

Common Sense

Towards an Australian Republic that improves the country

A Working Paper

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2025

For Tom Mc Donald who loved and espoused Tom Paine's pragmatism and vision, for
nandi, dhuway and yapa and for Norah and the gaminyarr and gutharra of the future

“The cause of ..democracy is the cause of all democracies.”

Tom Paine, *Common Sense*, 1776

“The science of the Politician consists in fixing the true point of happiness and freedom. Those men would deserve the gratitude of ages, who should discover a mode of government that contained the greatest sum of individual happiness, with the least national expense.”

Giaccinto Dragonetti, *Virtues and Reward* 1769

“A small number of electors, or a small number of representatives, are equally dangerous.”

Tom Paine, *Common Sense*, 1776

“Of more worth is one honest man to society, and in the sight of God, than all the crowned ruffians that ever lived.”

Tom Paine, *Common Sense*, 1776

“A government of our own is our natural right: and when a man seriously reflects on the precariousness of human affairs, he will become convinced, that it is infinitely wiser and safer, to form a constitution of our own in a cool deliberate manner, while we have it in our power, than to trust such an interesting event to time and chance.”

Tom Paine, *Common Sense*, 1776

"Do you approve amending the Constitution to establish the Australian Executive Council, comprising the Prime Minister and state and territory Premiers, as Australia's head of state, replacing the Governor-General and State governors?"

I
249 years ago Tom Paine's *Common Sense* galvanised Americans on the brink of the War of Independence with England. The pamphlet was widely read and the American colonists rallied to the cause of independence and democratic self government. It was common sense.

In 2025 a different kind of common sense is needed. Australia democracy has never had a galvanising revolution or war. When we consider the violence and upheavals of the 19th and 20th centuries this is a good thing! However, the coherence and idea of the Australian nation, as more than just a Federation of colonies, and a nation defined by its luck and the richness of its resources and people, remains to be properly defined as does the national relationship with the original sovereign peoples of the land.

Australia's independence has slowly emerged with 'the living flow of laws and institutions'. Since its formation as a colony, the King of the British Empire is below, not above, the common law bound by the will of the people, just as in British society. This is well articulated in English law: "If once again and ever so slightly the (Royal) Prerogative gets into association with Executive acts done apart from clear Parliamentary authority, *it will be an evil day; that way lies Revolution.*"¹

The superficial task for Australian governments now is to end the ceremonial role of the King of England. However, beyond this, Australians have an opportunity

to properly create their own modern democratic nation state free of the burden of unelected monarchs and the prospect of demagogues emerging that are "king-like",

to, once and for all, reconcile contemporary government and society with the rights of the peoples who were the original owners and custodians of the Australian continent

and, to continue to define and refine the most efficient forms of government that fit the large Australian continent and most efficiently meet the needs of all Australians.

The space is clear to deal with these problems and the structural weaknesses of governments originally created as nine different colonies. There is a need to transition away from the costly and inefficient mechanisms that constrain Federal and State parliaments and governments beginning with the offices of Governor General and Governors. Local and regional governments, not recognised by the 1900 Federalists, also need to be more formally defined and recognised. These are minimal, common sense expectations.

Peter C. Botsman

Kangaroo Valley, 2025.

¹ Lord Shaw, *R v Halliday* cited in (Evatt Herbert & Zines, 1987, p. 9)

II

Australia's pathway to independence and self government did not come through Revolution. As a settler society Australia has been swept along by events, world affairs, good fortune and pragmatism.

External events and authorities have largely defined Australia. There have been few grand proclamations just the steady flow of law and statutes, international treaties and agreements and world affairs.

Over 237 years the major statutes that give form to the Australian nation are the Australian Colonies Government Act (1850 Great Britain), the Colonial Laws Validity Act (1865 Great Britain), the Federal Council of Australasia Act (1885 Great Britain) the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act (1900 Great Britain), the Statute of Westminster Act (1931 Great Britain) and the Australia Act (1986 Commonwealth).

Of these six statutes only two were enacted through the democratic participation of people living in Australia. This is one of the reasons why the vestiges of English democracy including the role of the British sovereign as the Australian Head of State remain in place.

In 1924 H.V. Evatt argued that because of the evolution of British law, Australians, as all the citizens of the dominion countries of the British Empire, were properly the master of their own destiny. Whatever residual executive powers of monarchs that remained were legitimate only so long as they were under the control of the democratic representatives of the people. (Evatt Herbert & Zines)

The Statute of Westminster (1931) swept away the principle that the paramount law was that of the British parliament and allowed the former dominions of the British Empire to establish their own foreign, diplomatic and defence policy and institutions in the international arena.

Australia is a democracy in which 'the common people' have the principal power to determine their government at Federal, State and local levels. Australian well-being, measured by income, employment, education, health, environmental quality, social conditions, civic engagement and life satisfaction, is high by world standards. So it is little wonder that "the common people" have been satisfied by the gradual changes that have been wrought by legislative change. Tumult and revolution, with their great expense of human life and loss of resources, have thankfully not been the Australian way. Healthy pragmatism has defined us and should continue to do so.

The Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act (1900 Great Britain) established a Federal governmental system that combines the best of the modern democratic models available namely the British Westminster system and the American Federal system of

government. It was the brain-child of Andrew Inglis Clark and his peers and was, in many ways, a brilliant combination of the best of both worlds.

The anomaly at the zenith of our Commonwealth and State constitutions is that a Governor-General is appointed by The King, on advice of the Prime Minister and State Governors are appointed by The King, on advice of individual state premiers. The Governor-General and the State Governors as the King's representatives in Australia are the last vestiges of a time when the original colonies and subsequently the Federal Commonwealth of Australia were part of the government of a land thousands of kilometres away.

Only the powers of the Governor General and the Governors of each State are not derived directly from the people of Australia. These positions are not consistent with Australian democracy. As the King or Queens representatives, the Governor General and Governors are representatives of a hereditary office governed by the laws of another country.

III

Two years before the English settlement in Sydney the United States' Declaration of Independence was ratified on July 4, 1776. It begins with the words "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. – That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, - that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it; and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness".

The principles of American democracy mattered to the great architect of the Australian constitution Andrew Inglis Clark and the members of the Australian Constitutional conventions in Australia. On the 100th anniversary of the US Declaration of Independence Clark addressed Tasmania's Minerva Club:

"We have met tonight in the name of the principles which were proclaimed by the founders of the Anglo-American Republic .. and we do so because we believe those principles to be permanently applicable to the politics of the world and the practical application of them in the creation and modification of the institutions which constitute the organs of our social life to be our only safeguard against political retrogression. (Neasey & Neasey, p. 37)

Australia moved away from the colonial rule of England in unique ways. Each colony obtained the right of self-rule through elected parliaments in the 19th century. The

formation of the Commonwealth in 1900 meant that colonies came together under one nationally elected government. But all these things occurred under the aegis of the British sovereign and an undesirable feature of the monarchist shadow over Australian government is that it has obscured the nature and inherent features of the Australian people including the fact that all of the original landholdings did not derive from the Crown but from the first owners and stewards of the land.

The Australian people and the first custodians of the continent of Australia are the principal foundations of Australian well being, law and government. Their's is the rightful original *sovereignty* of Australia but it remains to be written into our founding documents, namely our Commonwealth, State and Territory constitutions.

IV

Sometimes Australians mistake their relative freedom and prosperity with stable, gradually changing system of government. But there is a limit to this. Government always requires thoughtful democratic change if it is to reflect the best interests of the people.

In the original **Common Sense** pamphlet Tom Paine put it like this: "Society in every state is a blessing, but Government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its worst state an intolerable one: for when we suffer, or are exposed to the same miseries *by a Government*, which we might expect in a country *without Government*, our calamity is heightened by reflecting that we furnish the means by which we suffer. Government, like dress, is the badge of lost innocence; the palaces of kings are built upon the ruins of the bowers of paradise. For were the impulses of conscience clear, uniform and irresistibly obeyed, man would need no other law-giver; but that not being the case, he finds it necessary to surrender up a part of his property to furnish means for the protection of the rest; and this he is induced to do by the same prudence which in every other case advises him, out of two evils to choose the least. Wherefore, security being the true design and end of government, it unanswerably follows that whatever form thereof appears most likely to ensure it to us, with the least expense and greatest benefit, is preferable to all others."

The price of enjoying the great freedoms of living in a land of democracy, abundance and natural resources is vigilance about the form of government which *has the least expense and provides the greatest benefit*.

Are we governed with the least expense and greatest benefit? Naturally, most Australians would think not. In this spirit we should consider our Commonwealth and State government and the tier of government which is not mentioned in the Commonwealth constitution, local government. Why was local government left out of the Constitution? It did not exist in our original colonies. As the Australian population has grown local government has become more important than any of our founding

fathers could have imagined and the powers of Commonwealth and State government have become entangled in ways that were similarly never imagined by our founding fathers.

V

Australia, the modern nation, was founded as colonies of the English Crown. In its simplest colonial forms Australia was governed by a Colonial Secretaries representing the Crown, then followed colonial parliaments with their own constitutions and then came the Commonwealth Constitution in 1900. Though eligible voters voted for the Commonwealth Constitution it was not really endorsed by the people. Only landed owners, males and gentry voted in majority to enact it in Australia. Nevertheless the Commonwealth constitution was robust, balanced and inspired by the same ideals that had driven Tom Paine and the American revolutionaries.

In the best traditions of conservatism the Australian Commonwealth Constitution has been changed only eight times since its inception. It is a horse and buggy document for a 21st century society and if it is to serve the future people of Australia then it has to be carefully considered and amended in relation to the needs and demands of future and contemporary life.

The Australian Commonwealth is an amalgam of the British Westminster system of responsible government and the American Federal system. Under the Constitution the Federal Parliament, consisting of the British Monarch, the Senate (originally designed as a State's House) and the House of Representatives or people's house, makes the laws of the land. The Monarch is the Head of State and is represented in Australia by the Governor General who is appointed on the advice of the Prime Minister and each State Premier nominates a Governor representing the Crown, who forms the Head of Government for each State.

Though our Federal system is influenced by the United States model, in Australia the head of government is not the head of State. Australia has followed the United Kingdom's Westminster system which derives from an Absolutist form of government in which the Monarch was once supreme. Over centuries the Westminster system has evolved to consist of the Monarch, the House of Lords formerly Aristocrats and Land Owners appointed by the Monarch and the House of Commons representing the people. Emulating this in Australia we have the Governor General, the Senate and the House of Representatives.

VI

Paine recognised that the English system was not some form of logical checks and balances. It was an imperfect structure created by a struggle of the people against the tyranny of hereditary Monarchs that had unjustly ruled over all.

The Australian system of government unnecessarily inherited all of the imperfections of the British system. The Commonwealth Constitution confers extensive powers on the British Monarch, including: introductory clauses 1-9 (the British Monarch is the enabler/executor of the Commonwealth Constitution), I-1-6 (the establishment of the Governor General's office as the Monarch's representative with the right of dissolving and managing the sessions of Parliament), Section 61 (the Governor General is responsible for the execution and maintenance of the Constitution, and the execution and maintenance of the laws passed (by the Parliament) in accordance with the Constitution) and Section 51 (Commander in Chief of the Military). There are also an additional 40 various clauses and sections of the Commonwealth Constitution which rely on the Governor General as the Head of State.

Unwritten "constitutional conventions" determine that the Governor General and by extension the Monarch can only act on the advice of the Prime Minister of the day. *But there is no mention in the written Commonwealth Constitution of the Prime Minister or Cabinet.* As Paine wrote of the British Constitution that governed the early American colonies.. "either the words have no meaning, or they are flat contradictions." He insisted that this was one of the primary reasons why the United States needed to declare their independence from Britain and write their own Constitution.

But even in the United States in 2025 the shadow of the ruler King is evident. The founders of the US Constitution created a popularly elected President. The power of the Presidency was supposed to be checked by the Congress and the Supreme Court. What has emerged with the Trump Presidency is a situation where neither the Congress or the Supreme Court checks the power of the President. The President's role as Commander in Chief of the US military forces is largely unchecked by Congress. The power of the Congress to determine expenditure and budgets is also under direct threat. The US Supreme Court and the Federal and State Courts have not restrained Donald Trump from over-reaching the powers of his office in deporting immigrants and usurping State rights, rather they have strengthened his power.²

² The present state of America is truly alarming to every man who is capable of reflection. Without law, without government, without any other mode of power than what is founded on, and granted by, courtesy. Held together by an unexampled occurrence of sentiment, which is nevertheless subject to change, and which every secret enemy is endeavoring to dissolve. Our present condition is, Legislation without law; wisdom without a plan; a constitution without a name; and, what is strangely astonishing, perfect independance contending for dependance. The instance is without a precedent, the case never existed before, and who can tell what may be the event? The property of no man is secure in the present unbraced system of things. The mind of the multitude is left at random, and seeing no fixed object before them, they pursue such as fancy or opinion presents. Nothing is criminal; there is no such thing as treason; wherefore, every one thinks himself at liberty to act as he pleases. The Tories would not have dared to assemble offensively, had they known that their lives, by that act, were forfeited to the laws of the state. A line of distinction should be drawn between English soldiers taken in battle, and inhabitants of America taken in arms. The first are prisoners, but the latter traitors. The one forfeits his liberty, the other his head.

There are many reasons for the gradual rise in power of the US President. However one of the relevant considerations for Australia, as it seeks to replace the role of the monarch in the Constitution, is the fact that the President is not only popularly elected, he or she is the most popularly mandated elected representative in the country. Even if it is argued that the role of an Australian President is largely ceremonial, if he or she is elected by the Australian people, it might be argued that a President had a broader popular mandate than the Prime Minister. The sacking of Prime Minister Whitlam in 1975 by Sir John Kerr should give us pause for thought here. Not only are such actions illegitimate they create chaos, disorder and potential instability.

In the United States the combined democratic electoral power of elected Congressional, State representatives as well as the constitutionally based power of checks and balances through the Courts should be more than a counter-weight to Presidential powers. However when public opinion can be manipulated, demi-gogues hold sway. The power of social media and the rise of the mega rich class was not something that was imagined by the founders of modern democratic nations. The conflict and crisis of the United States and the ever pressing role of the President is something to be avoided.

The best form of democracy is local democracy. When Australians elect a local representative that representative is of their community and is answerable to that community. If elected to parliament that representative's leadership role is determined by the collective of local democratically elected representatives. A Prime Minister or a Premier or a Minister are effectively elected and are accountable to their peers as democratically elected representatives. It may be argued that such a system is not dynamic and is conservative. But as Paine argued in 1776 "Monarchical governments are never long at rest: the crown itself is a temptation to enterprising ruffians at home; and that degree of pride and insolence ever attendant on regal authority, swells into a rupture with foreign powers in instances where a republican government, by being formed on more natural principles, would negotiate the mistake." It is best to build dynamism on the principle of local democracy not that of all powerful figures that have no natural accountability.

VII

It goes without saying that changes to the foundation stone of Australian government have to be achieved by a great majority consensus. There is no point, under any circumstances, in going to a referendum without the approval and support of all major political parties and leaders. Constitutional changes and referendums have to be bound by common sense that is accepted by all. Even those who have great affection for the past and the steadfast service of Queen Elizabeth II have to see the reason of changing the Australian constitution to ensure that the ordinary people of Australia are the masters of their own destiny. Consolidation of the good dimensions of Australian

government and democracy and creating a solid basis for improvement of our governance systems must be the touch stone of constitutional change. If these tests cannot be passed then there is no point in tinkering around the edges with clever questions or amendments. The advantage of the proposed Australian Executive Council model is that it encourages consensus across the Commonwealth and all States and Territories and all political parties, governments and oppositions, have a stake in its successful operations.

VIII A Simple Republican Referendum Question

After so many lessons of modern history, particularly from the United States and Great Britain: why appoint a *King surrogate* in the first place? The appropriate head of the Australian Commonwealth is the Prime Minister, and in the States and Territories, the Premiers and Chief Secretaries. We should not create another rival structure of power that has the risk of imbalancing the well-balanced system of parliamentary government. A Prime Minister or a Premier could never assume absolute power nor transgress the boundaries of their power because they rely for their continued tenure on good conduct monitored by their democratically elected peers.

The best way to replace the Governor General and the Governors in each of the States is to simply reform the existing Australian Executive Council and the Executive Councils in the States and Territories to form one Executive body that takes over all head of State functions and consists of the elected Federal and State government leaders. This would create many efficiencies and benefits and save the taxpayer a great deal of money.

The Australian Executive Council (AEC) model proposes replacing the Governor-General and state governors with a single council of the Prime Minister and Premiers of the six states (New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania) and two territories (Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory), with Government Houses repurposed as museums for First Nations reconciliation and multiculturalism.

The simple referendum question put to the Australian people is as follows:

"Do you approve amending the Constitution to establish the Australian Executive Council, comprising the Prime Minister and state and territory Premiers, as Australia's head of state, replacing the Governor-General and State governors?"

IX Mechanics

The mechanics of the Australian Executive Council model are straight forward and involve amending and adapting the current Executive Councils at Federal and State

levels that advise the current Governor-General and State Governors. These would be formed into one body that would meet monthly.

CURRENT SYSTEM: Commonwealth and State Executive Councils

Commonwealth (Federal) Executive Council

- Frequency: Every 2 weeks (when Parliament sits)
 - Purpose: Advise Governor-General on federal administration (e.g., regulations, appointments)
 - Location: Canberra, presided by Governor-General
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State Executive Councils (e.g., SA)

- Frequency: Weekly or as required
 - Purpose: Advise state governor on state administration (e.g., state laws, regulations)
 - Location: State capital, presided by governor
-

PROPOSED SYSTEM: Australian Executive Council (Australian Unity Republic)

Australian Executive Council

- Composition: Prime Minister + 8 Premiers (6 States, 2 Territories)
- Frequency:
 - Monthly meetings (video conference or Canberra)
 - Quarterly summits (rotating state capitals)
 - Emergency meetings (as needed, video conference)
- Purpose: Exercise federal and state head of state powers
 - Federal: Dissolve Parliament, appoint PM, ceremonies
 - State: Assent to state laws, dissolve state parliaments, ceremonies
- Decision-making:

- Majority vote for routine decisions
- Two-thirds majority for reserve powers
- PM's tie-breaking vote for procedural matters
- Location: Flexible (video, rotating capitals)
- Alignment: Supports Albanese government's productivity drive by streamlining governance and leveraging technology

X Constitutional Amendments and Actions

The following constitutional amendments would follow a successful referendum at Federal and State levels.

Level of Govt	Amendments and Actions
Federal Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preamble: Remove references to the Queen, affirm Australia as the <i>Aussie Unity Republic</i> with the Australian Executive Council (AEC) as head of state, committing to transform Government Houses into museums for First Nations reconciliation and multiculturalism, and align with the Albanese government's productivity drive by saving ~\$25.5-42.5 million annually to fund economic and social initiatives. - Covering Clause 2: Remove the Queen's role, establish the AEC as head of state. - Section 1: Redefine Parliament to exclude the Queen (e.g., "The legislative power of the Commonwealth shall be vested in a Federal Parliament, consisting of the Senate and House of Representatives, with bills assented by the AEC"). - Section 2: Repeal the Governor-General's appointment, establish the AEC as comprising the Prime Minister and state/territory Premiers. - Section 61: Vest executive power in the AEC instead of the Queen and Governor-General. - Section 62: Add Section 62A: "The Australian Executive Council shall consist of the Prime Minister, who presides with a tie-breaking vote, and the Premiers of the States and Territories, exercising federal and state head of state powers for the <i>Aussie Unity Republic</i>, enhancing productivity by streamlining governance." - Sections 5, 28, 57: Transfer parliamentary powers (summoning, proroguing, dissolving Parliament, resolving deadlocks) to the AEC. - Section 68: Vest command of naval and military forces in the AEC, exercisable on the advice of the Prime

Level of Govt

Amendments and Actions

	<p>Minister and Cabinet. - Other Sections: Update references to the Governor-General or Queen (e.g., Section 44 on parliamentary disqualifications). - New Section: Transformation of Government Houses and Productivity Alignment: - Provision: "Government House (Canberra) and Admiralty House (Sydney) shall be repurposed as national museums dedicated to First Nations reconciliation and the promotion of peace, tolerance, and multiculturalism, managed by a Reconciliation and Multiculturalism Council with Indigenous-led advisory boards. Savings of ~\$25.5-42.5 million annually from eliminating Governor-General and governor roles shall fund museum setup and support economic initiatives aligned with the Albanese government's productivity drive, such as housing, health, and job creation." - Purpose: Honor Indigenous history, promote social cohesion, and enhance productivity by redirecting funds to community investments, supporting Labor's economic reform agenda. - Implementation: Establish museums with public access, educational programs, and cultural events, funded by savings and revenue from entry fees (~\$10-20 million annually).</p> <p>- Section Establishing Governor: Repeal or amend governor appointment sections (e.g., NSW: Section 3, VIC: Section 6, QLD: Section 3, WA: Section 4, SA: Section 4, TAS: Section 2), recognizing the AEC as head of state for the <i>Aussie Unity Republic</i>. - Section on Executive Power: Amend to vest executive power in the AEC (e.g., NSW: Section 5, VIC: Section 7, QLD: Section 33, WA: Section 5, SA: Section 5, TAS: Section 3). - Section on Assent to Bills: Assign bill assent powers to the AEC (e.g., NSW: Section 16, VIC: Section 15, QLD: Section 64, WA: Section 61, SA: Section 14, TAS: Section 17). - Other Sections: Update references to the governor, assigning duties to the AEC. - New Section: Transformation of Government Houses and Productivity Alignment: - Provision: "Each state Government House shall be repurposed as a museum dedicated to First Nations reconciliation and the promotion of peace, tolerance, and multiculturalism, reflecting local Indigenous history and cultural diversity, co-managed with state and Indigenous stakeholders. Savings from governor roles shall support state-level economic initiatives aligned with the Albanese government's productivity drive." - Purpose: Create inclusive spaces for education and dialogue, redirect savings to community programs, and enhance</p>
State Constitutions (Each of 6 States)	

Level of Govt	Amendments and Actions
Territories (ACT, NT)	<p>productivity through efficient governance. - Implementation: Establish state advisory boards with Indigenous representation to design exhibits, ensuring cultural sensitivity and alignment with Labor's Closing the Gap goals.</p> <p>- Legislation: Amend Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988 and Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978 to integrate Chief Ministers into the AEC and remove Administrator roles. - Action: Support territory involvement in federal museum initiatives, using existing cultural facilities (e.g., National Museum of Australia in ACT) for reconciliation and multiculturalism programs, with savings contributing to productivity-enhancing investments like job creation and food security in remote communities, as per Labor's 2025 Closing the Gap plan.</p>

Notes:

Federal amendments require a referendum under Section 128, needing a national majority and approval in at least four states.

State amendments typically require parliamentary approval, with some states (e.g., NSW, VIC) potentially needing referendums.

Museum transformations require consultation with First Nations communities, following [National Museum of Australia](#) protocols, to ensure cultural sensitivity.

Savings (~\$25.5-42.5 million annually) fund museum setup (\$35-70 million) and support Labor's productivity priorities, with revenue potential (\$10-20 million annually) from museum operations.

XI Cost Savings

The AEC model could save approximately \$25.5-42.5 million annually by eliminating the salaries, housing, and operational costs of the Governor-General and state governors, leveraging existing elected officials and infrastructure. It is estimated that the cost of running one AEC council would be about \$5.1 million annually.

Table: Estimated Savings Breakdown

Category	Current Costs (Annual)	AEC Costs (Annual)	Savings (Annual)
Governor-General	\$13-18 million	\$0	\$13-18 million

Category	Current Costs (Annual)	AEC Costs (Annual)	Savings (Annual)
State Governors (6)	\$13.5-25.5 million	\$0	\$13.5-25.5 million
AEC Operations	\$0	\$0.5-1 million	-\$0.5-1 million

XII Productivity and Important Government Reforms

The Australian Executive Council's primary role would be to stably and consistently manage Australian democracy and government. In addition because of its make-up of the legislative leaders of all of the country's parliaments it could also expedite important matters of state.

There are a great many issues that might be addressed through a combined forum including:

- * A treaty with Australia's first peoples might be drafted acceptable to all Australian governments and then presented to 650,000 eligible Aboriginal voters across Australia. This would be a much simpler process than the current un-coordinated and uneven process occurring around the country.
- * Productivity improvements across government such as creating fixed parliamentary terms across all Australian parliaments with coordinated election dates would save many millions of dollars and stabilise government activities and the many duplicated activities of the States such as the certification of school teachers, motor vehicle licences, child safety credentials and other in efficient practices might be addressed
- * The AEC could also formulate referendum questions that have the approval of all governments and oppositions across the country on issues such as the recognition of local government and aviation in the Commonwealth constitution.

Overall the AEC could be responsible for ensuring that the Australian Constitution and the Constitutions of all States and Territories are modern and reflective of contemporary Australian society.

XIII Repurposing Government Houses

If the proposed question establishing an Australian Executive Council was successful government houses across the nation could be repurposed with the aim of creating self funding charitable foundations. The Commonwealth and States and Territories could ask Australians how they would like government houses to be repurposed. For example they could become museums for national reconciliation, peace, tolerance and multi-culturalism.

Museums for National Reconciliation: Each Government House becomes a museum showcasing First Nations history, culture, and contributions, with exhibits on pre-colonial life, colonial impacts, and ongoing reconciliation efforts. These spaces would

honor the 1967 referendum's legacy and address the 2023 Voice referendum's failure by promoting dialogue.

Centers for Peace, Tolerance, and Multiculturalism: The museums would include programs and exhibits celebrating Australia's diverse communities, promoting values of peace and inclusion, and fostering education on multiculturalism.

XIV After Thoughts

Constitutional change and governmental reform need not be problematic or difficult even if they appear strange and difficult at first. History tells us that it is better not put off matters of state that can be accomplished with good will and a sense of pragmatism. These are traits which are fitting of Australia. The Albanese Government and all current State and Territory governments have a chance to truly improve Australian government that will benefit every person immediately now and into the future. The last thoughts go to Tom Paine.

"These proceedings may at first seem strange and difficult, but like all other steps which we have already passed over, will in a little time become familiar and agreeable: and until an independence is declared, the Continent will feel itself like a man who continues putting off some unpleasant business from day to day, yet knows it must be done, hates to set about it, wishes it over, and is continually haunted with the thoughts of its necessity."

"the longer it is delayed, the harder it will be to accomplish."

Tom Paine, Commonsense, 1776

[1]This pamphlet, whose effect has never been paralleled in literary history, was published January 10, 1776, with the following title: Common Sense: Addressed to the Inhabitants of America, on the following Interesting Subjects, viz.: I. Of the Origin and Design of Government in General; with Concise Remarks on the English Constitution. II. Of Monarchy and Hereditary Succession. III. Thoughts on the Present State of American Affairs. IV. Of the Present Ability of America; with some Miscellaneous Reflections.

[*]Those who would fully understand of what great consequence a large and equal representation is to a state, should read Burgh's *Political Disquisitions*.—Author.

Statutes

("British North America Act,")

("Federal Council of Australasia Act,")

("Commonwealth of Australia Constitution,")

("Irish Free State Constitution Act,")

("Statute of Westminster,")

("Australian Colonies Government Act,")

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