

22.1.2009

Submission re. *Plebiscite for an Australian Republic Bill 2008*

I quote some republican constitutional experts on a plebiscite.

Prof. Cheryl Saunders.

"It follows that, if there is to be further consideration of a republic, there should be at least three elements of the information campaign. The first should explain the proposed arrangements and the implications of the move to a republic. The second should explain the proposed alternative. The third should be designed to deal with queries that arise during the campaign, before the vote takes place."1[1]

Prof. George Williams:

"A plebiscite is a glorified opinion poll; it does not have any constitutional significance whatsoever."2[2]

Tim Fischer:

"A plebiscite would have no power to change anything and would be absolutely no guarantee of a successful Republican end process."3[3]

Prof. Greg Craven:

"It is futile to think a plebiscite will solve the problem."
"Their plan for a festival of republican plebiscites combines the buoyancy of the Titanic with the transparency of a rigged horse race."4[4]

Malcolm Turnbull:

1[1] Saunders et Warhurst (eds.) / *Constitutional PoliticsL the republic referendum and the future*. Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2002; p. 206.

2[2]: *Inquiry into an Australian Republic*. Australia. – Senate. -- Legal and Constitutional Committee. - 13 April 2004. p. 44.

3[3] *The Age* Nov. 30, 2001

4[4] "Fix is on for the people's republic", *Australian Financial Review*, 27 July 2004, p.59

"Let the ALP do their plebiscite thing IF they get elected."

"A referendum is the only way."

"Peter Costello is very against plebiscites and is very close to Craven."5[5]

CEO: Republican Party of Australia, P. Consandine:

"Preposterous" 6[6]

Paul Kelly:

"Yet it is futile to think a plebiscite will solve the problem."7[7]

Andrew Robb:

"This suggestion of a whole lot of plebiscites and things, I think it's just a further insult to people really."8[8]

Peter Costello:

"I do not support this [plebiscite] proposal."9[9]

Could Senator Brown comment on the above quotes to ensure voters are able to make **informed** votes on this "preposterous"10[10] plebiscite idea?

Yours Sincerely,

Michael Canaris

5[5] Teleconference: 10/6/2004.

6[6] *Australian Financial Review*, 23 Oct. 2000

7[7] "Plebiscite is no sure path to a republic" *The Australian*, 20 November 2002.

8[8] ABC's *7:30 Report*, 5 August 2004.

9[9] Letter, 20 August 2003.

10[10] Loc cit.; 6.

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How would Sen. Brown deal with the following plebiscite question:

"Do you agree that the manner of electing Senators is to be changed?"

Would he support it?

Would he oppose it?

Or would he want more information about what the words "that the manner of electing Senators is to be changed" entails before deciding?

Yours Sincerely,

Michael T.A. Canaris.