1999 referendum 60% of Tasmanians said **NO** to a minimalist republic. How many voters in Tasmania and other States does the Senator think are likely to say "yes" to some question about an undefined republic? Millions upon millions of taxpayers money has been spent on this pipe dream over the past twelve years and support for a republic has not grown and in fact seems to have diminished since 1999. Spending more millions on plebiscites and referendums either at an election or separately when our nation is clearly heading for a bumpy economic ride in the next few years can only succeed in angering voters and increase the cynicism with which they regard most politicians of all parties.

Politicians Republic

In an interview with THE AUSTRALIAN on 23 November 2007 our now Prime Minister announced that a republic referendum would not occur in the first term of a Labor government, ***if at all***. However, an undefined republic was very much on the agenda at his 20-20 Summit. The 98/1 vote in favour of a republic (shades of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany) drew ridicule from the media as a whole, strengthened the mistrust Australians have toward most of their politicians and the republic section of the Summit was described by republican Professor Robert Manne as a Mad Hatter Tea Party. It must be evident to even the most naive member of parliament that the electorate as a whole does not have a high regard for politicians. When media barons for whom the public have even less regard, join with politicians in urging constitutional change our history shows that such a referendum will usually be rejected. If the stacking of the republican section of the 20-20 Summit is an example of republican "democracy" then we have a great deal to fear if a politicians republic replaces the present system of government.

Head of State

Australia shares its Sovereign or Monarch with fifteen other countries, a fact which seems to greatly bother the elite who make up the core of the Republican movement in Australia. I find their continual demands that we rid ourselves of our shared Sovereign a complete embarrassment suggesting as it does that we are a country of red necked racists so superior to the citizens of other countries that we need to dispense with our shared Sovereign in order to demonstrate our superiority as Australians.

As things stand, our shared Sovereign is Constitutional Head of State in the United Kingdom only. In the fifteen other countries the Governor-General is Head of State. This was understood as long ago as 1873 when the then Governor-General of Canada described a G.G. as Head of State.

In the case of Australia, the High Court of Australia on 8 August 1907 just six years after federation unanimously handed down a decision clearly stating that the Queen is Sovereign, that the Governor-General is Constitutional Head of the Commonwealth of Australia and a State Governor is Head of State of that particular State.

The five judges handing down this decision were Chief Justice Samuel Griffith and Justices Barton, O'Connor, Isaacs and Higgins, all Founding Fathers of this nation, all involved in drafting our Constitution and clearly aware of how it should be interpreted. In 1988 the Constitutional Commission set up by the Hawke Government in 1985 in its final report stated that the Governor General is in no sense a delegate of the Queen and that the development of Australian nationhood did not require any change in the Australian Constitution. Perhaps Senator Brown and those of his mindset could humble themselves a little and acknowledge that we have no need to change our Constitution but should rather spend more time promoting its study. As things stand the vast majority of Australians and a majority of visitors to this country would agree that with its political and constitutional stability Australia is still the Lucky Country among the more lucky countries. As long as this political and constitutional stability continues most Australians will support the status quo even if the Man in the Moon happened to be Head of State.

Conclusion

In concluding I would emphasise that I do not consider myself to be a royalist as such but having carefully compared systems of government around the world over the last two centuries and looking at the majority of republics (especially those in the Commonwealth who removed the crown without a referendum) I have reached the conclusion that ***The Queen reigns---the People rule-----The President rules-----the People rue.*** Therefore, I would have to describe myself as a constitutional monarchist and along with a majority of my fellow Australians will continue to view with suspicion the attempts of Senator Brown and other politicians to foist their politicians republic on the citizens of this country. It is just on 10 years since Australians gave a definite **No** to a republic and in the foreseeable future it seems certain that **No** will continue to be the winner. If the Senator were to propose a Bill by which the Constitution could be altered only by a grassroots Citizen Initiated Bill or a Bill allowing dissatisfied constituents to recall their MHR or Senator then I imagine such a Bill/s would receive a resounding **Yes** from the electors of Australia. Somehow I doubt that the Senator and a majority of politicians would ever agree to such a proposal.

Kindly acknowledge receipt

Yours faithfully

Neil R Wall