

# Republic Delayed is Republic Denied!

A revised Position Paper by **Peter Consandine** © 2020\*

Since time immemorial we have ALL heard the legal term: **Justice delayed is Justice denied**. Many of us can relate to this aphorism. Genuine Republicans certainly can. If a Prime Minister of a major political party (the federal Labor Party) which has a Republican plank in its platform won't advance Australia's constitutional future then we have delay.

If this same Prime Minister delays on the matter - for the expressed reasons stated below - then he/she denies the people of this country the constitutional future that they cherish - a **Republican** future. So much for the federal Labor Party. Although, to be fair, the Labor Opposition Leader going in to the May 2019 federal election, **Bill Shorten**, did make it known that he would - if elected - advance a second republican referendum process in his first term in Office.

Liberal/Coalition Prime Minister, **Malcolm Turnbull**, exactly like his Labor predecessors **Kevin Rudd** and **Julia Gillard** held to the view that Australia must wait until the monarch, Queen Elizabeth the Second, dies before the country can "**go Republican**". The writer, **Peter Consandine**, was in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly at the time of the centenary celebration of the 1891 Sydney Constitutional Convention in March 1991 when the then Prime Minister of Australia, **Bob Hawke**, made *the very same* statement. From the floor of the "Bear Pit" **Peter Consandine** took issue with **Bob Hawke** on that occasion in front of the 275-odd delegates. **Peter Consandine** laments the stand **Malcolm Turnbull** took when he seized the Prime Ministership and the fact that he avoided addressing the issue when the incumbent Head of Government. Regrettably, as far as is known, the re-elected present Prime Minister, **Scott Morrison**, like his Liberal predecessor, **Tony Abbott**, is a died-in-the-wool monarchist cum status-quoist, and for the time being the country must 'soldier on' with the existing, non-reflective arrangements. These heavyweight majoritarian politicians and others who espouse the same sentiments are 'torpedoes' for the Australian Republic. They are also NON-patriots as status quoists.

What then Prime Minister **Bob Hawke** in 1991 was saying and what recently-overthrown Prime Minister **Malcolm Turnbull** (the last known republican in the Top Dog role) is now saying, unwittingly and unfortunately, overlooks the harsh reality of the consequences of this delay, namely: that when the present monarch dies - as she surely some day and now sooner rather than later will - we long-suffering Republican Australians automatically get her son, **Prince Charles**, as our next/new Head of State because of the hereditary line structures in place. The 10<sup>th</sup> monarch since European (well, British) settlement in 1788.

**Her Majesty**, now 93 and looking very 'grannyish' upon arrival for her 16<sup>th</sup> [and probably final] tour of The Antipodes undoubtedly has the "royal genes" - her mother lived to be 101 (nearly 102!) - and, given her pampered, aristocratic life, she's a likely centenarian.

The Australian Republic cannot be delayed *another* 10+ years! **Delay equates to Denial!** Already, there has at least been 37 years of **delay and denial** if one goes back to 1983 - when **Bob Hawke** was first elected Prime Minister or 39 years with the Republican plank having been built in to the Labor Party federal platform, albeit by default, in 1981!

## **REPUBLIC NOW! NOT WHEN the MONARCH DIES or ABDICATES!!**

Once upon a time, our monarch went on the public record and clearly indicated that, if and when Australians - by way of a referendum - decided to “cut the proverbial apron strings” she, though disappointed, would not put anything in the way of a smooth, seamless transition from constitutional monarchy to constitutional republic. After ALL, many former British Colonies which became Independent Republics, retained links with their former overlords by remaining participating countries in the so-called Commonwealth of Nations of which our monarch is the titular head.

And her son, the monarch-in-waiting, **Prince Charles**, has on one (distant now) famous occasion made it plain that “The Australian Republicans may be right!” He even won The RPA REPUBLICANS’ ‘Republican of the Year 1994’ gong for this assertion which made the headlines and newspaper placards of the day. Australia-wide.

As monarchs go, our present one has hardly put a foot wrong in nearly 70 years on the throne. Insofar, she is and has been “acceptable”. On the other hand, it could be generally and fairly surmised that Australians overall, Republicans et al, do not share the same affection for the **Prince of Wales** and his second wife (**Camilla Parker Bowles**) who might be granted the next ‘Queen of Australia’ title.

In sum: most of us have grown up with a British foreigner Head-of-State but our links with the crown are holding back the natural progression to Republicanism for the aspiring Australian people. If we desire an end to the outmoded arrangements which obtain then we must act for the Australian Republic *before* the monarch dies/abdicates. However, the most appropriate, indeed respectful, steps must be taken. A multi-pronged approach is envisaged preceded by a campaign of “kind advocacy”.

## **KIND ADVOCACY**

The monarch must not - in any way - be subjected to ridicule or insult. Looking at it from *her* perspective...she has no say in the matter whatsoever; moreover, she is merely performing her duties/doing her job. She is a prisoner, in every regard. If ALL the Australian Republican groups - large and small - can coalesce under one *united* approach to “freeing the monarch” then we will earn our freedom in the wash-up! It is *the only safe* and secure *approach* the writer can think of which will attract the doubters and waverers (the “Don’t Knows”) to **The Quest**. This will be the big challenge for dutiful, dedicated Republicans. This challenge will need to be complemented by a well-trained army of advocates/disciples to carry forth a successful second and final republican referendum.

## The 3-PHASE PROCESS

Stage 1: Indicative Referendum on the YES/NO Question...Republic desired OR Status Quo retained? [this initial part of the 3-Phase Process would be virtually a nationwide Opinion Poll with, perhaps, voting voluntary a la the plebiscite process utilised in the same-sex marriage postal ballot in 2018];

Stage 2: Predicated on a “YES” Vote overall in Stage 1, a nationwide *binding* Plebiscite offering a menu of four models [the precedent was established for this procedure in the 1977 National Song/Anthem Plebiscite];

Stage 3: The most popular of the four Plebiscite models forms the fundamental basis of the Official ‘YES’ Referendum Question which is then put to the Australian People under Section #128 of the *existing* Australian Constitution with voting, of course, compulsory.

\*The original version of this Position Paper was written, printed and distributed in late May, 2009.

\*\*This 3-Phase process was, essentially, agreed upon in a February, 2006 meeting held at Crows Nest (NSW 2065) between then Chairman of the Australian Republican Movement, **Ted O’Brien**, and the National Executive Director of The Republican Party of Australia, **Peter Consandine**.