

The Secretary  
Finance and Public Administration Committee  
Parliament House  
Canberra, ACT, 2600

SUBMISSION RE: PLEBISCITE FOR AN AUSTRALIAN REPUBLIC BILL

I wish to make a strong objection to the *Plebiscite for an Australian Republic Bill's* proposal for a plebiscite with the next election to ask whether Australians would prefer a republic.

My objections include the following:

- Few people understand the implications of a plebiscite and the way it could be used to change the question put in a following Referendum.
- There is only one way to change the constitution – by Referendum. Why is it not being suggested if Senator Brown believes there is a need to change?
- The answer is that in a Referendum both sides of the question would be put, and the alternative to the proposal for an unstated, unknown republic would be continuation of use of the very successful present constitution, which has produced one of the freest and most successful democracies in the world. The result would not be to Senator Brown's liking, and the country should not be expected to pay for him to attempt to sidestep the constitutional processes.
- The proposed plebiscite invites Australian citizens to vote for a republic without detailing what this republic will be like. Will it follow: the US model, the Chinese model, the Italian, the Russian, French, Colombian, Cuban, S.African, or which other notably successful republics? The Australian public has been given no details that the republican movement will be able to do any better than any of these, none of which have produced the results of our present constitution.
- This country is on the verge of a recession, as is most of the world. The last two things we need are a period of constitutional instability with no known future, and the waste of money on a plebiscite which can have only negative effects on a country struggling to survive and retain jobs. Instability and a loss of confidence in the country internally and internationally would damage the country immensely.
- In 1999, in the republican referendum, the answer to wanting a republic was NO in every state and a large majority of electorates. Why should our increasingly needed resources be used on something so negative and wasteful, and which was answered so clearly only 10 years ago?
- Just because the proposer would like to see "a republic" (undefined) is no reason the Australian taxpayer and society should have to oblige him by wasting millions of dollars which could be used in hospitals, schools or for elderly or disabled people.

**The Prime Minister promised before the election there would be no move towards a republic in his first term. If he and the Government support this Bill, he is breaking that promise – and he has stated many times he will keep his election promises. Or is this perhaps a non-core promise?**

I believe the Bill should not receive support from either the government or the Opposition. If Australia is to become a republic, it should be at the will of the people, by referendum, with a freely chosen choice between alternatives clearly spelt out. This bill should not be supported.

Yours faithfully

Richard Pagan

Richard Pagan