



AUSTRALIAN REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT

THE ARM AND THE SENATE INQUIRY

In 2003, the Senate announced that it was conducting an Inquiry into an Australian Republic. The Inquiry's terms of reference cover two central issues: republican models and republican process; what kind of republican do we want, and what is the best way to get there?

Our submission to the Inquiry was built on four basic principles:

- Firstly, Australia deserves a republic with an Australian Head of State.
- Secondly, the move to an Australian republic should be driven and owned by the Australian people.
- Thirdly, an Australian republic should maintain our parliamentary system, its traditions and conventions, regardless of the mode of appointment for the Head of State.
- Finally, an Australian republic is the sole focus of the ARM and our uniting principle.

Republican Models

After 1999, the ARM resolved not to advocate any one model. We remain open on this issue and seek to encourage discussion between all republicans. In 2001 the ARM's constitutional issues committee researched and wrote *Six Models for an Australian Republic*, which presents a range of options from minimal change to several direct election models. Each are accompanied by suggested marked-up changes to the constitution. Five of these models were submitted to the Inquiry.

Model One - Prime Minister Appoints the President

The most minimal change, where the Prime Minister alone selects who should be the Head of State.

Model Two - People Nominate, Parliament Appoints the President

Very similar to the bipartisan model proposed in 1999, where the Head of State's appointment is approved by a 2/3 majority of federal parliament.

Model Three - Presidential Assembly Elects the President

An electoral college, elected by the Australian people, convenes and selects the Head of State from a list of nominees provided by the public.

Model Four - People Elect the President

An open form of direct election: any citizen with the required amount of nominees may run for Head of State in a direct vote of the Australian people.

Model Five - People Elect From Parliament's List

A model where the parliament votes by a 2/3 majority to approve a list of nominees to be put to the people in a direct vote.

All of these models seek to maintain a largely ceremonial role for our Head of State, a role that would place him or her above the political fray.

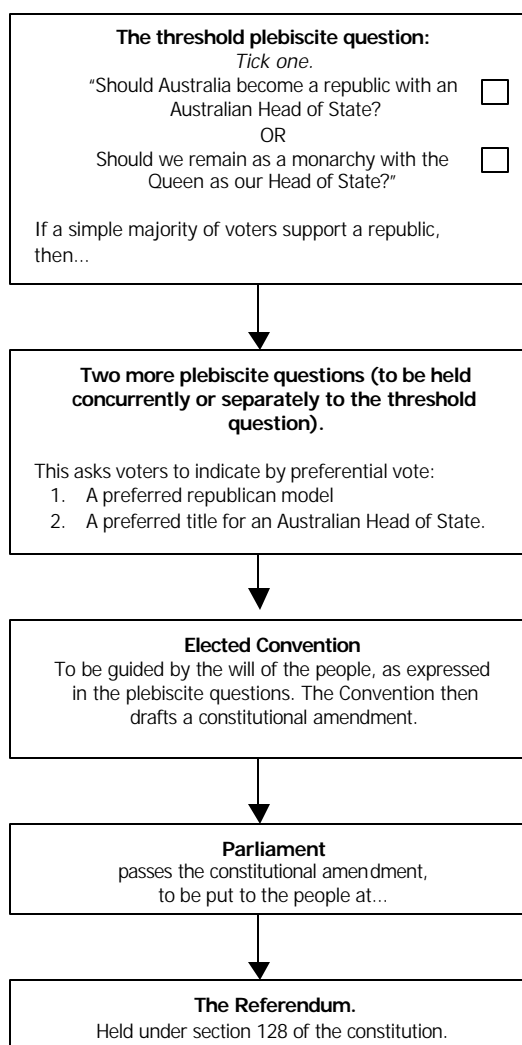
The ARM doesn't 'endorse' any one of these options and we recognise that other citizens and organisations have also devised some excellent workable models. We argue that in the move to a republic, it is the Australian people who should choose the kind of republic they want. But how do we get there? What's the best way to decide on a model and build the republic?

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The Roadmap to the Republic

In 2003 the ARM held a national consultative process with the membership to decide the best road map to the republic. In the end, we resolved to support a multi-plebiscite process to be followed by a fully elected Convention, and then a referendum. This was very similar to the process supported by the Corowa Conference of 2001. This would consult the people at every step of the way and give them a real say in building the kind of republic that would best suit Australia.

In short, the ARM's position is this: let the people decide the model, and consult them at every step of the way. This will give the Australian people 'ownership' of their republic and the confidence to vote 'Yes' at a referendum. This is what we propose:



- *Plebiscite: a vote of the Australian people to express an opinion on a particular issue. There is no obligation on the government to implement the results of the plebiscite, though the results of the vote would carry considerable weight. The Australian national anthem was selected by a plebiscite.*

The ARM's submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee's *Inquiry into an Australian Republic* can be found at the ARM website:
<http://www.republic.org.au/ARM-2001/republic/senateinquiry.htm>