

Chapter Eight

The Republic: Will Blinky be the Only Bill?

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May I say how greatly I appreciate the honour you do me in inviting me to speak to my fellow members tonight.

In particular, may I publicly acknowledge our debt, and I believe ultimately the debt of the nation, to Sir Harry Gibbs and his colleagues for all they are doing through the work and publications of our Society. They have highlighted some of the real problems and issues that confront Australia as we approach the next millennium.

Not least of our problems is the severe outbreak of millennium madness developing around us. I believe The Samuel Griffith Society has an effective antidote to that inane disease: rationality!

Historical Retrospect

When asked to provide a title for this speech, I chose The Republic: Will Blinky be the only Bill?

Let me begin with a brief retrospect of the so-called "republican debate" and explain how I came to be involved.

As is well known, republicanism in some form or other has been around for millennia. The ancient republics of Greece and Rome were followed in the Middle Ages by Venice and others. It has often arisen after someone has cut off the head of a king (figuratively or actually) and, rather than replace the decapitated with another dynasty, society has evolved some elective leader as Head of State or head of the Executive Government.

The British political inheritance has been somewhat different. Its constitutional history can be shortly characterised as the struggle of the people, vanquished in 1066 (and all that!) by William the Conqueror, to bring an overlord with a (foreign) army under civilian then parliamentary control.

In England in 1215 the powerful people the barons insisted that the King acknowledge that he reigned and ruled under the law of the land laws that still protect our liberty today. And so we obtained (and keep) the Magna Carta or Great Charter of Liberties.

If we skip over the intervening period to the Stuarts, we recall their extreme claim to rule by divine right. The King also claimed, as "the fountain of justice", to have the right, if not the duty, to dispense justice in person, and to rule by Royal prerogative. Let us say that the parliamentary forces under Cromwell, and the axeman, put paid to such pretension.

Oliver Cromwell refused the Crown and styled himself Lord Protector. On his death, moves were made (shades of North Korea today) to make the Glorious Leader's son his successor. "Tumbledown Dick" lasted only months and the monarchy was restored.

But, like the Bourbons later, the re-installed Stuarts had learned little and the Glorious Revolution of 1688 bloodless only in England effected a quantum change in constitutional power.

Thus, England in the 17th century was in turmoil torn between those of republican persuasion and those who wanted to restore a monarchy; those who wanted the Jacobites and those who wanted only a Protestant succession.

The latter won but neither republicanism nor the Jacobites were silenced. Both remained potent forces in the rather uneasy Protestant monarchy of Dutch William.

Under the Hanoverians we notice the evolution of the ascendancy of the will of the people (at least those of them enjoying the limited franchise) and their elected representatives over the King and, over time, his Ministers.

Gradually, personal Royal prerogative was replaced by total, or virtually total, reliance on the advice of elected advisers. Whilst the whole theory of government remained monarchical, and the practice remained monarchical, whilst the King reigned, others, enjoying the confidence of Parliament, ruled both country and monarch.

And under German George (no nationalistic symbolism there!) and his successors, cabinet government grew up, Prime Ministers evolved and so much of our conventional theory and practice of government became established.

The early Georges also ruled Hanover, which was a medium-sized German State with a population of approximately 400,000 in 1700. Whilst George could claim he reigned in England by hereditary right, there were more than 50 Catholic relatives whose claims were better. To avoid acknowledging this embarrassment, in his first speech to Parliament, King George I claimed that it had 'pleased God' to call him to the throne of his ancestors. Nevertheless, he proposed the severance of the joint succession to England and Hanover by leaving Hanover to any second son whom his grandson, Frederick, might have. George II, on his accession, pocketed his father's will and the union of the two realms remained until Victoria's succession, in 1837, only to the throne of the United Kingdom.

It was George II who expressed most bitterly his lack of royal power under the English constitution.

In 1744, he remarked that in England, "Ministers are the Kings in this country." In 1755, contemplating returning to England from Hanover, he said:

"There are Kings enough in England. I am nothing there. I should only go to be plagued and teased there about that damned House of Commons".

Over 30 years before Australia adopted its federal Constitution, Walter Bagehot, the political journalist, was able to point out that after 1832 the constitutional monarchy had given way to "a disguised republic". He wrote that "the appendages of a monarchy" had "been converted into the essence of a republic," which had its "dignified" and its "efficient" parts.

If that were the state of political thought by 1867, no wonder the new constitutional monarchy of Australia was readily called a "Commonwealth".

No wonder, too, that in our own literature, we of Australians for Constitutional Monarchy refer to our present constitutional arrangements as being a "Crowned Republic".

Nevertheless, the whole of our political theory, culture, conventions and executive government, our legislatures and our system of justice springs from this theory (and often the practice) of constitutional monarchy.

Refuting some Republican Claims

Perhaps I can turn now to refute some of the outrageous distortions and assertions of the republican movement. Indeed, it is interesting to note the various matters we have needed to rebut over the past two years.

1. Patriotism

The first and most basic, perhaps, was Mr Turnbull's characteristic claim that not to be a republican was to be "unpatriotic". He later qualified this somewhat to being "less than patriotic", which is better than his May, 1992 line that such people are "less than Australian", and that "those who support the monarchy despise themselves, they despise Australia and they despise Australians".

Mr Turnbull seems to have dropped these allegations now, and generalises the suggestion by claiming only that republicanism is a matter of "patriotism". In whatever guise, the charges, the inferences and the mind-set on which they are based are highly distasteful. If taken seriously, they call into question the loyalty of almost half the population. They are patently absurd.

2. Australian Independence

Another canard has been the assertion that Australia will not be independent (sometimes they say "truly independent") until we become a republic. This utter misrepresentation has wide credence. It is refuted by authorities as diverse as Sir Garfield Barwick and Gough Whitlam. It ignores the Labor Party's Australia Act of 1986 which asserts a pre-existing status of the Commonwealth of Australia as "a sovereign, independent and federal nation".

Professor Lane's Commentary on the Australian Constitution (The Law Book Company Limited, 1986) contains an introduction by the Right Honourable Sir Garfield Barwick, the longest serving Chief Justice of Australia (1964-81), which includes this interesting statement:

"The Constitution was not devised for the immediate independence of a nation. It was conceived as the Constitution of an autonomous Dominion within the then British Empire. Its founders were not to know of the two world wars which would bring that Empire to an end. But they had national independence in mind. Quite apart from the possible disappearance of the Empire, they could confidently expect not only continuing autonomy but approaching independence. This came within 30 years. They devised a Constitution which would serve an independent nation. It has done so, and still does." (page viii). [Emphasis added].

In the same work Professor Lane wrote:

"Cl II gives an ambulatory reading to "the Queen" wherever occurring in the Act, namely Cl II, III, V, ss 1-4, 34, 44, 57-61, 64, 66, 73-4, 117, 122, 126, 128, the schedule; "the Crown" incidentally appears in the Preamble and s 44. With twenty-five references to the Queen and the Crown and thirty-one references to the Governor-General, the republicans would really do better scrapping the whole Constitution Act with the help of the United Kingdom Parliament than by piecemeal amendment." [Emphasis added].

Writing this year in An Introduction to the Australian Constitution, Professor Lane said:

"Under the formal terms of the Constitution we owe allegiance to a monarch abroad with a local representative, a Governor-General who is appointed by the monarch. But in the 1990s the monarch has a status presence only, occasionally opening Federal Parliament"

"The monarch is only a shadow over a de facto republic. The Governor-General is appointed by an elected Prime Minister, and answerable to this Prime Minister, almost invariably acting on his advice (that is, the Governor-General may see himself, in most exceptional circumstances, answerable to the nation)". [Emphasis added].

Professor Lane went on:

"The Australianisation of the Crown is now complete. The Governor-General or the Governor has become in substance an Australian institution.

"Not only that. Because of the method of appointment, the incumbent and the independence of the office, this Australian Crown is less like a monarch than a President, while still standing aloof from politics."

3. Is Any One Yet An Australian?

Only slightly more foolish than the charges about our current lack of "independence" is the remark of the former Chairman of the Australian Republican Movement, Mr Keneally, that "no-one will know what it means to be an Australian until they wake up under a republic". The problem with that proposition is that people have woken up before there is a republic and, hence, will have to continue in a happy state of ignorance of Mr Keneally's blissful state for the foreseeable future.

4. Minimalism

A fourth major misconception peddled by the Australian Republican Movement and repeated by the federal government has been the "Tippex", "white-out", or "minimalist" solution to becoming a republic by replacing the words "Queen", "Crown" and "Governor-General" with the word "President". There are subtle variants on this, but they all boil down to a simplistic approach. The Independent Monthly even published a draft Constitution by Professor Winterton, which largely comprised such an exercise, showing the actual lines through the words replaced. One glance at it is enough to see the extent of the textual corrections necessary. Common-sense dictates that the overthrow of the entire theoretical basis of the law and practice of the Constitution is, to put it mildly, somewhat more complex.

It is instructive perhaps to look at comments by constitutional lawyers made before republicanism was a hot political issue. In the fifth edition of W. Anstey Wynes' text Legislative Executive and Judicial Powers in Australia (Law Book Company Limited, 1976) there appears this statement (page 7):

"Viewed generally, the Australian Constitution appears largely as a compromise between the Canadian and American models."

"The central characteristic of the Australian Constitution is the predominance of the Crown in every aspect of governmental powers. As we have seen, the Constitution Act recites the agreement of the people of the several Colonies to unite 'under the Crown' and the new political organism, the 'Commonwealth of Australia', was itself called into being by a Royal Proclamation. Not only is the Queen an essential part of the Federal Parliament, but the Executive power of the Commonwealth is expressly vested in Her and She is in theory present in every Court in the land. Special point to this fundamental truth, frequently overlooked, was given by the tour in 1954 of Her Commonwealth of Australia by our present Sovereign, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, who for the first time in history performed in person Royal acts which had up to that time been performed either indirectly through Her Representative, the Governor-General, or, at best, at a distance from our shores.

"The principle of Royal supremacy that all power derives in the last resort from the Crown is both fundamental and of practical importance for the interpretation and understanding of the Australian Constitution; it has received more than passing notice from the High Court of Australia on many occasions." [Emphasis added].

Does that not warn us that a change from monarchy to republic can never be minimal even if it can be made at all?

Similarly, HE Renfree, a former Commonwealth Crown Solicitor, in his text, The Executive Power of the Commonwealth of Australia (Legal Books Pty. Limited, 1984) devotes an entire volume to the relationship of the Crown and government. Even the headings of the chapters are illuminating, for example:

Chapter 1 - The Sovereign and Her Australian People (137 pages)

Chapter 2 - The Governor-General of Australia (43 pages)

Chapter 3 - Ministers of the State and other Servants of the Crown in Right of the Commonwealth (202 pages)

Chapter 4 - Executive Power and the Crown Prerogatives (207 pages).

Commonsense alone would seem to indicate that a "Tippex solution" of removing references to the Crown in the Constitution must have vast implications for our system of government.

5. Anti-British Sentiment

The fifth strand peddled by various republicans has taken the form of expressions of overt, and sometimes covert, anti-British sentiments. Perhaps its high point has been the Prime Minister's May, 1992 attacks on the opponents of republicanism as "bootlickers" and "lickspittles" to the British. In its subtler forms, it embraces descriptions of the Queen by the Prime Minister as "a foreign Queen" or "the Queen of England" or "the British Queen". This is repeated frequently, although the Queen is, by statute, part of the Federal and State legislatures and head of our Executive Government. When challenged, variants include descriptions of the Queen as "a grandmother living in England", or even "quaint".

6. Denial of Australian Identity to the Queen

To deny any Australian identity to the Queen is tantamount to denying Australian identity to all those holding dual nationality. This is despite the fact that many such persons in Australia have the vote and wield actual power in the body politic, rather than the essential but impersonal role that attaches to the Monarch.

At one stage, the debate went through an absurd phase with the Prime Minister informing the Indonesians that he was going to change our flag because it has the flag of a foreign country on it; kissing the ground in Niugini, an impulse unlikely to overtake anyone who had actually seen military service; and then alleging that the British "betrayed the interests of Australia" in Asia. This latter calumny was so far wide of the mark that it brought almost universal condemnation.

By the time of the celebration of D-Day, the Prime Minister seemed to have found British valour acceptable and the royal yacht accommodating, but went on immediately to explain to the French why he wanted Australia to become a republic.

Apart from the inherent discourtesy both to the Queen and the Australian people, at least the Prime Minister on this occasion was talking to experts, who have tried five different republics and seem to have ended up with the worst of all worlds.

7. Ageism

Mr Keneally has asserted that support for republicanism would be overwhelming "if we could get rid of the over 55s" that is, 20 per cent of the Australian population! Personally, I would have only one year left nay, less than five months to enjoy our constitutional monarchy.

But this was not just the random thought of an Austral-Irish novelist as he landed at Mascot once again. The Prime Minister also has characterised monarchists as "blue-rinse" presumably "aged", at least, camouflaging their grey hair.

A Mr John Gulpers, writing to The Adelaide Advertiser (19.7.94) raced to the Bureau of Statistics figures of 1992 to show that, by 1996, some 769,000 first-time voters will go to the polls, "while 320,000 people above 55 years will die (mainly monarchist). The figures for 1999 and 2002 are similar". By 2002, "one million people over 55 will have died since 1993."

This line of argument has even nastier sides. I was invited recently to be Master of Ceremonies at a dinner given by the Monarchist League, a totally different body from the Australians for Constitutional Monarchy. Dame Pattie Menzies was Guest of Honour. She made an impassioned, and splendid, speech outlining her reasons for supporting the monarchy. This brought forth the gallant comment in The Sunday Mail (Adelaide) by Peter Goers:

"Forgive my error. But until recently I thought Dame Pattie Menzies was firstly a yacht and second dead. However, she is constantly being resurrected in the cause of the constitutional monarchy At 95 years of age, dear Dame Pattie is the last gasp and the forlorn hope of a lost cause."

Mr Goers added, for good measure:

"We may well be the `arse end' of the earth because we have been treated like that by Menzies and the British for so long. Too long."

What sort of a republic does this suggest we are heading for?

Predictably, it was Paddy McGuinness (The Australian, 7.7.94) who noted the backlash to strident republicanism evident in the polls of those 18-24 year-olds who, he claimed, "are clearly fed up with the Keating government". After the over-55s, support for changing the flag is lowest amongst 18-24 year olds at present, and a large number of the latter are also "don't knows" about the republic. Says McGuinness:

"It is probable that for purely demographic reasons the Coalition vote and the anti-republican vote will continue to rise over the rest of the century."

8. Personal Attacks

Perhaps the most tasteless attack during the whole republican debate has sprung from Mr Keneally. He chose the Feast of the Blessed St. Patrick to assert, in a memorable phrase which the ABC News courteously carried throughout Australia, that the monarchy was "a colostomy bag on Australia". He has never since claimed the Prime Minister's defence: that he was only speaking "figuratively".

Professor John Hirst has published in The Australian, and included in his recent treatise, the extraordinary statement that the Queen is "the enemy of rural Australia". One is left to wonder at his thought processes. If there were one person in the world from whom no shadow of danger or faintest sign of ill-will towards this country has ever come, it must be Elizabeth II.

Finally, in a catalogue that, time-wise, must be brought to a close, personal abuse of the Queen will be found in the Hansard of the Legislative Council of New South Wales where the Labor Party Councillor, Dr Burgman, adopted the view that "the Queen should be re-trained as a stenotypist and put to useful work".

As the Queen worked on military transport during the second World War, there is no doubt as to her capacity for manual work. I choose not to comment on Dr. Burgman's potential.

I forbear to list the personal attacks on me, Sir Harry Gibbs, Dame Leonie Kramer and others and the threats of legal action by Mr Turnbull.

The Republican Debate

May I now remind you briefly of the so-called progress of the republican debate.

The Australian Republican Movement was launched in mid-1991, at about the same time as the Australian Labor Party resolved that Australia would be a republic by the year 2001. The decision to form the Australian Republican Movement was taken around the luncheon table of the Hon. Neville Wran, QC, a former President of the Australian Labor Party and Premier of New South Wales. He is on record as advocating the abolition of the States. The peripatetic Mr Keneally was appointed Chairman and was active when in Australia. He made much of Australians having a "divided soul", but it has proved to be a malady from which most of us cannot discover that we have ever suffered.

While calling for bi-partisan support and claiming members from many political parties, the triumphalism with which the Australian Republican Movement announced that a member of the Liberal Party State Executive in New South Wales, Ms. Marise Payne, had been appointed Vice

Chairman as "the first significant Liberal to join", indicates the shallowness of actual bi-partisan representation in A.R.M.

The Forces of Republicanism

From the time when socialists broke up Federation meetings in the 1890s in the name of republicanism and "White Australia", through the political crisis of 1975 and the militant republicanism of the 1990s, the republicans have gained strength. It would now be fair to say that the republican forces, at least overtly, include the Prime Minister, the Australian Labor Party and its machine, the Managing Director of the ABC, Mr David Hill, The Australian newspaper, The Sydney Morning Herald, the Australian Republican Movement, the Republic Advisory Committee and the former Liberal Premiers, Mr Nick Greiner of New South Wales and Sir Rupert Hamer of Victoria. One may add also Professor Donald Horne's "Ideas for Australia" project and Professor Horne himself, the prime mover for the establishment of Centres for Australian Cultural Studies. By way of aside, their first conference, held in Canberra, was called "Freedom for the Golden Lands of Australia" (this in 1993) and was attended by approximately 50 people over 3 days and comprised 38 speakers. Only Justice O'Keefe and Sir David Smith were invited to put a pro-monarchist point of view, and their views were omitted from the subsequent publication.

According to the press, it would also be safe to add 100 Liberals in New South Wales and the Young Liberals, by a small majority, in the same State. For a movement which is claimed to well from the hearts of the people, the cracks are small in the political divide of the Liberal Party. The Labor Party members of monarchical persuasion, who are very numerous, have no voice in that Party.

Why Change?

It took the Prime Minister's intervention to concede that our Constitution "is not broken and does not need fixing". The change to a republic, which his own Republic Advisory Committee had indicated was "purely symbolic" was, according to the Prime Minister, allegedly needed because the monarchy is "inappropriate".

The Royal Family "Irrelevant" to the Debate

Recently, the advent of Mr Alexander Downer to the Leadership of the Federal Opposition has caused the first real let-up in the debate by clearly re-positioning in the public mind the propositions that the Queen and the Royal Family are "irrelevant" to the debate and that the Queen exercises no relevant power in the day- to-day running of this country. As any referendum proposal cannot succeed without the imprimatur of the government, Mr Downer is correct to stress that it is useless discussing change in the abstract until the Prime Minister indicates clearly what change (if any) the government proposes.

Minimalism Dead

At this stage it can be said, I believe safely, that minimalism is dead. Even Professor Horne is no longer repeating his claims to have invented application of the word to the debate. Anyone in any doubt has only to read the voluminous Republic Advisory Committee Report to apprehend that change from a monarchy to a republic will have far reaching consequences.

A Constitution in Simple Language?

The Prime Minister, at Corowa, blandly claimed that the whole Constitution needed to be re-written in plain English. Lawyers who have any acquaintance with one of the simplest provisions of the Constitution, Section 92, which states that:

".....trade, commerce and intercourse among the States, whether by means of internal carriage or open navigation, shall be absolutely free",
will rub their hands at the thought of a plain English constitutional lawyer-fest.

God or Secular Humanism?

As to the preamble, those who lust after the American preamble, "We, the people" are unable to see anything democratic in our present preamble, "Whereas the people" . Few of the replacement preambles that I have seen have sought to retain the recital "humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God", or to replace it with any other reference to the deity. The removal of this part of the preamble would represent another victory for secular humanism, despite the Census finding that over 70 per cent of Australians still claim faith in a Supreme Being.

Will the States Survive?

Republican advocates, such as the ALP Member for Melbourne in the House of Representatives, Mr Lindsay Tanner, continue to advocate the abolition of the States. Lately, such calls have been joined by Senator Kernot of the Australian Democrats. According to an editorial in The Sydney Morning Herald on 14 July, 1994 Senator Kernot described Australia as wanting:

"a republic, a Bill of Rights, a new voting system, another look at the powers of each tier of government and, it almost seems, a block of flats and Tasmania".

The Democrats also supported a ban on Ministers being chosen from the Senate, and sided with the Australian Republican Movement in having the politicians choose a President. This is surprising, as almost 80 per cent of voters are in favour of direct election of any President.

As recently as 16 July last, the former federal Treasurer, Mr Dawkins, has urged business to push for the States to be abolished.

The hidden agenda, which so many have feared for so long, is becoming less hidden as the discussion goes on.

Will Men have a Role in a New Republic?

This month, Susan Ryan, a member of the Republic Advisory Committee and an ex-Minister in the Hawke Labor Government, claimed that a republic and a new Constitution were the logical outcomes of feminism because our current Constitution was "sexist, undemocratic and unaccountable". She claimed that:

"A republic is the pinnacle of democracy where leadership is elected, where fair and frequent election processes allow every person to make a decision. This is going to be a republic made for women."

Poppi King, a 22-year old recent recruit to the A.R.M. cause, described the monarchy as "riddled with sexism. It holds women in traditional roles and portrays them as victims an instrument of patriarchy". (Telegraph-Mirror , 7.7.94).

This would no doubt have surprised Queen Victoria and, indeed, would surprise Queen Elizabeth they having reigned now in excess of a hundred years since 1837.

The longer discussion goes on, and the more varied and bizarre the ideas tacked on to republicanism, the more the people are seeing it for the diversion and empty notion that it is.

A "Hardline" Monarchist's Manifesto

Having been attacked as a "hardline monarchist", I would like to make the following propositions clear. I try to do this each time I speak publicly on this matter:

1. I am a democrat and will, without cavil, accept the legally expressed wishes of my fellow countrymen and women in a proper referendum. Incidentally, on this topic I believe this to be a majority of all voters together with a majority in every State, before there can be any change to a

republic. This is due to the operation of Section 128 of the Constitution and the provisions of the Australia Act.

2. If you ask me to name the republican model I would favour, it is that of the United States of America. We know it has worked for over 200 years with only one bloody civil war. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the government in the U.S.A., I believe, is infinitely inferior to that delivered by our own constitutional monarchy.

The 'Wombat' Republicans

I often find my views substantially explained and, indeed, expressed by Padraic McGuinness, a republican, but a perspicacious commentator on the current debate. He dismisses the present rash of republicans as "wombat republicans", and has amusingly assigned the leading lights parts in *The Adventures of Blinky Bill*. He writes:

".... re-reading *Blinky Bill* does rather stimulate the imagination. There is a large cast of characters, all of them reminiscent of the various actors in the neo-republican movement. Most notable of all is Blinky's main offsider, Splodge the kangaroo, who reminds one of the chairman of the Republic Advisory Committee, Malcolm Turnbull. To his name has to be added the Reverend Fluffy Ears, who cannot help but be identified with Tom Keneally, a first-rate writer but a second-rate guru. And Mr Wombat is just like Donald Horne.

"Other wombat republicans who correspond to the entourage of *Blinky Bill* include Mrs Grunty (ex- Senator Susan Ryan), and Jack Kookaburra who sounds just like the chief publicist of the group, Mark Day.

"Mr Wombat is not altogether politically correct, since he is not very fond of black fellows, but Blinky is proud to announce himself as "PC" (meaning "police constable", not "politically correct"), while the loyal Splodge takes umbrage at being described as "Splodge ASS" (even though this means, of course, assistant).

"So Blinky, Splodge, Mr Wombat, Mrs Grunty, Jack Kookaburra et. al. have a fine old time of it in the bush, transforming their society while it is perfectly clear that they have not the faintest idea what is going on in the real world. It is a great children's story.

"But none of this has anything to do with the real political issues of how we should run our real world country, nor about the political institutions which are appropriate to our present stage of development and government. To address this requires serious thought, and there are no simple solutions like a republic achieved by a wave of the magic wand, which can bring about any substantial improvements on our present state."

As you can see, McGuinness roundly condemns the ineptitude of the Australian Republican Movement's campaign. I think he believes, as I do, that, if Australians want to be governed under a republic, then the American model, or something close to it, is the only safe and likely alternative to our present regime. Fiddling with what we have I believe to be a recipe for disaster.

Australians for Constitutional Monarchy

Ranged against the Australian Republican Movement we have convened a group, now a series of groups across Australia, to expose what the republicans have been doing. We have called it "Australians for Constitutional Monarchy". Under the inspired guidance of Sir Harry Gibbs and the Honourable Michael Kirby, and with the extensive efforts of Gareth Grainger, we gathered together ex-Senator and Aboriginal leader Neville Bonner, Dame Leonie Kramer, the Honourable Barry O'Keefe, former Labor Lord Mayor Doug Sutherland, Aboriginal activist Margaret Valadian and many others active in the arts, ethnic and political communities of Sydney. Since then we have established Councils in the Australian Capital Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia.

Here in Queensland, Neville Bonner and Sir Harry Gibbs have been joined by twenty-one other prominent Queenslanders including the Honourable Peter Connolly, Dean Grimshaw, Major General WB James and Professor Darrell Lumb, to mention only a few.

In New South Wales we are shortly to set up a State Council which will be convened by Mr Tony Abbott, MP, and include several members of the National Council and others such as war hero, Nancy Wake.

In Victoria, the Honourable Lindsay Thompson has been joined by the Honourable Don Chipp, the Right Honourable Malcolm Fraser, Dame Phyllis Frost, Lady Murray, Professor Joan Rydon and many others well-known both in that State and nationally.

In Tasmania our Council includes Sir Stanley Burbury, Miss Coral Chambers and Mr Edward O'Farrell, while in South Australia, Mr Kym Bonython has gathered together a representative Council which includes Mr RW Law-Smith, Sir Bruce Macklin, Justice Robin Millhouse and Mr Hill-Ling.

In Western Australia the Council includes Mr Graeme Campbell, the Labor Member of the House of Representatives for Kalgoorlie, Rabbi Coleman, Sir Charles Court and the Honourable JH Muirhead, QC.

I have not given you every name as it would be tedious, but each of our Councils has, we believe, a balanced representation which is non-sectarian, non-sexist, non-Party political and includes a wide range of different ethnic backgrounds.

ACM's Progress to Date

We do not have the luxury of Mr Turnbull's merchant bank providing us with headquarters, nor Directors of his bank, such as himself and Mark Ryan, as activists in our cause. We have had under 100 donations in excess of \$500, but we do have over 9,000 signed-up, pledged supporters who have been pleased to adopt the Charter the Foundation Council issued, and which was substantially drafted by the Honourable Michael Kirby.

I believe in the leadership shown by those I have mentioned in so many spheres of our national life. Together with all those whom I have not had time to mention, we are providing leadership in this campaign to what, we believe, is a majority of Australians. We hope our efforts will be effective to expose and defeat the republican "push".

Views within the Labor Party

Whilst the Labor party pursues its avowed policy, things are not always what they seem. Rumour has it that whilst none of the Federal Cabinet are monarchists, only the Prime Minister is a fervent republican.

His predecessor, Mr Bob Hawke has said that the republic is an "issue of small importance" and that it "should be postponed during the Queen's lifetime". As the Queen Mother is still alive, on that time scale few of us here will need to hold our breath. Incidentally, Sir Rupert Hamer, opening the A.R.M.'s first branch outside a capital city at Bakery Hill in Ballarat, was of the same view. He would not like to see a move to a republic before the end of the Queen's reign and added that, while Mr Keating keeps his present course, "the present nominal constitutional monarchy is absolutely safe". (The Age 8.7.94). Some republican!

Mr Hayden, Mr Hawke's predecessor as Leader of the Labor Party, has warned that change has "the potential for long periods of great instability." No-one who saw it would ever forget the apparent ease, if not glee, with which the former Prime Minister and the present Governor-General discussed the issue for the benefit of TV.

Mr Barry Jones, the President of the ALP has said, in one television debate, that he would not want a President to be head of the Executive Government, nor to command the Armed Forces.

He did not go on to state (nor was he asked, of course), which politician would command the Armed Forces and to whose benefit.

Recently, Mr Beazley provoked the Prime Minister's wrath by suggesting that any referendum would not be held till the end of the century. The Prime Minister's apoplexy reached Australia from Paris, insisting that the debate was a live issue. Nevertheless, changing the flag has now allegedly been postponed until after the advent of a republic, if we can rely on government statements.

Is Blinky the only Bill?

Well, what of the bills for all this? In cold money terms, the Republic Advisory Committee cost approximately \$600,000. The Republican cause has been allocated federally \$200,000 annually for the next three years. A committee is working out of the Prime Minister's office. Quite extraordinarily, it was from this source that the notion of a compulsory course in Civics was suggested for the nation's school children. When the Prime Minister's Department was asked for details of it this week, our office was referred, not to the Education Department, but and this you may not credit to the offices of the Australian Republican Movement.

Maintaining a Presidential System

If we are to be permitted to elect the Head of State, as 80 per cent of Australians indicate they would like to do in the event of a republic, the Republic Advisory Committee has calculated that the cost will be in the order of \$44.5 million per election, with another \$4.7 million if biographies of the candidates are to be distributed to all the voters. If held in conjunction with a general election, which would be highly undesirable, the cost would reduce to \$4.6 million for the ballot and \$4.7 million for the booklet.

The next bill would come with maintaining the President in proper presidential style. Les Hollings, writing in *The Australian* this month, ridiculed the Governor-General's entourage to Kazakhstan, although most reports skilfully glossed over the fact that the Governor-General was received there with a twenty-one gun salute, an honour reserved for a visiting Head of State.

Would it be possible for a President to survive without a presidential flight of his own? What President could resist continual State visits overseas? Can you imagine the costs?

And let us remember that the President would not be alone. We will need another new President six in all in each of the six States. Thus, republicanism will replace one hereditary monarch and seven nominated local representatives with seven Presidents, only the first of whom will cost \$50 million to elect. The costs of electing the State Presidents has not yet even been calculated.

Other Changes to Cost

The Republican Advisory Committee Report (p.148) listed some other changes necessary if we move to a republic:

Executive Councils will need re-constitution.

All offices filled by commission will need to be provided for.

The use of the word "royal", e.g., "Royal Charter", etc., will need to be provided for.

The interpretation of all laws referring to the Queen, the Crown or the Governor-General, etc., will need to be provided for.

Interim provisions for the change-over will need to be addressed.

Provision for some form of prerogative to replace the Royal prerogative will be needed.

Then there are the constitutional referenda and presumably the alteration of all royal insignia in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Fire Brigades, etc.

All land title will need to be provided for.

None of these changes has yet been costed.

Some More Bills

Other major "Bills" in abolishing the monarchy will include non-monetary losses:

It will tear the heart out of our inherited political and administrative structure, and politicise our Head of State for the first time since Cromwell.

It will be essential that, for their own protection, political parties control the President, with all the questions that will raise.

It will re-visit the divisions of 1975 as to whether the Governor-General's power to dismiss the Government would be given to a new President and, if so, how it would be controlled.

Decisions will need to be made as to where the vast powers of the Governor-General:

- the power to command the armed forces;

- the power to call Parliament;

- the power to prorogue Parliament;

- the power to appoint Ministers; and

- the power to dismiss Ministers,

will be placed. Who will they be given to? How will they be controlled? Won't they go to the Prime Minister?

Dead Losses!

Discarding our system of constitutional monarchy would sever the traditions of our inherited public life, our political culture and conventions.

It would mean a deliberate break with the international nature of our Head of State system, which combines our total sovereign independence with a figure of world renown, who is the Head of State of 16 countries including Canada, New Zealand, Papua Niugini and the United Kingdom, our Head of State being also Head of the Commonwealth of Nations comprising 51 nations of the world.

In breaking with our present system of government, we would swap an easily recognisable member of a family of international renown and repute, with over 1,000 years' history behind it, and an institution of equal integrity, for a series of failed politicians.

The Cost to Christians and Other Believers

The Republic Advisory Committee has asked the Acting Solicitor-General if the Preamble to the Constitution could be deleted.

Many Christians like the fact that our Constitution vests the executive government in the Queen (of Australia) and that she is part of our Parliament and the fountain of justice. As such, at her Coronation she was anointed by the Church in the name of God, and dedicated her life to the service of God and her people (according to the respective laws of their respective lands).

No Christian could seriously doubt that a change to the republic will mean the imposition and triumph of a secular humanist society.

The Cost of the Integrity of Australia

The Republic Advisory Committee pointed out that the original Federal compact involved the joining together of the former colonies into "one indissoluble Federal Commonwealth under the Crown of the United Kingdom", and that this resulted in the Constitution that Australians devised and voted for.

The Crown was the neutral pivot and basis on which the colonies agreed to unite. The Crown became the Head of State both of the Commonwealth and of each State in it. Allegiance to the Crown was the tie that bound the peoples of the various colonies in the union. If that bond is severed, a new basis of union must be found, or in other words, there must be a new agreement to a new union.

The Republic Advisory Committee acknowledged the force in the suggestion that change to a republic "cannot be forced on the States", and that the Commonwealth "cannot alter the fundamental character of the parties to the compact without requiring re-negotiation of the entire agreement". However, in the same volume it listed, as an option, the mechanism which it believed would be effective to force individual States to adopt republican constitutions against the will of that State's voters, and over-riding all entrenched State constitutional provisions. How totalitarian is the new republic to be?

The ultimate effect of the republican push may well be the disintegration of a unitary nation on the islands that comprise Australia.

Vale Blinky

And what of Blinky Bill? Doesn't he seem as pathetic as the entire proposal? All that can be said of him is that, unlike the republicans, to this point he has never done the nation any harm and is considerably better looking than most of its proponents.

He is a symbol of innocence, so that, used in conjunction with republicanism, he was an example of totally false advertising.

I was awakened at 6.30 am one day this month to comment on the radio at the astounding news that the "new-look" Australian Republican Movement (now run by Turnbull Bank director, Mark Ryan, a long-term friend and political adviser to the Prime Minister), was spearheading a new push to get the republican campaign back on the rails. Since then, we have indeed witnessed a sustained, co-ordinated and skilful media barrage that included new stories popping up each day. One such story was that the Australian Republican Movement had abandoned its mascot, Blinky Bill, and was searching for a new logo. Would I care to comment?

I must confess I had difficulty stopping laughing; I got into dangerous ground in my semi-somnolent condition. When they asked me if I could suggest a replacement logo, all that came to mind was "rats leaving a sinking ship". Unfortunately, I said so.

On reflection, however, rats would not have the misleading effect that Blinky Bill had. But, I hasten to add, it was a jocular suggestion and, as it was a logo, I was obviously speaking "figuratively". Well, if Prime Ministers can, why can't I?

The A.R.M.'s new seriousness, we hear, is to work republicanism into "soap operas". Two years ago that was their complaint about the Royal Family's troubles!

"A spokeswoman for the ABC said the national broadcaster would probably be 'responsive' to the idea of including republican versus monarchy storylines in its dramas it's quite likely." (Telegraph Mirror, 6.7.94).

Not only in the "soaps", however.

The approach of the totalitarian State is boasted of by none other than Mr Michael Lynch, the new General Manager of the Australia Council (under Ms Hilary McPhee, the wife of Don Watson, the Prime Minister's speech writer and arch-republican). Mr Lynch said of his appointment:

"Arts play a significant role in determining what is going on in society, and they will play a significant role in helping lead the country to a republic I have no qualms about admitting I am an avowed republican. I have got this appointment for five years to 1999, and I would certainly hope that what happens under my management of the Australia Council will progress the debate towards a republic."

Is this what we want for our nation?

A Message to the Nation

It is time to stop the republican nonsense and send as loud a message to the nation as we can that there are concerned Australians who value our life under God, Queen and Country and will fight

bitterly and trenchantly to retain our liberty under our present Constitution. Many have the heart for the cause.

Australians for Constitutional Monarchy organised a rally in the main Sydney Town Hall on Friday, 26 November, 1993 which was addressed by, amongst others, the Liberal politician, the Honourable John Howard and Mr Graeme Campbell, MP, the Labor Member for Kalgoorlie. Over 2,500 people filled that hall to overflowing a thousand more than attended all the public meetings of the Republic Advisory Committee. If each one of us speaks to our friends, and they to their friends and so on, our message will spread like wildfire through the grass roots of this nation, until it culminates in the annihilation of the millennium madness of minimalist (or maximalist) republicanism.

I leave you with that thought.