

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

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Re: a Plebiscite for an Australian Republic Bill 2008.

I wish to take up the invitation to make a submission on the above bill, and to make the following comments and observations to the Committee for their consideration.

Why in a time of dire economic circumstances, not only in Australia but world-wide, are we even contemplating spending millions of dollars, adding to the millions and millions already spent on various attempts to persuade the people to support a republic, while pandering to the egos of a few, like Senator Brown and his ilk, who will not accept the will of the people.

Why is it that Dr Brown and others like him, who appear never to be happy with anything in Australia, are allowed to push for a plebiscite, that is, a non-binding indicative national vote, prior to a referendum, to test the Australian people's preparedness to accept the idea of a republic (by a simple 'yes/no' vote). Senator Brown must believe us all to be stupid when he clearly agrees with those republicans who say Australians want a republic, then, in the next breath says we need a plebiscite to gauge the mood of the electorate. Either we do or we do not, but let us spend millions more on a plebiscite that invites the people to reject the existing Constitution without knowing what is to be put in its place. **Details of the proposed republic are being kept secret. Surely we should know what is being planned before we vote.** You can lay a wager on the fact that part of the republican agenda for most if not all, would be a change of flag as well.

The smaller states are not protected with a plebiscite as they are 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. This proposal lacks substance, is superficial, and contrary to the wishes of the majority of Australians. **Again, I ask, how, can one vote yes or no to something not explained or set out? It appears Senator Brown has no idea either! The Senator wants an un-Australian plebiscite for no other reason than that he and his ilk are clearly afraid the electorate will again say no in any referendum, even though their official 'line' is that we do!**

Submission re a Plebiscite for an Australian Republic Bill 2008

Further, I must have missed the changes to the Constitution allowing for plebiscites in place of referendums (or with them?). I am particularly incensed that any committee or indeed any government would be inclined to use a so un-Australian means to usurp the result of a referendum clearly rejected by the great majority of Australians only nine years ago. We remember well that in 1999, every State and 72% of electorates said no to the republicans' preferred model. I with many others say a collective no to any plebiscites, which are contrary to our Constitution. **There is only one way to change the constitution.** This is by a referendum. So why isn't it being used? The reason is clear. The founding fathers chose the referendum because it requires any proposal for change to be on the table before the people vote, and not after.

Don't republicans understand that No means No? The general populace like myself, have to abide by the umpires decision, but it is becoming more and more obvious that politicians and the self appointed elite are determined that we should have a republic whether we like it or not and despite the fact that if passed, it would lead to a period of constitutional instability! A little like the EU politician who said, "keep on voting until you get it right!"

There are a whole host of issues that confront the nation and the world that are infinitely more crucial than the pushing of a proposal that is extremely low on the majority of Australians list of must do reforms.

I would be grateful if you would acknowledge receipt of this submission.

Yours Faithfully

John W Salmon