

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

5th February 2009

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 to the Committee for their consideration:

I refer to Part 5 of the Bill, “ Question to be submitted to the electors” which states that

The Question to be submitted to the electors in accordance with section 4 is “Do you want Australia to become a republic.”

A republic, spelt in the lower case, is a utopian concept and this question is utopian in nature and therefore ambiguous. A Republic, as opposed to a republic, has many different meanings and people will answer in accordance to their understanding of the Capital “R” republic.

Constitutional Monarchists supporting Justice Kirby’s assertion that we live in a Crowned Republic would probably support the Question on the basis they want Australia to become what it already is..

Direct Election Republicans will vote yes on the belief they are voting for a Direct Presidential Election Republic.

Supporters of The McGarvey model Republic will vote yes for a McGarvey model Republic.

Mugabe model Republicans will vote for a Mugabe model Republic.

Marxist for a Marxist model Republic.

Islamist for an Islamic Republic

And so on. One would think that the only people who would realistically vote “No” are refugees from Republics who have experience of politics that have been distorted by process to become a mechanism for repression.

If we considered asking people if “Australia should be Heaven” vary few would vote “No”. The result would be meaningless and leave the population dazed and confused about what it all actually means. The same considerations apply to this question. I believe a sectarian Government should not be dealing in the utopian, let alone the ambiguous and therefore I believe it is beyond the business on Government to be putting this question, as a plebiscite, to the electorate.

John Wylie