

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
PARLIAMENT HOUSE  
ACT 2600

24<sup>th</sup> December 2008

Dear Senators

I support the Plebiscite for an Australian Republic Bill 2008.

It is clear that there is significant support within the Australian community for a republic. Polls have consistently shown strong support for a republic. As a delegate to the Australia 2020 Youth Summit I saw very strong support for a republic. The main Australia 2020 Summit included republican government as part of its vision for Australia in 2020.

If approved by the voters, it is likely that a Constitutional Convention will be held to discuss the various models of republican governance, followed by a second plebiscite to determine a preferred model, and ultimately a referendum to change the Constitution. This will be a lengthy process. If the first plebiscite is held at a general election in 2010-11, a second plebiscite and a referendum, if held in conjunction with general elections, could take until 2016-17. (If a Constitutional Convention election were to be held I would suggest that it be conducted as a voluntary postal ballot like the 1998 Convention.) Whilst I understand that there will be significant expense involved in holding a plebiscite, and that there are significant Budget pressures during this time of economic instability, the plebiscite must be held sooner rather than later if we are to achieve the republic by 2020.

One possible improvement to the Bill would be allowing for additional questions regarding other constitutional issues such as an entrenched bill of rights, recognition of local government, abolition of the states, a preamble, fixed terms, etc., however these are separate issues from the republic, and I support the Bill regardless.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Donnellan