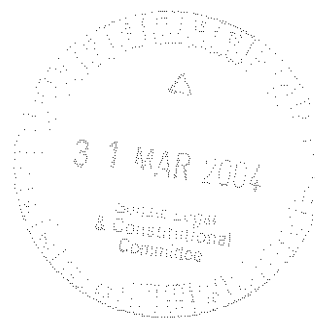




W O M E N



INTO POLITICS



The Committee Secretary

**Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee
Parliament House
Canberra. ACT. 2600**

Submission to the Senate Inquiry into an Australian Republic.

From

Women into Politics Inc

30 March 2004

Women Into Politics Inc: A Coalition of Women's Organisations and Individuals including:

Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women (NSW Division), Australian Federation of University Women (NSW) Australian Local Government Women's Association (NSW), National Women's Justice Coalition, Organisation of Hellenic & Hellenic-Cypriot Women of Australia, War Widows Guild of Australia (NSW), Women and the Australian Church, Women in Science and Technology Network, Women Lawyers' Association of NSW, Women's Electoral Lobby (NSW), Women's International League of Peace and Freedom, Young Women's Christian Association.

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Submission.

1. *Women Into Politics Inc* is pleased to make a submission on the matter of an Australia Republic.

2. *Women Into Politics* supports the detailed submissions made to the Senate Committee of Enquiry into an Australian Republic by:

- Kim Rubenstein, Associate Professor of Law, University of Melbourne, and
- Women for an Australian Republic

3. *Women Into Politics'* primary concern is that women must be full participants in all areas of Australian public life and to this end we were one of the women's organizations which developed and organized the *Women's Constitutional Convention* in Canberra prior to the *Australian Constitutional Convention* in 1998. Some three hundred women from all over Australia, representing women's organizations and individuals attended this event.

The consensus arising out of the Women's Constitutional Convention was:

- women supported an Australian Republic,
- there was no decision on whether the Head of State should be elected or appointed, but it was decided that the Australian people should be given the opportunity to decide this question through a plebiscite or referendum.
- women were concerned that the constitutional arrangements and procedures for the nomination or appointment of a Head of State must contain guarantees that provides for equality of women with men, and that women be given equal opportunity to become Head of State. This latter point is dealt with in detail in the submission made to your Committee from Kim Rubenstein, Associate Professor of Law, University of Melbourne. We commend her submission to you.

Women Into Politics believes that women, concerned for women's political equality remain of these views.



Joan M. Bielski AM
Hon. Secretary
For and on behalf of
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30 March 2004