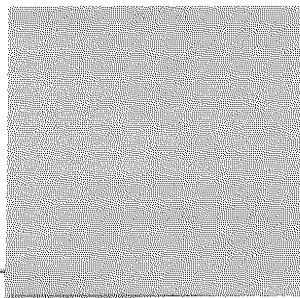


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Dear Senators,

I understand you are conducting another inquiry into a republic for Australia.

I have looked through your briefing notes. The main part of the notes implies there will be such a move and it is intended to solicit comments about the type of republic to undertake and how to get there.

My concerns are

(1) That you are seeking to head for a republic when quite clearly the majority of the electorate have already said they do not want to be republican but prefer to remain with our monarchical system of government. So really the matter was settled in 1999 and should not really be looked at for another 50 or 100 years.

(2) Your preferred method of approach through plebiscites (where it may not even be compulsory to vote) will mean one sided campaigns as the NO case will not get funding. With the final referendum the NO under the Constitution must be funded. But there is no mention of the endless politiking, conventions and plebiscites of any funds being allocated to the NO case. This means far from a democratic exploration of the republic your committee would be advocating a most undemocratic system of using propaganda to influence the public that a republic is inevitable that they should just go that extra step and support it in the final referendum against the only time the NO side of the case is funded. Your proposals really make a mockery of the Australian democracy by undertaking such a course of action.

Republic is a danger in British systems

I have to say also that I am totally opposed to a republic in Australia. This is because Australia has the safest democracy in the world and it rests on the checks and balances in the monarchical system of government. Indeed it is underpinned also by compulsory and preferential voting which always ensures the government works for all the people as it must always face the entire people every three years. But above that is the system that guarantees the head of state is apolitical and not using his or her powers to the detriment of the people. Any form of republic involving direct elections of the highest office will politicise the position and call into question the effective governance in the nation by having clashes between an elected head of state and an elected government. The most recent example of this is the dismissal of the Sri Lankan government by their president because of the different parties and viewpoints the president and the prime minister have. This is a problem that has sprung up in many former British colonies that have gained independence in republic form instead of retaining the Monarchy. When the Queen formally appoints a Governor-General (or a Governor in the States), that person takes on all the persona and reserve and other powers of the monarchy in Australia and becomes the effective Head Of State in this country. Thus the argument that the Australian Head Of State is not 'one of us' is flawed, because in fact the Australian Governor-General becomes the Head Of State on his appointment. (There is even an argument below that the Queen is effectively 'one of us'). His office is at the pleasure of the Queen, but that office is never terminated except on the advice of the Prime Minister of Australia.

With the Monarchy we are part of a special family of nations

The fact we retain the Queen and her descendents as our Sovereign does not

lessen Australia's autonomy as an independent nation. In fact it strengthens our position in the world by retaining our links with our founder nation - Great Britain and with other countries that retain their allegiance to the Monarchy, such as Canada, New Zealand etc. It gives Australia, as it does for these other countries, a system where we are part of a family of nations. People look to the royal family as being an extension of their own families much more than they would ever look up to a transient political president. Even Americans look to the royal family as something special, and something they wish they still had. They would love to have the stability that comes with a royal family rather than the four yearly Presidential election between two party leaders, where usually election is by a minority of voters as they do not have either compulsory or preferential voting. The American system combines the Sovereign into the Prime Ministers role by having a powerful President and makes a mess of both as there is no continuity of person over long periods as we have with the Queen or King.

Plebiscites are one sided campaigns

I am most concerned by the fact that your office is looking at Plebiscites as the preferred way to gain public support. The first big problem with plebiscites is they are not referenda. With referenda the Government has to pay for the No case to present its views. With plebiscites the government will be free to design the question that best fudges it points of view and then use that without any funded opposition to gain a Yes vote. The obvious example is the simple one of asking "Do You Want An Australian Head Of State?" The obvious answer most people will give is Yes. They will give that regardless of whether they are republican or monarchist because even monarchists believe the current system of the Governor-General is effectively an Australian Head Of State as he or she takes on the reserve and other powers of the monarchy in Australia when appointed by the Monarch as her representative in Australia. So the question is flawed from the outset. It is designed to get a Yes vote. The real problem is that a committee like yours, Senators, would then use the outcome to say the people have voted for the removal of the Sovereign and Royal Family because they are from the United Kingdom. But that was not the question that was asked. It is a fudging of the result to claim an outcome that was not asked. The appropriate question would be "Do you want Australia to become a Republic?". On this question you know from the experience of the referendum of 1999 that you will most likely get a No answer. This is because people love the tie to the Royal Family. They know it gives Australian society a benefit that far outweighs its little cost. They know it gives us a constitutional protection not available to other countries. We only have to look at the recent war in Iraq for us to see a presidential system gone mad, that we had to contribute armed forces to try and correct. In the Westminster systems of government designed to give a republic

(or as in the case of Pakistan, later changed to a republic) we are able to see endless turmoil in many of the countries with that system. We need only look to several African countries, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and India to see countless examples of where the Presidential system has not provided the safeguards for the people that our system provides with the Monarchy over the Governor-General, with the Governor General then having his reserve powers prescribed by convention. In my work as a Migration Agent I have written over six million words on refugees. Many are people from the failed democratic system of Pakistan where a Presidential system was instituted over the top of the Monarchy and then derailed into army dictatorship - not only once, under General Zia, but again under General Musharraf, and the intervening 'democratic' parties were just as cruel in the torture and arrest of opponents as have been the military forces.

Most of the millions of words I have written with refugee applicants are those from former British colonies where there was an attempt to make a Presidential system work with the Westminster system, which is the sort of constitutional tampering proposed by the republicans for Australia.

It just doesn't work as the dictatorships of Africa and Pakistan, as well as the dictatorship of Mrs. Gandhi under the "Emergency" in India demonstrate. An elected or politically appointed President sometimes wants to play God himself, and usually throws his country into chaos in the process.

Millions of people have come to Australia to escape the persecution they had at home. After World War Two it was the Europeans, and now it is third world countries. They came here because we have a stable society. It was found in many prisons in communist countries the inmates had drawn pictures on the walls of angels holding Canadian, United States and Australian passports. They thought so highly of Australia as a place of freedom and sanctuary that their minds had Australian passports and residence on a par with angels.

One of the reasons for the strength of Australia and its freedom is the political stability at the top, brought about by having the hereditary non-political monarchy. In the 1930s Australia and Argentina were always compared as the developing nations of the future. Argentina had its elected President, followed by its dictatorships and disappeared to the economic abyss. We had our stable democracy under the Crown and survived all sorts of problems because of the stability at the top and now have one of the most prosperous nations on earth.

Your use of Ireland as an example of a good Presidential system is quite flawed because Ireland is not even in the Commonwealth of Nations and would have a

very different system to what we have. It also is not a system as well developed as ours and probably has never had to deal with the sort of constitutional crisis we had in 1975 with a clash between the House of Representatives and the Senate. Indeed, you will probably find their upper house (if they have one) would not be able to obstruct legislation like our Senate can. So to use the example of Irish system as a way to overcome potential problems in Australia is quite inappropriate.

Why does the press oppose the Monarchy?

It always fascinates me that people like those on your committee seem hell bent on overthrowing our monarchy and do so with the full support of the major press. I have often wondered why the press takes on such a position. What is in it for them? It would probably be better for the Senate to set up a committee looking at that sort of question than setting out to destroy the basis for our very successful democratic system. I think you need to look at the nature of the press and how it is really the creature of its major advertisers. For the two major press chains in Australia with its predominance in rural newspapers one of the major advertising sectors are companies involved in selling chemicals to farmers and pharmaceuticals both in the country and urban papers. Who has been at the forefront of biodynamic and organic farming in England and thus opposed to chemicals on farms? It has been Prince Charles. Who banned chemicals several years ago on his 4000 acres of estates? Once again it was Prince Charles. Who has been at the forefront of homeopathic medicine and is patron of the Royal Homeopathic Society and thus showing an alternative to pharmaceutical drugs? It has been Her Majesty, The Queen. It is no co-incidence that every hospital in the UK is meant to have a homeopathic section, and many do. So it leads to an interesting speculation that the attacks on the Royal Family both in England and Australia by the press could be to erode its influence as much as possible in these valuable areas. It would probably need an investigative journalist to really probe into this sort of conspiracy theory! Or perhaps you should set up a committee to look at this. I am sure it would uncover things much more valuable to Australian society than continuing to work on a republic which can only be divisive and destructive in its end result. It is obviously in the interests of the big chemical and drug companies to lessen the influence of the Queen and Prince Charles as much as possible. What better way to do that than get their newspaper friends to push for a Republic. Sounds a bit far-fetched, doesn't it? Perhaps a good conspiracy theory? Well ask yourself, If your industry poured hundreds of millions of dollars every year into rural and mainstream press in Australia, America and elsewhere to push your chemical additives to farms and drugs to doctors and patients, wouldn't you want to stop the influence of influential people like the Queen and Prince Charles who symbolise opposition to many of

the very things you make and advertise. Wouldn't the newspaper owners have an interest in stopping the influence of The Queen and Prince Charles in order to maintain their billions in advertising revenue? Don't think the papers are there just to serve you. They are mainly there to generate revenue and will often help their advertisers to do so too. You see this everyday in your local newspapers as they run favourable editorial copy next to the ads for local restaurants, hair stylists etc. There's nothing stopping them doing the same at the national level to help their national & international advertisers. Could it be possible much of this republic debate has been whipped up to lessen the influence of the Royal Family in Australia as the Royals promote Organic and Biodynamic agriculture and homeopathy and other alternative medicines, while at the same time Prince Charles actively fights against Genetically Engineered and Modified food. If you like having your alternative medicine and go to natural practitioners, as nearly 50% of Australians do, you should be protective of the Royals who are helping so much in these areas and not promoting a dangerous republic.

It amazes me how the Greens can be so attacking of the Monarchy when it is Prince Charles who does so much to promote alternative agriculture in England and by example around the world. He is one of the main bulwarks of green type issues, yet the Greens are determined to pillory him out of his role as our next King. It is Charles who speaks out against Genetically Modified food, and sees the real danger in it. I am sure the GM companies see Prince Charles as one of their main opponents. It amazes me that the Greens are not supporting the Prince, rather than the onslaught they have all the time against him and the Monarchy, which benefits the GM genetic companies. You can see how dangerous genetic engineered crops are becoming. Already there are reports that genetic Cotton grown in China for textiles is so weak it is useless to Australian spinners. I have heard of one report that my brother read on the internet that says the genetic crops in China are leaving a Sarin type residue in the ground. That may be one of the reasons for the rise of bird flu and other strange animal diseases in China. Again an investigative journalist needs to follow these things through. The Greens, the Australian Democrats and the Labor Party as well as the republicans in the Liberals, really need to look closely at whom they are attacking and by default whom they are supporting by their activities in trying to make Australia a republic.

The Queen is already 'one of us'.

The Queen and the principal members of the Royal family are exempt from needing passports or visas to enter Australia. You only need to look at the Immigration Acts to see that. Thus they are really considered Australian under our laws, which means they are effectively 'one of us' anyway. Your committee

should perhaps look at this notion and tell the Australian people that the Queen is effectively 'one of us' and thus the system does not need to be changed. It would be more appropriate for your committee to come out with a recommendation to encourage the Queen and other royal members to spend much more time in Australia, and indeed it may be a good idea if your committee promoted the idea of one of the Princes or Princess Anne becoming Australia's Governor-General or a Governor in one of the States.

If you really looked seriously at the Australian system of government you may find there is more argument to having an Australian based Royal Family of our own instead of the one based in Britain, rather than throwing the whole system overboard for a President. Whenever the Royal families in Europe find they have no heir, a successor is found in another of the Royal families to take over the position. Australia is a monarchy devolved from British Monarchy, which itself is devolved from European Monarchy. It would make more sense to set up our own Monarchy in preference to a republic if the Australian people really did want to jettison the shared Monarchy that we have with Britain, Canada, New Zealand and several other countries.

The shared monarchy is a unique and wonderful system that brings together all these countries and where we do regard ourselves as Commonwealth cousins under the same head and in a much closer binding than those Commonwealth countries which have foresaken the Monarchy. The shared Monarchy gives our countries a fanfare and destiny that republican countries can only dream about. It does not make sense for us to overthrow the best system in the world for the instability of a republic.

'Save Us From The Politicians Knavish Tricks'

In summary I am opposed to your proposed series of plebiscites. Plebiscites are not part of the Australian democracy or constitution. They can be manipulated to gain any desired result. Such a result can be used by unscrupulous politicians to obtain a result that is not what the Australian people really want. When I was at school I found the third verse of God Save Queen included the words "And save us from the politicians knavish tricks". It is no wonder with the tricks that your committee may be seeking to impose on the people that this verse has disappeared along with the old anthem. Replacing the anthem with Advance Australia Fair brought us our own national song, but to throw out the Monarchy would bring us instability and constitutional problems the like of which we have never had in this country before.

The republicans love to say the Queen is in London and has nothing to do with

us. It is a facetious argument. The Queen and the Royal Family are very involved in Australian affairs. She is a little like a grandmother to the nation. She doesn't interfere but is always on hand as a symbol for the Australian family. The need for countries to have a person with "mystique and glory" at the top rather than political appointees is what gives monarchies the stability that is so rarely seen in republics. The only stable republics in the last 100 years have been Switzerland and USA. The USA President is really an elected executive King, originally given powers of such magnitude to be able to deal equally with what were then the autocratic rulers of Europe. But he does not have the continuity of a Monarch and is all too often in America elected by a minority of the people due their lack of preferential or compulsory voting.

It is not the intention of the republicans to give overwhelming power to an Australian President. But that will happen over time. In 1999 there was no proposal to either codify the reserve powers of the President or to restrict their use. It just cannot be done to hand all these powers of being the commander in chief of the armed forces, appointing and sacking ministers, approving or disallowing legislation etc to a President who is not constrained by the Conventions that now constrain the Governor-General. The Conventions of use of vice-regal power are what enable the Governor-General to do his work to protect the Australian constitution in the face of politicians who may want to act illegally.

The dismissal of Jack Lang and Gough Whitlam are not the only times the Governor-General has acted to protect the Constitution. Sir Zelman Cohen recalled when he was Governor-General he constantly required ample and adequate explanations and reasons for what was proposed. There have been many times when Liberal Prime Ministers and Premiers have also been closely scrutinised by the Governor-General or State Governor.

The Governor-General's job is not just ceremonial as the republicans are trying to make people believe. It requires the utmost knowledge and dedication. Sir Zelman referred to it as being the most complex and demanding position he had had. It called upon all his legal and life experience. It is not a position where you can throw any elected Tom Dick or Harry, whether he is a sportsman or a movie star (which seems to be result you would get from Direct Electionists) or someone only agreed to by the Leader of the Opposition, who has power of veto over the PMs choice as a result of the 2/3 model proposed at the 1999 referendum.

The current system of appointment through the Queen of a suitable person recommended by the Prime Minister, and his ability to hold office in the face of

the political problems of the day, as he is there at the Queen's pleasure, is what makes the current Australian system so much better than the republic being proposed.

69 Changes with just one vote!

Normally a referendum is only allowed to change one part of the constitution. The 1999 referendum change affects far more as Peter Reith described at the time:

"In total, the referendum model involves 69 changes to the existing Australian Constitution. Four sections would be deleted without replacement and a further 11 sections would be deleted and replaced by new sections - most of them completely different to what existed before. An additional 11 completely new sections will be added, bringing the total of new sections to 22. Furthermore there will be 43 other amendments which sweep across numerous sections of the Constitution, plus The Table Of Contents. Together these 69 changes mean that this single referendum will alter almost half the sections of the Constitution. There is much more to this referendum than meets the eye."

Obviously any future referendum attempt will also be attempting in one swoop to change the same amount of provisions of the Constitution. Of course a referendum is only meant to change one provision at a time. Changing 69 in one go, may leave the changes open to endless High Court challenges as to their validity thus weakening our constitution and democracy in the process. Then there is the problem of what happens if two or more states decide to remain with the Monarchy. Do they effectively secede from the Commonwealth Of Australia to do so, if the rest of the country adopts a republic? Your republican proposals are fraught with many dangers both in trying to be implemented and after their implementation.

Why is there such a rush to make us a republic when the other British Westminster Monarchies are not interested in such a move ?

Being a Constitutional Monarchy puts Australia in a group of special nations in the world. The most stable democracies are the monarchies. These are countries where the sovereign power is separated from the exercise of political power. It means the pomp and circumstance of the Head of State is held separate from whatever the politicians may be doing. We have a very special monarchy as it is shared with many nations, with Governors-General exercising the Monarchs powers and duties. The Queen is Queen of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, United Kingdom, and another dozen other countries. Even Fiji , where the Queen refused to continue ruling because of the coup, asked her to return and be their


sovereign once again.

The republicans seem to think if Australia turned on the Queen, they could then carry their campaign against the Royal Family to other countries like Canada and NZ. They are wrong. There is little support for republicanism in New Zealand. Canada being a monarchy is the big separator they have from the United States. A republic will never get up there because Canadians fear such a move would open their whole country and culture up to domination by the United States. If Australia became a republic we would not be followed by other Commonwealth countries. Rather we would find ourselves on the outer with our senior Commonwealth partners. It is these countries and the UK who have come to our assistance with troops and support for our work in East Timor. America has had to be badgered into helping. If you remember Confrontation in the 60s when Indonesia tried to destroy Malaysia, you will know the British had 60,000 troops there to defend Malaysia, along with Australian and New Zealand troops and planes. Britain has millions of migrants in Australia. If Australia was attacked it would be the British who would be here first to protect us. After all if they were prepared to help Malaysia who constantly criticises them, they would be much more willing to come here to help us. I know everyone thinks the Americans would be here first. But would they really? Timor doesn't suggest so. It was the British who were the first to volunteer troops to help us, followed quickly by our Canadian Commonwealth cousins. America only offered help (and no ground troops) when they felt it in their national interest.

We have a special relationship with the major Commonwealth countries through the shared monarchy and our shared institutions. If you look at the Commonwealth countries that have become republics, you will find most of them have had bouts of dictatorship and instability that has happened in few of those keeping the Queen as head of state - Fiji and Grenada being the only real exceptions. Fiji returned to the Crown, and Sir Paul Swoon as Governor-General in Grenada actually was able to call for outside assistance to restore democracy to that troubled Caribbean island, thus protecting his people.

The Australian Monarchy is a very precious part of our Constitution and political stability. I ask you Honourable Senators to stop your pursuit of a republic and to accept that the system we have does work well and is in the best interests of Australia for the future. Just because the Monarchical system is an old system does not mean it should be overthrown for a modern republic. In Europe, Japan and Thailand there are many monarchical systems that will remain for hundreds of years, providing stability at the top. We are part of this unique form of government. We must retain it for the safety and stability it gives.

I am, yours sincerely,


ANTHONY L. CLARKE J.P., KSJ