

**SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

The Victorian branch of the Australian Monarchist League, which represents several hundred members, opposes the holding of a plebiscite on the question of whether Australia should become a republic.

Changing the Constitution is a serious matter and should not be taken lightly. It is incumbent on the proponents of any change to explain their proposal in a detailed and rational fashion and to convince the electorate that the adoption of their proposal would improve the Constitution and the government of Australia. Section 128 of the Constitution recognizes the gravity of these obligations and prescribes strict procedures and criteria to be satisfied before the Constitution can be altered.

The proposed use of a plebiscite on a question as momentous as Australia's becoming a republic is an irresponsible and cynical political exercise, the main objective of which is to circumvent the procedures set out in Section 128 of the Constitution. It is wrong to attack any aspect of the Constitution without proposing a viable alternative.

The term "republic" encompasses an enormous variety of systems of government and is meaningless in the context of constitutional reform unless accompanied by a description of the particular type of republic proposed. While the holding of a plebiscite, or opinion poll, on such a nebulous question will not change the Constitution, it may have the effect of undermining the Constitution.

Quite apart from the dishonesty of this tactic is the question of cost. It would be financially profligate to incur the unnecessary cost of a plebiscite during the current economic crisis, particularly given that a referendum on a republic was held, at great cost, so recently.