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Letters to the Editor,
Herald Sun,
Box 1924R,
Melbourne 3001.

Dear Sir,

With Mr. Alexander Downer canvassing options for constitutional change, one glimpses the possibility of a convergence of Liberal and Labor views by the end of the decade. But even a bipartisan proposal for change would fail, if unsupported by the ultimate decision-makers: the people of Australia.

Australians want to vote in their head of state; but politicians are understandably worried by the prospect of a popularity contest. Perhaps a suitable solution is for Parliament to put forward their favoured candidate, to be *approved* (or otherwise) by the people at a referendum.

Such a "referendary" system might also be fruitfully applied to some of the thornier questions in constitutional reform, recognising that advances in technology could make twenty-first century referenda more streamlined than those of the twentieth. The head of state could be given wide-ranging powers—not to act directly, but rather to *initiate a referendum* on any issue of public concern. The reserve powers could thereby be wielded, but not without the assent of the populace; conversely, the Government of the day could seek the referendary removal of the head of state.

In such a system, the head of state would effectively be an "ombudsman" or "advocate" for the people of Australia, without the granting of any direct discretionary power that would usurp the role of Parliament. The benefits would be visible to politicians and citizens alike.

Sincerely,

John P. Costella