



# AUSTRALIAN REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT

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## THE CASE FOR HOLDING A REFERENDUM ON THE ISSUE OF A REPUBLICAN CONSTITUTION FOR AUSTRALIA

### THE REFERENDUM METHOD:

This allows every Australian voter to directly register a YES or NO vote about any proposed change to the Australian Constitution. If a majority of voters, and a majority of States, votes YES, the proposal is inserted in the Constitution and empowers the Federal Parliament to make law based on it. (Sect. 128 of the Constitution). The referendum is a truly democratic power in the hands of Australia's voters, and the proposal for an Australian Republic must pass that test. How will the people of Australia react to such a proposal? Let's consider the present Australian 'state-of-mind'

### ABOUT THE 'COLONIAL' MENTALITY:

- It began with the 'First Fleet' prison settlement.
- It grew on the English class system of master over servant.
- It knew nothing of basic human rights.
- It could do nothing without permission from London authority.
- It entered the twentieth century trapped in a rebuilt prison called the 'Australian Constitution'.
- It still produces two types of colonial:

The 'Wild Colonial Boy' with his chip-on-the-shoulder attitude and ocker image, all bluster against legal authority, yet dependent on 'them' when danger threatens because of his ignorance and insecurity.

1. The 'True-Blue Monarchist' with his pseudo-aristocratic attitudes, deferring always to royalty because Mother England knows best, and howling 'treason' at the slightest sign of challenge to the prerogatives of the English monarchy over the Australian polity.

- BOTH these types of colonial mentality admit that ultimate power lies with the British Crown as sovereign over Australia.

### ABOUT THE REPUBLICAN MENTALITY:

- It began before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth.
- It believed that all were equal in their humanity.
- It grew on the spirit of common rights and common duties.

- It looked back on a proud republican history, including the seventeenth century English Commonwealth.
- It believes in the individual while accepting only the sovereignty of the people joined in a republican constitution.
- It feels a deep yet realistic need for truly independent Australia with its own elected Head of State.
- It understands that a republican constitution is the only true foundation for national independence.

### THE REPUBLICAN ISSUE:

Political events, media exposure, and party loyalties have split the majority of Australians almost equally between republicans and monarchists, leaving about one-third of the people uncommitted or not involved enough to form an opinion: it is they who will decide the issue by the turn of the twenty-first century. The battle for their hearts and minds has already begun and its outcome will decide Australia's international status in the eyes of the world's peoples. We say, let that battle be fought NOW through democracy and reason in a referendum, rather than risk a slow and apathetic decline into the violence and dictatorship of a coup.

### WHO WILL WIN?

It is true that newspaper and opinion poll samples of public opinion appear to show a two-to-one balance in favour of the present British monarchical constitution. Yet much of that is undoubtedly apathetic acquiescence in the status quo, either from the over 50's who are less well-educated than today's younger Australians, or from the typical 'can't-be-bothered' voter-against-change.

*A strongly-fought referendum battle will stir the thinking of both these groups and awaken them to the nation's need for true independence. WHY NOT LET THE PEOPLE SPEAK?*

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For A.R.M.**