



Mr J R Bruce

The Secretary,  
Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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THE SENATE INQUIRY INTO AN AUSTRALIAN REPUBLIC.

I place on record my objection that the Inquiry does not canvass opinions from the majority of Australians who do not wish to change to a republic and I would like to formally record that I do not agree with any change to our existing constitution.

Furthermore I am totally opposed to any plebiscite being held. Neither the constitution nor the law of this country provides for plebiscites and any Government can purposely frame the question to facilitate obtaining the answer they desire.

The Fathers of Federation created a wonderful set of balances checking each arm of Government, no Republican Constitution could provide the same. If the President is appointed by Parliament, he/she will be a tool of the Government. If elected by the people, he/she will assume an authority, which could counter that of the Government.

No former British Colony that has retained the Westminster form of government but removed The Crown has been able to maintain the sort of democratic freedoms enjoyed by Australians under our Constitution.

All of the questions raised by the Inquiry whether relating to a United States type of Presidency, a French style or a President appointed by the Parliament will completely upset the delicate system of checks and balances within our Constitution. The Office of Prime Minister and the Lower House of Parliament have already assumed as much (and possibly even more) power as allowed under the framework of our Constitution. To create what will be a political presidency will, in the case of an appointed President will place too much power in the hands of the Prime Minister or in the event of an elected President, create a rival power to that of the Prime Minister. Both systems will greatly undermine the brilliant democratic nature existent in our current Constitution and will greatly depreciate the power of the people.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James Bruce".

James Bruce  
12<sup>th</sup> January 2004.