

Introduction

Republican
Party
of Australia

*The primary objective of the
Republican Party of Australia,
is the establishment of
an independent democratic republic,
by severing constitutional links
with the British Monarchy*

Australia moves into its third century since foundation faced with the sobering prospect of being left solely to its own devices, for the first time in its history. The British withdrawal east of Suez, together with entry into the European community and the changing complexion of the United States role in the Pacific, leave us in no doubt as to the respective priorities of our major allies. Thus, we must come to terms with the new order and the responsibilities that will flow from it.

The Republican Party believes the current climate is now conducive to the realization of constitutional independence by the establishment and international recognition of an independent republic of Australia – the logical and final step in our political evolution. The transition to a republic can be expected to serve as a filip to both national progress and pride – whilst providing the essential pre-requisite for self-sufficiency and non-dependence on other nations.

Paramount in our efforts to achieve such self-reliance, must be the cultivation of a positive policy of non-alignment, which will serve to nourish our independent aspirations, whilst not absolving us of regional and extraterritorial responsibilities (as distinct from isolationism). This desire for self-sufficiency must permeate every facet of our national life, from the armed services through to the arts.

There is no place in the Australia of tomorrow, for basking in reflected glories.

We need look no further than ourselves, in providing our own protection and our own resourcefulness in industry and commerce, in the sciences and humanities and in social reforms. The needs of all, are unique in their Australian context and the needs of all can be met with indigenous solutions and formulas, if we are to have confidence in ourselves as individuals, and as a people.

Throughout the world, “yesterdays answers” are being found wanting, new approaches are desperately needed – “yesterdays men” are unlikely to provide such answers!

Australia is no less affected by this lack of vision – the present parties of the old order are hostage to unyielding dogma and hamstrung by retarding traditions which serve only to give rise to inept and divisive policies. Such a torpid political climate, must only perpetuate the inequalities of privilege in all its manifestations, epitomized most graphically in the institution of our anachronistic monarchy and its attendant, “bunyip aristocracy!”

Australia is on the threshold of greatness. One Party alone, has the vision to realize that greatness. Our destiny belongs to us.

The Republican Party invites all Australians to move forward together, to reap the fruits of that destiny.

Statement
of
Objectives

The Economy

The long-term stability of the Australian economy, demands a great measure of rapport amongst employers, employees and governments.

The Republican Party, with a view to promoting such harmony is committed to an imaginative and refreshing new policy, which would actively seek to achieve an equitable, (albeit minority) worker share in the ownership of companies, irrespective of nature, magnitude, or existing proprietorship. The Republican Party believes such a partnership of both workers and investors alike in enterprise, would see, apart from industrial concord – marked improvement in productivity and efficiency – with a resultant greater pride in work.

Such a daring departure from the Capitalism VS Communism syndrome pitting owners against workers or State against workers respectfully, offers a viable alternative to most Australians, who are equally (and justifiably!) mistrustful of embracing Socialism.

Joint worker-owner proprietorship would further compliment attempts to provide adequate consumer protection.

Further, the Republican Party committed to the maintenance of full employment, in a modern, free enterprise economy, believes Australia is in the unique position of being able to confront the bogey of Automation and convert it a complimentary instrument for our modest workforce. Automation thus harnessed, could enable competitive Australian entry into world markets hitherto and otherwise denied.

It will be seen also, automation may obviate the need to create a huge population, which serves only, to compound social and economic problems.

Mindful of our desire to attain both political and economic independence, a republican government whilst appreciative of foreign capital's vital role, would assure local equity majorities in industrial – both primary and secondary – and national resources undertakings.

Social Welfare

The Republican Party as opposed to the tardiness of the conservative bodies and the hand-outs of the socialists, envisages the provision of social welfare, by the creation of a single, national insurance scheme spanning the full spectrum of welfare requirements. Aged and invalid pensions, Health and unemployment benefits together with superannuation etc., all would thus be streamlined in administration, to assure maximum efficiency in the dispensing of benefits promptly, – and at the lowest possible cost to contributors.

Such an all-embracing national scheme, financed by the citizens themselves, during their working life and drawn from disposable income, would enable all citizens to maintain their individual dignity when claiming support, in the knowledge that they – and not the State – will be providing relief.

Education

The Republican Party will not entertain any form of compromise in attaining, and making available to all citizens — irrespective of means — the highest possible standards in education. It is proposed all schools, both government and private, be granted an initial injection of funds where and when deemed necessary, to achieve and maintain acceptable standards. The determining and supervision of such criteria, will at all times, rest with the state.

Whilst every Australian pupil is deserving of the best educational system the State can provide, amelioration of educational amenities and facilities is also essential in the interests of the teaching profession, in recognition of teachings invaluable role and in attracting and retaining individuals of the highest calibre to the profession.

The proportion of budgetary expenditure allocated for education — always a matter of dispute — remains largely, not a question of if, we can afford increasing educational requisites, but rather, if we can afford not to meet such needs!

The Structure of Government

The forms of government which a country can adopt (or have imposed upon it) are as varied as life itself. Those currently in existence range from the totalitarian regimes of the Communist bloc to the petty dictatorships of South America to the attempts at democracy in various parts of the world. There is no good reason why Australia should employ any of the existing forms of government. The Republican Party of Australia proposes a uniquely Australian concept of government born of democracy and governed by the will of the people.

Australia was once the most democratic country in the world. The scheme proposed by this party would undoubtedly make it so again. Two principles have emerged as of the utmost importance to true democracy. The first of these is proportional representation. The second is that government must be as close to the people as possible.

The Federal Government

In the concept of proportional representation lies the key to the role of the President and the operation of Parliament. Proportional representation would ensure (as nearly as it is possible to do) that all groups in the community would be represented in Parliament according to the proportion that their numbers bear to the overall community. This would mean that the composition of Parliament would reflect the composition of society. The basis of democracy in a large country is government by representatives. And what could be more representative? What, then, could be more democratic?

Instead of having one group in Parliament being made the government, the whole of Parliament would be the government. In the past other parties have offered government controlled by big business interests, government controlled by trade unions, government run by farmers and even government controlled by a church. It took the imaginative genius of the

Republican Party to conceive the scheme of government so bold that it proposes that the government should be run by the government itself! Cabinet positions would be divided between all the parties represented in Parliament in proportion to the size of their representation. The Presidency would rotate around the members of the Cabinet for periods of (possibly) twelve months at a time.

The Republican Party deplores the current division of Parliament into Government and Opposition. In theory it might seem that this type of division would help to keep Parliament on its toes as a strong Opposition would be quick to point out the mistakes of the Government. In practice we have seen that it does not work that way. Members of Parliament have developed a mentality which holds that everything their own side proposes is absolutely right and that their opposite numbers speak only nonsense. Both sides of the House have reached a point where they are afraid to confess their own mistakes and cannot apparently comprehend that members of other parties also possess a developed and informed intelligence. Whenever issues of major importance confront the nation the extensive efforts of both sides are more concerned with saving face than with what is best for the nation. The result is a failure to acknowledge mistakes and an unreasonable difficulty for new ideas to be properly discussed and considered.

The system of government envisaged by the Republican Party does not deny a role to political parties. In fact, it is based on the assumption of their continued existence. Rather, it seeks to redirect the energies of political parties so that they might work together in the common good instead of spending a considerable amount of Parliament's time needlessly fighting amongst themselves.

The desire for a rotating Presidency drawn from Cabinet stems from the fact that it would fit in so well with the rest of the proposed system of government and also from the need which is felt to play down personality-cult politics. The rotation of the Presidency would mean that none of the elements represented in the Cabinet would be left out in the proverbial cold. Because of this involvement in the essential functions of government and the vested interest that each group would thus have in the Presidency all parties would be

obliged to act in a more responsible fashion. That each party should in its turn furnish the nation with its President would also reduce to insignificance the instability which is often associated with multi-party government.

Thus we propose a system in which every group of substance in the community can, by its representatives, take part in government; a system, moreover, in which the issues and the welfare of the country will be more important than the personalities involved.

Federalism

The Republican Party has also realised that the cause of democracy will not be advanced by the centralisation of power in Canberra. Our federal politicians already claim to be overworked and most of our law now comes from legislative authority delegated to bureaucrats. To give more power to Canberra is, therefore, to give much more power to the bureaucracy. It is conceded that the members of the public service are fine men and women of both competence and integrity but they are not responsible to the people for their actions. In short, government by the public service is not democratic.

The apparent conflict between the needs for an energetic and mature central government and for a decentralisation of power can be resolved by a return to true federalism.

For federalism to function properly we must create a balanced structure of government in which state and federal bodies would have an equal internal status. Of course, only the federal body could speak for Australia and represent us in international affairs. Matters which by their nature need to be dealt with on a national basis should be in the hands of the Commonwealth government. Other matters, as much as practically possible, should be in the hands of state or local bodies. (Future publications in this series will seek to show whether the various subject matters dealt with are appropriate for national or local control.)

Federalism has not worked properly in Australia to date because the present framework enables the Commonwealth to dominate

Conservation & National Development

the scene. This has been brought about by the lack of any clear line of demarcation between federal and state functions combined with the Commonwealth government's control of the national purse-strings. The Republican Party, therefore, stands for a careful definition of the respective powers involved and a new financial arrangement which would be the foundation of the new federation.

We envisage one common revenue fund, a major part of which would be divided between the state and federal governments each year on the basis of a fixed predetermined percentage which would be embodied in a Constitutional formula for that purpose. The formula itself would be subject to review by a body comprised of representatives of the various governments involved. Amounts required by any government over and above its predetermined share of the distributed funds would be the subject of a petition to this body. A preliminary hearing would come before a member of the judiciary to decide whether or not the claim was within the Constitutional definition of a Special Case. If the answer was in the affirmative the matter would then go to the body referred to which would also be chaired by a member of the judiciary.

The Senate In the proposed federal balance the Senate, as a state's house, would be unnecessary. Recently, however, the Senate has shown signs of developing into a house of committees wherein matters of great importance can be considered more fully than is possible in the House of Representatives. Assuming that this potential can be fully realized, the Republican Party supports the continued existence of the Senate for this purpose.

State Boundaries Not strictly relevant to the structure of government but mentioned here for convenience is the Republican Party policy of investigating the possibility of redefining state boundaries on a basis of logical zoning rather than historical accident.

In a Nutshell Through proportional representation and a return to true federalism, Republican Party policies are designed to make government in Australia conform more closely to the basic principles of democracy.

The Republican Party views both conservation and national development as joint issues most likely to effect the long-term well being of all Australians. Whilst it has become fashionable to indulge in hyperbole, in paying lip-service denouncing the desecration of our environment and the ravages of our unique fauna, the Republican Party would take drastic action to cease such myopic actions by means of a multi-pronged assault on this betrayal of posterity!

Pollution: Industrial pollution in particular, must be prevented at the source, as opposed to "nominal" fines for breaches, which fail to offer sufficient deterrent. Pesticide control must be enacted and enforced rigorously.

Conservation: The Republican Party remains unintimidated by the god of "progress" for its own sake. Motivated by the rational attitudes that characterize their every approach - republicans reject the notion that simply because a mineral deposit is known to exist in a given area, it must be "developed" in the interests of productivity and progress! - or that a forest might be razed to claim "improvements" (!!) - for taxation purposes. Such double-standards are an indictment of current government policies.

Decentralization: Few issues have inspired more platitudes and less implementation than decentralization. The Republican Party would seek to highlight the correlation between decentralization and the "quality of life". The cancerous urban sprawl with its manifold socio-economic problems, must be terminated unequivocally. A national master plan, with projections categorizing areas as being suitable for light, medium or heavy population densities must be given top priority.

Population: The "populate or perish" assertion promulgated in the post-war period and until recently readily accepted by most Australians, no longer maintains credibility without due regard for the capacities of education; housing; employment etc. Restricted immigration, having cognizance of prevailing domestic conditions, together with the exercise of voluntary procreation control on the part of indigenous Australians, will see a new, national emphasis placed upon a qualitative life style.

Rural Policies

The Republican Party remains convinced of the long term viability and inestimable value of traditional primary industries. Bold and vigorous initiatives would distinguish a republican government's part in creating a rural industry as self-sufficient as the new republic itself.

Predictably then, a republican government would not wish to maintain the granting of hand-outs in perpetuity, (any more than self-respecting farmers themselves desire retention of subsidies or grants!) -- a republican government would, however, be anxious to provide funds to assist rural enterprises achieve maximum efficiency. A rural bank, offering funds, liberally, on long term, low interest rates would be created to provide for the rural sectors sole needs. Major criteria in evaluating the rural industry as a whole or in part, would be based upon efficiency -- not on size. Sometimes the most efficient enterprise will be seen to be large, but very often it will be small or medium. Yet a continuing parallel benefit from a more independent political posture, would be the concerted efforts to diversify our markets from the traditional European sources -- soon to be denied us. The narrow concentration of past and present markets, further witness to our colonial legacy!

Wool: The recent depression in wool prices is a prime example of the manner in which Australians have been conditioned to selling themselves short.

The Republican Party believes that Australian Merino wool remains without peer as a textile fibre. This monopoly on the worlds best wool, can, and must be exploited to the full. The marketing of "Australian Pure Merino wool" as opposed to the non-de-script "Pure new wool", on international markets would afford maximum benefits to be derived, in like manner accorded Belgian lace, Scottish tweed or Scandanavian design etc. Should such unilateral marketing of wool in raw and finished article form, lead to withdrawal from the international marketing bodies -- so long carried on Australian coat-tails -- this should obviously not serve as a deterrent.

The production of finished woollen articles in Australia is of vital necessity, if the home industry is to exercise significant influence on the fortunes of wool, whilst realizing optimum returns -- such a contention, formerly drawing derisive retorts, now commands respect in the light of automation and increased efficiencies.

Defence & Foreign Affairs

The Republican Party has made clear its desire for an Australia capable of commanding its own destiny -- a nation resolutely drawing itself up and casting aside its neo-colonial yoke -- thus winning respect and admiration of the multifarious nations of the Pacific region and beyond. Whilst in so many respects, Australia today is self-governing, it is not sufficient to BE so in constitutional terms -- it must also APPEAR to be so -- to the world at large, and no less to it-self! At this point in time it has attained neither form nor substance!

As the most potentially influential nation in the Pacific basin, Australia has an obligatory first duty to the less well-endowed nations of Oceania, so long excluded from the Australian consciousness. Positive and tangible relationships with oceanic nations, in the form of reciprocal trade agreements, together with social and cultural exchanges -- preceded by economic assistance, of more than token substance, will see a basis for immigration in the near future.

Such foreign aid as is committed by Australia, would be channelled through the United Nations and its agencies, to spare recipient nations the "strings" so customarily attached.

Motivated by a genuine spirit of non-alignment, a republican Australia, aspiring to middle-power status and playing a constructive role in the councils of the world, would gravitate to a position of trusted intermediary. Non-alignment, viewed as a positive, contributing force, would also serve to foster self-sufficiency in the provision of defense equipment, at present, so painfully neglected. There would remain, however, emphasis upon defensive, as opposed to offensive materiel.

Conclusion

Republican Party (Australia)
321-1111
11/16

In reading this outline you will have discovered that republicans are interested in much more than abolishing Monarchy.

Our basic attitudes do not arise from the fact that we are republicans. Rather, the fact that we are republicans is a result of our basic attitudes. Because we share these basic attitudes, it follows that Republicanism in its broadest sense, applies to everything from defense to education, to housing. Yet Republicans are not dogmatic. Above all else, they cherish government by reason as the ultimate objective.

N Copy

Republicans are, therefore, the kind of people who will listen to other people's ideas and accept criticism of their own. This sort of criticism is openly invited in the Republican Party, in the belief that a complete and honest debate is the only way of achieving well reasoned government.

The Republican Party alone, provides the opportunity for Australians from all walks of life, to share in the task of introducing Australia to a new era.

Applications for membership should be directed to:

**Republican Party of Australia,
National Headquarters,
P.O. Box 106,
Croydon, Victoria, 3136.**

**New South Wales Division:
P.O. Box 192,
Spit Junction, N.S.W., 2088.**

**Queensland Division:
P.O. Box 67,
Kenmore, Qld., 4069**

**South Australian Division:
P.O. Box 16,
Elizabeth, S.A., 5112.**

**Victorian Division:
G.P.O. Box 1976R,
Melbourne, Vic, 3001.**