

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

MONDAY JANUARY 26TH 2009

Plebiscite for an Australian Republic Bill 2008

On Australia's National Day, I take this measure to express the strongest disapproval of the proposal to hold a national plebiscite on an Australian Republic. It is a most contemptible way on the part of individuals and of group interests of trying to weasel into being what clearly failed by other means in the past. If it served some useful or worthwhile purpose, it could be understood or perhaps condoned. But it can't, because it doesn't.

Therefore, in response to the invitation to make a submission on this bill, I wish to put the following to the Committee for their consideration:

- o There is only one way to change the constitution. This is a referendum. So why isn't it being used?
- o Details of the proposed republic are being kept secret. Surely we should know what is being planned before we vote.
- o The smaller states are not protected as in a referendum. For a referendum to pass, it must be approved by a national majority and also by a majority in at least four states. Some lawyers think a referendum on such a basic change would need to be approved in all states.
- o This plebiscite invites the people to reject the existing constitution without knowing what is to be put in its place.
- o If passed it will lead to a period of constitutional instability.
- o It will be costly, and add to the millions and millions already spent on various attempts to persuade the people to support a republic.
- o In 1999 every state and 72% of electorates said no to the republicans' preferred model.
- o Don't the republicans understand that No means No?

o The agenda of many if not most republicans includes changing our flag. I would be grateful if you would acknowledge receipt.

o Let us work to protect, retain and enhance our National tradition and heritage, and not as has already happened with so many other aspects of our history and national identity, seek to allow - encourage - **bring about** its denigration and destruction.

DESMOND ALLAN SHEAHAN