



Gareth Kimberley
Street
Sylvania NSW

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

Page 1 of 3

SUBMISSION ARGUING AGAINST THE REPUBLIC PROPOSAL

THE PEOPLE HAVE ALREADY REJECTED THE REPUBLIC

At the referendum of 6 November 1999 asking the people if they wanted Australia to be changed to a republic, the answer was a resounding NO. As the people have already said no to the republic I find it surprising that you are now inquiring as to what kind of republic we should have. The fact that the Government has formed this Committee despite the decision of the Australian people and that the Committee consists of republican supporters will clearly discredit any pro-republic recommendations the Committee might make. Nevertheless, the arguments against meddling with our tried and proven constitution and turning Australia into a Politicians' Republic are overwhelming and I will repeat them again despite the fact you are clearly biased and will no doubt reject them anyway.

THE FATAL FLAW IN THE REPUBLICAN IDEA

The idea of a republic is almost certainly doomed to fail because it gives the Government the power to dismiss the Head of State. The people remember only too well the frightening events of 1975 where a federal government went out of control. Fortunately, the Governor-General, through the powers invested in him, was able to force the Government back to the people before irreparable damage was done. It was rather ironic that the Governor-General was a Labor Party supporter who had been appointed by the Labor Prime Minister.

It is highly unlikely the Australian people would agree to a change that would hand more power to a tyrannical, centralised government in Canberra while at the same time robbing them of the protection they have whereby the Head of State can force a rogue government back to the people where it can be held accountable for its actions.

Only the Parliament should be able to dismiss the Head of State and certainly not the prime minister of the day, or even a simple majority of the Parliament as this would still favour the governing party. It should always be remembered that the current prime minister is not the Head of State but merely a temporary servant of the people. With the appallingly low regard the people have for our current crop of politicians, unless they can be assured that the Head of State will always be there to protect them from a runaway government in Canberra with a distorted idea of a mandate, they are hardly likely to vote for a change. Indeed, such a change would put the entire future of the nation at risk.

THE NEED TO RETAIN THE RESERVE POWERS

Prime ministers and governments come and go. Some have been good, some mediocre and some have been downright dangerous – but all of them popularly elected. The role of the Head of State should be to provide stability in the constantly changing world of politics. It is not so much a matter of whether the people can be trusted to elect a suitable Head of State but rather, the choice of candidates presented to them, the method of selection and election, and the popular mood of the day. Experience has shown that the situation could arise where a popularly elected government with a charismatic leader and a majority in both houses of parliament, could run off the rails and get out of control. It is absolutely essential that our Head of State has the power to force the Government back to the people before irreparable damage is done. It is not a matter of the Head of State sacking the Government but simply making the Government accountable to the people and it is the only protection the people have from a powerful and tyrannical government. Many believe the Government has too much power already. It is essential that the reserve powers of the Governor-General remain in place to protect the people from power-hungry politicians.

THE DANGERS OF A POPULARLY ELECTED PRESIDENT

It is now quite clear that the very real dangers of a popularly elected President have been conveniently ignored by the republican protagonists. If a popularly elected government was joined by a popularly elected President of the same political ideology because of the popular mood at the time, the stage would be set for political dictatorship and democracy as we know it in this country could be suddenly and seriously endangered. Imagine a situation with someone like Hawke or Keating as Prime Minister and someone like Whitlam as President. Any President who is popularly elected must of necessity become a politician and will have had to mount a costly election campaign. His or her left or right leanings will be highlighted by the other side of politics resulting in him or her being despised by around 50% of the adult population. We could then be on our way towards joining the United States with our first Presidential assassination. The only safe way to elect a Head of State who would be generally politically acceptable is by a two thirds majority of both houses of parliament and that the candidates preferably not be politicians. Our Head of State must be someone who is clearly apolitical and who can satisfactorily replace the Queen – someone whose integrity is beyond question and who can be trusted and respected by all Australians. Clearly, that would rule out a politician.

THE POWER OF CENTRALISED GOVERNMENT

It would be too easy for external forces such as the giant Transnational Corporations, the Third World dominated United Nations, the WTO, IMF or World Bank to influence or even control a centralised republican government in Canberra that had the power to impose its will on the Australian people. Control would be achieved by means of 'Education Programs' designed to convince the people that the changes were for their own good and were necessary because of the demands of 'Globalisation'. It is highly significant that the Howard / Costello Government was able to force through the Parliament its Big Business sponsored Goods and Services Tax claiming it had a mandate to do so when the majority of voters were clearly opposed to it. The same thing is happening now with the concerted attempt to force a republic on us when the majority of voters have already voted against it. The proposed changes to our Constitution would serve only to further centralise power in Canberra and weaken the safeguards that currently exist.

A LEAP INTO THE UNKNOWN

The claim by the pro-republican forces that Australia is still tied to England and that the Queen still controls our Government is, of course, quite untrue and is nothing more than a desperate attempt to convince the people that they should vote for the changes and (like the GST) trust the Government to sort out the problems later. Australia is already a totally independent, sovereign nation with our Governor-General as our Head of State and a system of government that is a proven success. There is no republican system of government anywhere in the world that can be demonstrably shown to be as good as what we already have, in fact they are demonstrably worse. Even the so-called 'Minimalist Approach' is fraught with danger because of the fundamental changes involved and their widespread and unforeseeable repercussions. Australia would be placed in real danger of heading down the path towards becoming a Keating style banana republic. In view of the fact that we already have what is probably the best system of government in the world and one that has worked extremely successfully for the last 100 years, the proposed changes represent a dangerous and unnecessary leap into the unknown merely to appease the pro-republican movement and should be – and hopefully will be totally rejected by your committee.

A POLITICAL GRAB FOR POWER

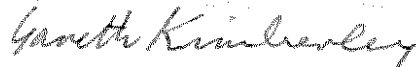
The arguments being put forward by the glib, smooth-talking pro-republican protagonists would have us believe that the changes are necessary in order to make Australia a truly independent nation with an Australian as our Head of State when in fact we are already an outstandingly successful independent nation and we already have an Australian as our effective Head of State. Clearly, this is not just about turning Australia into a republic but it is also an attempt by our current crop of politicians and their republican cohorts to transfer power away from the people into the hands of a centralised republican government in Canberra while at the same time taking away the last few remaining rights and safeguards the people have under our existing constitution. If, in spite of all this, your committee still recommends that Australia should be turned into a republic against the wishes of the Australian people it will be seen for what it is – an overt and arrogant power-grab by unscrupulous republican politicians. In view of the recent cases of corruption amongst our politicians we should be mindful of the quote, "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely".

SUMMARY

In concluding my arguments against meddling with the Constitution I would simply make the following points.

1. The 1999 referendum on turning Australia into a republic was rejected by the people despite an almost fanatical campaign by republican politicians and their cohorts and a saturation pro-republic campaign in the media financed by Big Business and other overseas interests.
2. Attempts by pro-republican politicians to get around the referendum rejection by switching to plebiscites asking what kind of republic we want will be seen by the people as treachery.
3. Those republican politicians who betray their oath of office and continue to undermine our system of government could be viewed in some quarters as being guilty of treason.
4. The crown is the basis on which our system of government operates. Those countries which have abandoned the crown in favour of becoming a republic have invariably become political dictatorships. We could well end up as another Third World republic.
5. None of the republic models dreamed up are viable. You cannot simply exchange the Governor-General for a President. The Governor-General must remain apolitical representing the Crown (the Australian people) and retain the reserve powers in the interests of political stability and protecting the people from a tyrannical central government.
6. There is no republican system of government that is better than - or even as good as - what we've already got. To jeopardise the future of our nation simply to appease the republican putsch would be the height of madness.
7. If our rabid republican politicians and their high profile supporters continue to push for their politicians' republic their names could well go down in history - but for all the wrong reasons.

For the sake of our children and our children's children I urge the six of you on this Committee to put aside your republican bias and heed the decision of the Australian people.



Gareth Kimberley