

AUSTRALIANCONSTITUTION.COM.AU PAPER NO. 16  
ATTN THE MEDIA, EDITORS AND JOURNALISTS

*"I have rarely attended elections in any country, certainly not a democratic one, in which the newspapers have displayed more shameless bias. One and all, they determined that Australians should have a republic and they used every device towards that end."*

- W.F. Deedes, 'The people of Australia send Blair's Britain a useful message', *The Daily Telegraph* (London), 8 November 1999.

- See also AIDC Paper No. 17 quoting senior republican opposition to the 1999 Referendum Model.

To seek to counteract this serious criticism of the Australian media made after the 1999 Referendum, it is suggested that the media, via its editors and journalists, expose the electorate to some verifiable **truths** and so seek to recover its former reputation for fairness.

**Some examples:**

- A. Leading constitutional expert and republican Professor Greg Craven wrote, of our Constitution:-  
*"...our existing constitutional framework is fundamentally sound."  
 "...it is one of the great democratic documents of the modern world."  
 "The ultimate proof of the Constitution's quality has been its fundamental success."  
 "The Constitution is the greatest asset we have."  
 "I also passionately believe in the Australian Constitution."  
 "The more we engage in civilized conversation about it, the better."*  
 Greg Craven, Professor of Government and Constitutional Law at Curtin University (W.A.). Published in *CEF-A News*, vol. 1, 2004. Now Vice-Chancellor: Australian Catholic University, Sydney.
- B. *"The Australian system of government works well."*  
 Republican Cardinal George Pell, *Homily* 6 Feb. 2012.
- C. Leading republican Malcolm Turnbull said:-  
*"You've got to be practical. Conservative Republicans will never agree to abandon the Westminster system. Members of Parliament don't want a separate executive presidency. It breaks their lock on ministerial positions. But the strongest argument is that we already have a perfectly good, functioning democracy. Governments go in and out. They are more answerable to the voter than, say, the British ones. We have elements of Westminster, elements of Washington. **It's a uniquely Australian system that works well.**"*  
 From an interview with Frank Devine in *The Australian*, Mon. 16 July, 2001 (p. 13.)
- D. Former Chief Justice of the High Court and republican, Sir Gerard Brennan wrote:-  
*"But the principal objection to an elected Presidency is the risk – perhaps the likelihood – that the President, armed with the authority of a popular mandate, might exercise executive and, possibly, reserve power to frustrate the policies or impair the powers of the Prime Minister and Government. There would be two hands on the tiller of national interest."*  
 - 4<sup>th</sup> Geoffrey Sawyer lecture, 14/7/2001.
- E. Senior republican Professor Cheryl Saunders AO wrote:-  
*"It follows that, if there is to be further consideration of a republic, there should be at least three elements of the information campaign. The first should explain the current arrangements and the implications of the move to a republic. The second should explain the proposed alternative. The third should be designed to deal with queries that arise during the campaign, before the vote takes place."*  
 From the book *Constitutional Politics* (Brisbane: UQP, 2002), p. 206. Co-authored by former CEO of ARM Professor John Warhurst.
- F. Former NSW Premier and republican Bob Carr said:-  
*"We have a Westminster or parliamentary system of government. Call it a prime ministerial system. **It works well.**"*  
 - From his 25<sup>th</sup> April column "Republic: Dwindling Support" on his blog *Thoughtlines*  
<http://bobcarrblog.wordpress.com/2011/04/25/republic-dwindling-support/>
- G. Noted left-wing author and republican Bob Ellis notes a worry that, despite his republicanism, **"the best countries in the world are monarchies."** ("Monarchies rule" (*ABC Unleashed*, 0900 hrs, 28 Aug. 2008; retrievable from <http://www.abc.net.au/unleashed/stories/s2348261.htm> )
- H. The UN rates Australia as no. 2 of 187 in its Nov. 2011 Human Development Index rankings. 70% of the top 10-ranking countries by HDI are Constitutional Monarchies (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics>). \*1Email [ozziesystem@gmail.com](mailto:ozziesystem@gmail.com) for AIDC's synopsis of those rankings.
- I. The prestigious University of New South Wales, in its 1998 Law Journal *Forum* (launched by the then NSW Governor on 23 June 1998) contained 36 serious criticisms of the 1999 model by leading republican constitutional experts, led by respected republican the Late Prof. George \*2Winterton and 9 by former Chief Justice the (non-republican) late Sir Harry Gibbs, added to by 9 others by knowledgeable senior republicans – 54 in all. To obtain details of 17 separate and additional criticisms by Australia's then most senior public servant republican \*2Mr Harry Evans (then Clerk of the Senate), 36+9+17=62 criticisms by republicans of the Republican model they asked us to support

**Summary**

It is suggested that had the electorate at the 1999 referendum result described as "a landslide" been made aware of above it could well have been a "tsunami". Hence Lord Deede's quote at the top of this page.

Comments welcome. Underlining by us. To obtain \*2Prof. Winterton's criticisms plus those of \*2Mr Evans, \*1email as above in 'H'.