

AC PAPER NO. 10

An estimate of the tax-payer cost of changing Australia to an unknown republic

Electors in our 6 Sovereign States and Nationally are entitled to vote at a s.128 referendum to keep or to change our 7 constitutional monarchies, i.e. 7 referenda. Additionally, we were (under PM Rudd) asked by the Government to vote in 2 plebiscites (=14 polls), i.e. a total of 21 expensive and divisive polls. "Labor assumes that the process would take about a decade" [John Warhurst (former CEO: Australian Republican Movement) / *Constitutional Politics*, Brisbane: UQP, 2002; p. 24]. It must be remembered that such votes may include votes to change (or downgrade) our chief national symbol – our Australian Flag – see paper no.7.

Certain church publications which include prayers for the Queen will need costly alteration to omit these.

The flag-change/downgrade is supported not only by the ALP Government, but also by the Australian Greens and the ARM. See AIDC paper no. 7. However, it is stressed that it is a move by the **leaders** of those organisations and **not** by their 'rank and file'.

In such a massive change, it is impossible to do other than a "best estimate" and this costing falls into that category. Others will have other estimates, and they will doubtless publish them. It will be up to each voter to accept his view of which is the more realistic.

5 OR 7 REFERENDA NECESSARY – NOT ONE! (SEE AIDC PAPER NO. 2)

Cost of the previous exercise from the establishing of a Republic Advisory Committee in 1993 to the referendum in 1999. Including the costs of an election for the convention, around \$150 million. This excludes the costs absorbed in other budgets, salaries of official delegates, the cost of legislative time and that of legislators both Nationally and in the States. More than, but say: **\$150m. Added to 6 State referenda at say \$100m: \$750m.**

EDUCATION ABOUT OUR CONSTITUTION

The ALP/ARM's proposal envisages a "public education" program. If by this it is intended to ensure that every Australian is conversant with the present Constitution this will be a very significant program. (It cannot of course be assumed that all Australians will wish to be so informed). A minimal fund for schools, colleges and universities for curriculum development and additional teaching explaining the meaning of our Constitution (82% don't understand it):

To fund documentaries and other television, radio and print media programs, say: **\$200m.**

YES/NO PAPERS ON PLEBISCITES AND REFERENDA

There will also need to be adequate taxpayer funding of a YES and NO case for such proposals.

Direct costs of Federal Plebiscites would be approx.

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| 1st Plebiscite: (1) YES and NO cases (and public education): | \$25m |
| Plebiscite costs (14): | \$100m |
| 2nd Plebiscite: (1) YES and NO detailed cases for 4-6 various models proposed, inc. Public Education: | \$50m |
| Plebiscite costs (14): | \$100m |
| Sub-total: | \$275m |

NB: Our present *Crowned Republic* system of government must be included in the menu of models, to allow democratic choice.

REFERENDA EXPERTS' COSTS

If the second plebiscite indicates a preference (which will still be legally and constitutionally of no effect) for a form of republic or produces as stated by ARM a menu of a variety of models, then a variety of proposed republican completely new constitution/s will need to be drafted. Who is to draft these? A Convention of selected experts? How many experts from both sides? Why would a Constitutional expert opposing change contribute to the destruction of a constitution which has served Australia faultlessly for over 100 years – and one described by republican constitutional expert Prof. Greg Craven as "one of the great democratic documents of the modern world"? The result of this would be that only republican experts would be involved. Shouldn't those who push for such fundamental and radical changes to Australia's proven system pay for it, in view of the landslide 'No' vote in 1999? Why should those who seek to keep Australia the way it is be forced to pay for its change? As we do not know the answer to these questions let us assume that a convention of republican experts from the 9 or more **disparate** republican groups each with its own preferred model will be convened with the public voting for or against its selected model at a referendum.

Based on the precedent in 1999, the direct additional costs of this would be, if there were a postal ballot, about

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| • Referendum: Already estimated above at \$100m/plebiscite for 7. | \$700m |
| ○ Yes & No cases | \$55m |
| ○ Public Education | <u>\$30m</u> |
| | c/b \$2010m |



P.T.O.

HIGH COURT CHALLENGE

A factor seldom mentioned is the question of what is to happen if one or more States vote not to become a State Republic and/or part of Federal Republic of Australia and mounts a High Court challenge and possible appeal against being forcibly included in the change. We suggest a contingency fund of say (see also AIDC Paper no. 2) \$10m.
 The enormous direct costs of change eg uniforms, RAN, RAAF, Army, equipment, ships, ceremonials, establishment statutes, currency, stationery etc (including cost of changing prayer-books and deleting prayers for the Queen.) This is most difficult to estimate but conservatively estimated at \$500m.

COST OF A PLETHORA OF CHANGES FOLLOWING CHANGE TO AN (UNDEFINED) REPUBLIC

A change of our chief national symbol – our flag – nationally and in (possibly) say 3 States (i.e. the States which vote to change to State Republics.) – SEE PAPER NO. 7.

Question: why should citizens of say 3 States which vote not to change to a republic pay for the cost of changing the flags of the say 3 republican states? This alone could trigger an expensive and delaying Court case to clarify. It is estimated that there exists in Australia and in its overseas missions and countries around 10 million Australian flags and designs built into buildings, uniforms, paintings etc.

- Cost to destroy and dispose of these: say \$10m
- Cost to run a plebiscite or plebiscites to select a new one: say \$100m
- Cost to replace the 10 million flags with a new republican flag, including official advice to approx. 200 countries of the change and provision of a new flag to them. say \$20m
- Cost to distribute them to all of Australia’s many thousands of schools, universities, colleges, government buildings e.g. Police & Fire Stations: say \$35m
- Cost to select suitable candidates, and cost of election/appointment of a President: say \$50m

We seek input from others to assist a “ball-park” figure as even an approximate cost is difficult to calculate.

Cost to change our currency to omit reference to the Crown/Queen

Mr Clive Hamilton, Director of the Australia Institute, wrote in 1998: “the cost of changing our currency could range from \$100 million to several billion dollars”. So say a conservative figure of (due gradually to change over a period) say \$200m

New Presidential Palace and PM’s Residence

As reported by Federal Government’s NCPA’s Prof. Walker RWM in the *Australian*, early 1995. Estimated cost of the 2 proposed residences is (including security and relocation etc. etc.) say \$100m

\$3,035m

**Grand total of estimated costs of change:
 \$3,035,000,000 (roughly \$3 Billion) Dollars**

It’s enough to say “Conservatively 2-3 Billion Dollars” pending more precise calculations

Note: Republicans could suggest that to hold one or more plebiscites and referenda simultaneously with a General Election or State Election would save costs. However, to do so would totally politicise both. AIDC asserts that it is not practicable. In any event, so many plebiscites and referenda are involved that they could never all be held with an election.

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| <p>Question 1: in a country which has celebrated the Anniversary of Federation with a Constitution producing arguably the best and most stable and peaceful country in the World, wouldn’t these funds contribute more to community welfare if spent on education, health, drug and crime prevention and the environment?</p> | <p>Question 2: Why change our proven system when Australia’s leading republican says: “We already have a perfectly good and functioning democracy... It’s a uniquely Australian system that works well” (Malcolm Turnbull, in <i>The Australian</i>, 16/7/2001)?</p> | <p>Question 3: Why change a system which the UN in its HDI rating of 187 countries has Australia placed at no. 2 in the World after Norway, and whose constitution is “one of the great democratic documents of the modern world” (republican Prof. Greg Craven, <i>Cefa News</i>, Vol. 1, 2004)?</p> |
| <p align="center">NB re. Question 3: The UN’s 2011 HDI Report is available on < http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/ >. In it, 70% of the top 10 countries are constitutional monarchies like Australia while the vast preponderance of low-ranking countries are republics. Australia is no. 2 behind Norway. The USA is no. 4.</p> | | |

Notes on cost items

1. When PM, Mr Rudd (joined by the ARM and the Greens) called for 2 unconstitutional and unprecedented plebiscites and a referendum to change Australia to “a republic.”
2. If Mr Rudd and his colleagues are to be consistent, and since each State and the Federation have their own respective processes to change the 7 constitutional monarchies comprising Australia – see paper 2 – each of the 7 may have to effect their ancillary processes. Therefore, 7X3=21 polls will be required to change all 7. This process would take “About a decade” (Warhurst et Mackerras (eds) *Constitutional Politics* (Brisbane: UQ Press, 2002); p. 24.)

QUESTION – AC asks “Why do it – when ‘the Constitution is the greatest asset we have’ according to republican Prof. G. Craven?”