

Victoria

22 February 2004

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

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Dear Sir,

*The Senate Inquiry into an Australian Republic*

I wish to place on record my objection to the terms under which this inquiry has been constituted.

Since it is a known public fact that a very substantial number of Australians still support the Australian monarchy (their exact number is unknown), and since a majority of electors voted NO to a republic in the very recently held 1999 constitutional referendum, it is, in my view, improper for the Senate, or for that matter the House of Representatives, to embark on any course of activity which could be construed as a partisan campaign for either side (republic or monarchy).

Rather, it is essential for the wellbeing and unity of the Australian people that Government adopt an open

and even-handed approach to this great constitutional controversy on all occasions and in all contexts. Equity to both sides is both a matter of natural justice and important so that any losing side in future constitutional contests will be able to feel that its case was fairly put to and fairly heard by the Australian people.

In the lead-ups to the Constitutional Convention and then the 1999 Constitutional Referendum, the monarchist side was not adequately and fairly presented to the Australian people. Only one strand of monarchist opinion was allowed an official position by the Governments of the day, and that was that of the Australians for Constitutional Monarchy. As a result, very important arguments in favour of the monarchy simply did not appear in explanatory documents mailed to all electors. The constitution of the committee to prepare the NO case showed a similar bias.

Moreover, no adequate statement was made canvassing the important *third option* of moving towards an entirely independent Australian monarchy, which could be founded in the future with the co-operation of the House of Windsor. This option has the advantage of both giving Australia its own head of state, while keeping the constitutional monarchy structure which has given us over one hundred years of peace and stability.

I believe that the terms of the Inquiry should be broadened to include "the most appropriate way of

retaining a constitutional monarchy in Australia, should that prove to be the majority will".

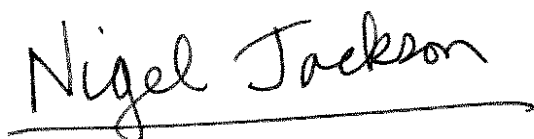
For similar reasons, I am opposed to the holding of any plebiscites on the constitutional question, since it would appear that their purpose is to try to compromise the electorate and prejudice their capacity to decide in advance of the next referendum.

There is already reason to feel that, as in 1999, most of the major media in Australia are not only pro-republic but quite unprepared to give fair space and time to the monarchist case. Moreover, there is reason to feel that many secondary school text books in the SOSE area show a similar bias, and that much teaching at this level in Australia is currently one-sided in favour of the republic. Such a state of affairs is itself scandalous.

For the Senate to follow in their footsteps, as the establishment of the present inquiry suggests it is doing, is truly disgraceful, as well as being fundamentally unjust and unrepresentative.

Accordingly, I call on the Inquiry to make whatever moves are needed to rectify this very wrongful state of affairs.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nigel Jackson". The signature is written in dark ink and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

NIGEL JACKSON