

In 1999 the Howard Government put a referendum to the voters for republic in which an Australian Head of State would be hand-picked by the Prime Minister and approved by a 2/3rds majority of Parliament. The failure of the referendum was arguably a rejection of the model of appointment of a head of state *by politicians* rather than any definitive rejection of a republic.

Polling in 2007 shows 45% of people totally in favour of a republic compared to 36% opposed, with 19% undecided. Those in favour climb to 62% if Prince Charles takes the throne (Newspoll, 21/1/07).

Labor policy in 2001 supported a republic and it came to government in 2007 with a republic as part of its platform. Moving to a Republic was also the no. 1 recommendation of the constitutional workgroup of the 2020 Summit but almost three years on there is no progress.

The Democrats were the first political party to have an official pro-republic position and we initiated the Senate inquiry into the steps and processes needed for Australia to become a truly independent nation.

Australia's Constitution has hardly changed in the last century. However, High Court decisions, broader interpretations of Federal powers in areas like communications, industrial relations, family law and social welfare, together with numerous inter-governmental agreements and attitudinal change mean it is out of date.

..... moving to a **Republic**

Our Plan

Ask the people

1. A public awareness campaign as a first, crucial step in engaging the public
2. A simple, first plebiscite asking the Australian people:

Do you want Australia to become a republic? YES or NO

The vote would be non-binding and conditional upon the public being consulted about different forms of republic models

1. Consistent with the principle of popular sovereignty, a fully elected constitutional convention would then be held to develop models of a republic
2. The models would be put to a second plebiscite
3. A referendum would then be conducted to change the Constitution offering a choice between the form of republic preferred by the second plebiscite or remaining a constitutional monarchy

Our Plans for further Constitutional change

- Entrench the roles and independence of the three arms of government - the Judiciary, Executive and Parliament – and the **separation of powers** between them, including the accountability of the Executive to the Parliament and the people
- Clarify the **powers and responsibilities** of each level of government and the mechanisms for ensuring efficiency and accountability.
- Entrench our bicameral **parliamentary** with both houses elected simultaneously by quota preferential system of proportional representation
- Recognise Australia's fragile **environment** and seek to protect and preserve its diversity and natural beauty
- Recognise the prior ownership of the land by our **Indigenous** peoples
- Include a **bill of rights** providing freedom - from discrimination; of speech; sexual expression; assembly; for the media; to strike; to die with dignity; to justice and a fair and speedy trial, and more