

Proposed Plebiscite

I cannot understand why the government is proposing to spend millions of dollars on this exercise when such a course of action has never been undertaken before. If the suggestion is that an affirmative to the proposed plebiscite question will result in a proposal to change the constitution then a future referendum has to be called. As the matter concerns the very foundation of our political system then a plebiscite is an entirely misleading approach to a question of such profundity. It should go straight to a referendum (as laid out in Section 128) without the preliminary and rather arbitrary, simplistic and populist question of the plebiscite.

The fact that a referendum on the matter was held in 1999 and did not succeed appears not to be enough for certain republican senators. Do we have a referendum every ten years until the people vote the way the politicians and media want them to? Are we becoming an offshoot of that other behemoth, the European Union? I think of Ireland as I write this.

Another matter which worries me is that there is no groundswell demand for a change to the constitution. The people are not on the streets. The system works well as it is and no one can deny that the checks and balances inscribed in the person of the Sovereign is as good a system as could ever be devised. The fact that our Head of State is an Australian and our Sovereign is Queen of Australia makes for a superb system. Has anyone considered the scenario that the plebiscite gains the 50% plus 1, it goes to referendum and is then defeated? Is the government not aware of the dangers of uncertainty and unrest here?

I do not want a politicians' republic. We have the ultimate check on supreme power in the person of the hereditary monarch and our Australian Governor-General acts as an independent representative of that ultimate authority. We have a world-renowned democracy. Leave it alone.

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