

# POWER TO THE PEOPLE

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE A BETTER AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY?

## THE WAY FORWARD IS THROUGH THE AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTION

A Constitution is a document that describes the sort of society we want to live in and prescribes how we consent to be governed.

Unfortunately, our Constitution was drafted over 100 years ago to create a Federated British Colony. It was never intended to be a Constitution for the independent Nation we have become.

### **So what is so wrong with our Constitution that we need to change it?**

Firstly, the People are powerless. Political Parties select the candidates and that reduces our power to choosing between Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dumb. In between elections, the politicians seem to think they have the right to do what ever they like.

Secondly, we have nine separate Parliaments in Australia all passing reams of different laws with which we must comply.

Thirdly, most of our taxes go to paying thousands of bureaucrats. There is very little left to provide the services we need like health, education and law enforcement.

### **So what can we do?**

Fortunately, the drafters of our Constitution expected changes would be required as the society developed so they inserted Section 128 to allow amendment of the Constitution.

The drafters also made sure our Constitution could not be changed by politicians.

Our Constitution can only be changed by the People voting at referendum.

### **So why don't we hold referenda to right the wrongs?**

Unfortunately, under current rules only the Parliament can **initiate** such referenda.

That means **We the People** can't change our Constitution – we can only veto what the Politicians put up in a referendum.

### **So, what needs to change so that WE can initiate a referendum?**

**All we need is a small amendment to Section 128 of our Constitution** - a small amendment that would give the **People** (as well as the Parliament) the right to initiate a referendum.

How to achieve that?

We need a hard hitting, nation-wide campaign to force a referendum.

How do we achieve that?

Firstly, we need a petition with so many signatures the politicians can't afford to ignore it.

Secondly, we need a private Member's Bill in the Parliament calling for the referendum. (This is in hand.)

Thirdly, **all the organisations in Australia trying to make a better society have to get behind this idea.** Only by securing this amendment to the Constitution will you or your organisation be able to effect any change.

Every member of every organisation has to pressure their elected representatives at each level; Federal, State and Local Government. We have to back this up with letters to the Editor of every paper in the country. Get on to Talk Back radio. Email all your acquaintances. Blog it!

**JOIN THE PUSH! THIS IDEA ALREADY HAS MOMENTUM BUT IT NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT.**

The change we are advocating is to amend Section 128 of the current Constitution by adding a paragraph to allow Citizens (as well as the Parliament) the right to initiate referenda to change the Constitution.

Section 128 of the Constitution would then be as shown on the next page **with the changes in bold type.**

*Note 1. 1% of eligible voters equates to about 140,000 signatures.*

**The last page of this paper is for YOU to collect as many signatures as you can.**

**Print out the last page and start collecting!**

## **ADD YOUR VOICE**

**PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED SIGNATURE SHEETS TO THE ADDRESS BELOW  
AS THEY ARE FILLED.**

**The Foundation for National Renewal**

<b>Registered Office:</b> 20 Carmody Rd St Lucia Qld, 4067	<b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:constitution@national-renewal.org.au">constitution@national-renewal.org.au</a> <b>Phone:</b> 07 5442 1589 <b>Fax:</b> 07 5442 1587 <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.national-renewal.org.au">www.national-renewal.org.au</a>	<b>Post Mail:</b> PO Box 82 Woombye Qld, 4559
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## Chapter VIII

### ALTERATION of the CONSTITUTION

128. This Constitution shall not be altered except in the following manner:—

#### **By the People.**

**Any elector or group of electors eligible to vote for the election of the House of Representatives may initiate a proposal to change this Constitution by submitting a Petition to the Governor General. The Petition shall include the proposed alteration of this Constitution. On receipt of such a Petition signed by not less than one per cent of the electors qualified to vote for the election of the House of Representatives, and verified by the Electoral Commissioner, the Governor-General shall within three months submit the proposal to referendum.**

*Note: These bits in **bold** are the changes we seek. The remainder is as it currently appears in our 1901 Constitution.*

#### **By the Parliament.**

A proposed law **by the Parliament** for the alteration thereof must be passed by an absolute majority of each House of the Parliament, and not less than two nor more than six months after its passage through both Houses the proposed law shall be submitted in each State and Territory to the electors qualified to vote for the election of members of the House of Representatives.

But if either House passes any such proposed law by an absolute majority, and the other House rejects or fails to pass it, or passes it with any amendment to which the first-mentioned House will not agree, and if after an interval of three months the first-mentioned House in the same or the next session again passes the proposed law by an absolute majority with or without any amendment which has been made or agreed to by the other House, and such other House rejects or fails to pass it or passes it with any amendment to which the first-mentioned House will not agree, the Governor-General may submit the proposed law as last proposed by the first-mentioned House, and either with or without any amendments subsequently agreed to by both Houses, to the electors in each State and Territory qualified to vote for the election of the House of Representatives.

When a proposed law is submitted to the electors the vote shall be taken in such manner as the Parliament prescribes. But until the qualification of electors of members of the House of Representatives becomes uniform throughout the Commonwealth, only one-half the electors voting for and against the proposed law shall be counted in any State in which adult suffrage prevails.

And if in a majority of the States a majority of the electors voting approve the proposed law, and if a majority of all the electors voting also approve the proposed law, it shall be presented to the Governor-General for the Queen's assent.

No alteration diminishing the proportionate representation of any State in either House of the Parliament, or the minimum number of representatives of a State in the House of Representatives, or increasing, diminishing, or otherwise altering the limits of the State, or in any manner affecting the provisions of the Constitution in relation thereto, shall become law unless the majority of the electors voting in that State approve the proposed law.

In this section, "Territory" means any territory referred to in section one hundred and twenty-two of this Constitution in respect of which there is in force a law allowing its representation in the House of Representatives.

# ADD YOUR VOICE

We ask the House to submit to the electors a referendum to change Section 128 of the Australian Constitution to allow Electors as well as the House the power to initiate referenda to change the Constitution.

The amendment we seek could be worded as follows:

Any elector or group of electors eligible to vote for the election of the House of Representatives may initiate a proposal to change this Constitution by submitting a Petition to the Governor General. The Petition shall include the proposed alteration of this Constitution. On receipt of such a Petition signed by not less than one per cent of the electors qualified to vote for the election of the House of Representatives, the Governor-General shall within three months submit the proposal to referendum.

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