

LAUNCESTON
TASMANIA
1/03/2004

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



Senate Inquiry into an Australian Republic

Dear Sir,

Just over 4 years ago the Australian people indicated very clearly that they did not want Australia to become a republic. A recent nationwide Television poll - with a huge 13,000 plus respondents - clearly endorsed that result.

There has been no groundswell from the Australian public to hold this inquiry; the initiative has come from some members of the Australian Senate with a passion for such an exercise and it will involve a huge expense to the Australian taxpayer.

Bearing the above in mind I humbly submit the following :

(i) The Terms of Reference are misleading and, I believe, dishonest. The emphasis is on having an Australian as a Head of State. (We already have one.) And there is no provision whatsoever for Australian citizens opposed to a republic and who are quite satisfied with our current system.

Major-General Michael Jeffery is an Australian and as our Governor-General is our Head of State. The Queen, as Head of the British Commonwealth of Nations - of which Australia is proud to be a member - is accorded the status of Commonwealth Head of State.

Sir John Kerr was an Australian Head of State. In 1975 he made a momentous decision, but more importantly the decision subsequently was overwhelmingly endorsed by THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE, and that is the way it should be.

(ii) Our Constitution, which I believe is possibly the best in the modern world, makes no reference to, or provision for, a plebiscite, so I consider the Inquiry an unnecessary expense to the Australian taxpayer.

(iii) I have not seen one iota of evidence to suggest that becoming a republic will in any way improve life for Australians. I have seen evidence that it will have an adverse effect on ordinary Australians. Should not the lifestyle and freedom of the Australian

people be the ultimate aim of parliamentarians?

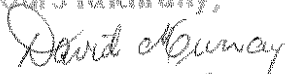
(iv) Before even contemplating an inquiry such as this I believe every politician and aspiring politician should have a sound working knowledge of the Australian Constitution, and be prepared to uphold it, firstly because it is an excellent document; secondly because it sets out clearly the laws and statutes upon which this nation was built and thirdly because this document has been abused by our politicians in recent years. This really is unforgivable.

The Government should ensure that our young people should at least be aware that we have a Constitution, what the purpose of such a document is; that before completing their education they are familiar with its general contents at least, and that it cannot be changed except by the consent of the Australian people through a referendum.

(v) When I see the composition of the Committee so heavily stacked with staunch republicans I must naturally doubt a balanced report on the Committee findings

In conclusion I believe this Committee should never have been set up in the first place as it is based on the false premise that the majority of Australians want a republic and it is putting words into the mouth of the citizens of this country. How can it be seen as a true reflection of the way Australians think? I believe the inquiry should not proceed.

Yours faithfully,



F. David Murray