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## **Order of St. Thomas of Acre**

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To: The Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration  
The Senate of Australia

### Re: Proposed Australian Plebiscite on a Republic

The Private Members Bill moved by Greens Senator Bob Brown, seeks a plebiscite on the issue of Australian becoming a republic some time in the next year or so. If the plebiscite is successful Australians will face another referendum with the next Federal elections, on the form of republic wanted.

There are a number of key matters here. Firstly the concept of if “it ain’t broke don’t fix it”. The current system of constitutional monarchy has served us extremely well since Federation in 1901. It is true that Queen Elizabeth II, who is proclaimed Queen of Australia, does not reside in the country. If this is the real problem for those prompting change then why has the concept of an Australian monarch, never been considered by parliament? This would allow us to continue to be constitutional monarchy.

The great lateral thinker Edward de Bono published a book called “I want to be King of Australia” but otherwise this subject has been largely ignored.

There are a number of tangible advantages of monarch over presidents. The first is longevity. Monarchs are remembered because of their long reigns and devotion to service.

A monarch becomes the embodiment of the nation as they travel the country and represent the nation in international forums.

Monarchs are non-political, as a head of state should be. Could any President of Australia be able to be non-political - to be elected they would need the support of the political parties.

An Australian monarch could be elected or appointed for life (or to retire at 70). We do not favour heredity principle (which does have its advantages) for a new Australian monarchy, but it should be debated along with alternative methods of choosing a monarch.

The 1999 referendum failed because Australia did not want to change and because the concept of a parliamentary appointed president is not what electorate wanted. The head of state must be independent of the parliament. Our constitutional monarchy ensures this.

We reject the concept of a plebiscite as an inappropriate way of approaching the matter. Further the cost, which will be tens of millions of dollars, cannot be justified under the current economic circumstances and given the resounding no vote in the referendum only 10 years ago.

We believe that if change is to take place the option of an Australian monarch should be considered. We would encourage open debate and detailed consideration on this matter, possibly by way of a convention on the subject, prior to any future referendum.

Yours faithfully,

*Allan Sterling*

**Allan Sterling, KCST**  
**Victorian Baillif**  
**Order of St. Thomas of Acre**

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