

**Submission to the  
Inquiry into the Plebiscite for an Australian Republic Bill 2008  
of the  
Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee  
by  
5 February 2009**

The proposal for a plebiscite, with its meaningless question and no legal force, is irresponsible government, clearly designed to manipulate Australians into accepting an unknown system of government, without consideration of it compared with the present one. Quite apart from the present economic crisis, it is an irresponsible diversion of resources from areas of need.

Discussion.

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The simple plebiscite question "Do you support Australia becoming a republic?" is meaningless because voters are not told what is meant by "republic". There are so many types of possible republics, with so many possible variations, that results of the plebiscite would be meaningless without giving details of the republic in the question. Should the majority vote "yes" in such a plebiscite, it would be used to cultivate no confidence in the present Constitution and open the way for an inferior one to replace it.

Any question that asks people if they prefer an alternative to the present system of government should also include reference to the present Constitution and details of the changes proposed.

Change to the Constitution can only be made by referendum, per section 128 of the Constitution, with all details of the proposed alternative clearly publicised before the vote as well as reference to the present Constitution. Only that way voters can make an informed vote.

In contrast to the substantial arguments for retaining the present Constitution, arguments for replacing it with some unknown republic are without substance. Those pushing for a republic rely on superficial catch-cries to sway the people to their viewpoint. They are now turning to a plebiscite as a way of deceiving and manipulating the people. Such tactics are out of place in Australia and can only be seen as an attempt to remove the safeguards in the present Constitution to enable some elite to take absolute power in government. Such an outcome would be disastrous for the people of Australia.

A plebiscite would be an irresponsible use of taxpayers' money. The present Constitution works very well, being one of the best in the world, and does not need changing. Why spend on a plebiscite money that would be better spent on needs, such as health, education, infrastructure, national security? The current Australian economic crisis makes expenditure on a plebiscite even more irresponsible.

The government should apply its resources to the welfare of Australians. Because they are irrelevant to it (despite spurious claims by some), a plebiscite and pushing a republic work counter to the welfare of Australians by diverting valuable resources to irrelevancies.

Conclusion.

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Without the question giving full details of the republic to be considered as an alternative to the present system of government, the voters would be voting in ignorance. The results would be meaningless.

The plebiscite has no legal significance and is obviously designed to manipulate the Australian people.

The proposed plebiscite is a misuse of taxpayers' money and government time.

The Bill is irresponsible legislation and should be dropped.