



## RPA Campaign Bulletin #50 of June, 2021

The longer one is involved in grassroots politicising cum politicking the bigger and better the chance that a large number of bulletins will be prepared and published...21½ years on from the very first RPA Campaign Bulletin (in January 2000) issuance, The Party has ultimately arrived at the 50<sup>th</sup> edition and, decidedly, a Land Mark!

In a position such as that which **The Writer** holds down as an UNpaid CEO of a registered Not-for-Profit organisation he gets to read and research a good deal. But with being such an avid reader it happens that he has to “play Catch-UP” often and, case in point, he came across **Mike Carlton’s** memoirs [‘On Air’] published in 2018 at Vinnie’s. Carlton, saliently (on page #121), infers that, all along, it was way back in 1963 that Australia should have commenced with the push to a republic upon the treacherous news that Great Britain was going to apply for membership of the European Economic Community (a.k.a. the then ‘Common Market’). Fat chance of *that* ever happening whilst **Robert Menzies** was Prime Minister, though!

Going back a few more years to 2016 when **Julia Baird’s** brilliant biography ‘Victoria the Queen’ was published, **The Writer** was quite surprised by the revelation that (page #344) between 1871 and 1874 some 85 Republican Clubs were founded throughout the land of Great Britain. Of course, this was one of the low points in the lengthy reign of **Queen Victoria** but it clearly reflects how entrenched the British Monarchy – then as now – really is. That **Her Maj’s** Great, Great Grandmother survived no less than 8 assassination attempts in her long stewardship even belatedly indicates that the Institution is robust and indeed durable.

Another distant surmise was made in **Laurie Oakes’s** 2002 publication ‘Power Plays’ where on page #254 he wrote: “Sure, some people get excited about the republic. But when it comes to changes that would improve the federation and make government more efficient and effective, there is almost a universal lack of interest”. Oakes’s surmise could well have been crafted in this very year because it would appear to be a contemporary reckoning. Granted, the ARM is trying a number of schemes to change this UNfortunate State of Play in this second year of the General Covid-19 Pandemic which shall be highlighted later in this narrative.

However, before **The Writer** documents a series of other relevant topics he would like to ‘give a flight’ to **Conrad Black’s** interesting little tome: ‘The Canadian Manifesto’ published in 2019. Now, **The Writer** had to go to almost ridiculous lengths to acquire this book.

In fact, he had to call upon the good graces of his erstwhile Australian friend now living in Illinois, USA, **Kris Spike**, to obtain a pristine second-hand copy so that he could ascertain where Black was coming from prosecuting a 'Royal Republic of Canada'. On the face of it a 'Royal Republic' is a contradiction in terms but Black, give him his due, attempts reconciling Canada's traditional proclivity for devising co-equal structures for both the Realm and the Republic. He cites, of all people, his apparent hero **Napoleon Bonaparte's** proclaiming of *his* Empire as a Republic in 1815! Not going to happen – a Royal Republic of Canada – anytime soon, if ever.

The **Duke of Edinburgh's** death at just a little shy of becoming a centenarian, was not entirely unexpected but it remains to be seen if the Duke's passing will become a catalyst – as previously mooted – for an Australian Republic. Reaction emanated from several quarters including the predictable response from the ARM but also from NSW State Liberal Member for Hornsby, **Matt Kean**, together with Federal Labor Member for Kingsford-Smith and, jointly, Federal Labor's Spokesman for the Republic, **Matt Thistlethwaite**, and **David Muir** of the Real Republic Australia (RRA) organisation in Brisbane. The ARM have actually telegraphed that they shall be looking to announce their prescriptive model for an Oz Republic in the second half of calendar 2021. ARM Chairperson, **Peter FitzSimons**, in a Press Release on 10<sup>th</sup> March last assured SMH columnist, **Chip Le Grand**, that "the ARM model would be developed with input from constitutional experts plus parliamentarians on all sides of politics and broad public consultation" stating further: "we in the ARM have come to the view that the time is right to put forward the preferred model" the stinger being – as he freely admits – "the chances it will please everyone are zero...but our view is this is the best chance we have to achieve the majority we need". Prominent Direct-Election Republican, **Phil Cleary**, opined in the very same article, that "any future referendum on the Republic question would be doomed to fail unless republicans gave people the model they wanted". Cleary's opinion is seconded by **The Writer**.

The March 2021 international television interview between **Prince Harry** and **Meghan Markle** with **Oprah Winfrey** need not be given any more than a passing mention here and now. However, ramifications are still being experienced and the reputation for high controversy stalks the former Royal Family members. Suffice for **The Writer** to finger Harry as being the epitome of what you get when royalty is crossed with celebrity and ends up as a new kind of privilege without duties but with lots of attitude. These are the pertinent words of 'Speccie' occasional columnist **Melanie McDonagh** in an article headed: 'His Mother's Son...The Echoes of **Lady Diana** in **Prince Harry**' published before the ITI on 9 January last. How prophetic was McDonagh, eh? **Prince Charles** cannot get off lightly in all this as the ructions in The Firm perpetuate and in a telling article in 'The Speccie' of 24 April **David Van Gend** headed 'The "Prince of Wails" will Doom us all' he writes: "Well might we say 'God Save the Queen' because if Charles doesn't desist from politically divisive posturing, nothing will save the monarchy".

Second last in the aftermath of the imbroglio, Harry & Meghan's son, **Archie Windsor**, won't be left out of the Royal Equation long-term because he will eventually get a Royal Title when *his* Grandfather, **Prince Charles**, becomes **King Charles the 3<sup>rd</sup>**. This is made plain in an incisive article by **Ramesh Thakur** – again in 'The Speccie' of 20 March – headed 'Daughter-in-Law from Hell: Meghan the Karma Chameleon'. Lastly, Meghan gave birth to **Lilibet Diana** on 7 June.

The goings-on pro tem in the UK are worth alluding to at this juncture where the **Nicola Sturgeon**-led Scottish Nationalist Party have advanced in the 'Popularity Stakes' ever-so-slightly following their one-Seat gain in the devolved Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh in the May general election. GB Prime Minister, **Boris Johnson** ['**Mr Prime Misfit**' according to 'Speccie' columnist, **Matthew Parris** on 5 June], appears to be at the proverbial 'sixes & sevens' stage on just the matter of the mooted (second) Scottish Independence referendum which frightens many Conservative commentators e.g. **Katy Balls** + **Fraser Nelson** + **Douglas Murray** + **James Forsyth** et al. Even former Labour Prime Minister, **Tony Blair**, now recognises that passing the Scotland Act in 1998 was a "misjudgement" insofar as devolution was NOT meant to deliver independence to Scotland and, as a corollary, contribute to the "Undoing of the United Kingdom" to quote him in the 1 May, 2021 editorial in 'The Speccie'. Moreover, happenings in Northern Ireland serve to complicate matters somewhat further for the Westminster Parliament...there in the Capital (Belfast) the newly-elected Leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, **Edwin Poots**, is toying with the idea of staging a plebiscite which might reflect the preparedness of Northern Irelanders to support secession from the UK to form part of a United Ireland. Suddenly, the "most successful political union which the UK is" – to quote **Douglas Murray** ('The Speccie' of 15 May) appears to be unravelling. However, with the sheen, discernibly, coming off Sturgeon for various reasons, the Status Quo holds sway.

There are pointers aplenty in observing the UK ructions because here in Australia – at the time of the Western Australian State general election on 13 March last – there was a hastily-formed WAXit Party contesting Seats for that State's Legislative Council. The 'Secessional Concept' is a long-held sentiment in the WA body politic although, from an Utting Research poll the WAXit Party commissioned in tandem with their ill-fated campaign, only 28% of Sandgroppers, these days, want separation from the Commonwealth. Goody, 'cos a Republican State of WA in a Commonwealth of States is a far better – and infinitely achievable – idea worth championing.

By the Way: The RPA is presently enjoying a surge of support in Greater Perth as The Party attempts to strengthen its precious hold on registration with the AEC. Following the former Prime Ministers **Kevin Rudd** (Labor) and **Malcolm Turnbull** (Liberal) who jointly petitioned the Federal Government for a Constitutional Referendum on Australian Media Ownership and failed but got an Inquiry instead, The RPA went through the motions to prompt the Federal government to hold a referendum on the broken Australian Federation – an Inquiry in to the

serious undermining of Section #92 of the Australian Constitution, at the very least.

Alas, the endeavour was stymied. Sorta like, to be expected with ALL the bad news pertinent to the Covid-19 pandemic that's around. No harm done in the exercise 'cos the matter of concern will not just fade away into oblivion. Australia *is* OVER-governed and UNDER-managed. Period!

Harking back to an earlier item, recognition should be given to the ARM for the initiatives the NSW Branch of the Lobby Group have deployed in recent times namely (a) 'The Kangaroo Express' quarterly bulletin and (b) 'Talking Independence' podcasts with prominent republicans – so far, the new NSW State Branch Convenor, **Tony Hockey**, and NSW Executive Branch Representative Councillor, **Rick Mitry** – both interviewed by a most intelligent republican advocate in **Evelyn Santoro** and (c) Sydney Salon networking forums. Very heartening.

It was significant that the Federal Labor Opposition Leader, **Anthony Albanese**, did NOT 'do a **Bill Shorten**' and promise a move to a republic in his first term as Prime Minister in his Budget-in-Reply speech on the night of 16 May. As might be expected, '**Albo**', as he is affectionately known, committed to a First Nations Treaty and a referendum for, essentially, an Indigenous Australians' Voice to the Australian Parliament per recognition in an amended Australian Constitution. It might be fanciful of constant critic of the 'fake republic' – **David Flint** – but he did objectively acknowledge that **Albo** was "better informed than his predecessor (Shorten)" insofar as in the aftermath of yet another Australia Day 'Outrage' – caused by a controversial announcement by then 'Shadow Minister for an Australian Head of State', **Matt Thistlethwaite** – the Opposition Leader changed Thistlethwaite's portfolio to that of 'Shadow Minister for the Republic'. Hmmm! Flint's flamboyant article in 'The Speccie' of 6 February was broadranging and even managed to squeeze in the then [1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2021] latest Nielsen poll finding which determined that support for an Oz Republic had fallen to 34%. Flint confidently opined that "The republic is doomed". Some Day/One Day Flint will be proven wrong. Betcha.

Rare though it was to sight an article headed: 'Monarchy: Fundamentally Wrong' in the Summer 2021 edition of The New Liberator, **The Writer** was quite taken by what was revealed in the 'post-Winfrey climate' by conversationalists **Emma Park** and **Graham Smith** the CEO of the UK Republic organisation. Smith reminded readers that "the monarchy is a quasi-religious institution very much bound up with the established church; that indeed, the Queen is the Head of the Church of England". Smith also predicted that there'll be a 'game-changer' when **Her Maj** is gone; that the monarchy is UNprincipled meaning 'wrong in principle'. Very secular and fittingly published in a long-term biannual secular periodical.

Let's just see if he's wrong but Brisbane-based freelance journalist, **Dennis Atkins**, forecasts a Saturday, 9 October (next) Federal Election – straight after the AFL & NRL (footy) Grand Finals.

Yours Patriotically, **PETER CONSANDINE**, CEO of The RPA, Sydney