

## **WOMEN for an Australian Republic**

### **Alternating Gender for Head of State**

#### **Reasons for support:**

1. An important statement of substantive equality in a new Constitution (that also contains an equality clause for women and men).
2. Demonstrates equality in practice – by legally entrenching it in the most senior job in the country as a example to people in Australia and other countries. Such a move would be aspirational.
3. Shares head of state job equally between women and men.
  - compare with the history of Governor-General appointments since Federation in 1901. There has been a single female appointment so far (2008 to present), only when it was inevitable and *politically* important to do so.
4. If head of state is directly elected, need to ensure that women have an equal opportunity to get the job – highly likely that requires a special legislated measure to make it happen in practice (less likely to be naturally attained if unspecified especially given position of women in Australian society and corporate life; have not yet made inroads into senior/executive jobs and not accepted in those roles; the statistics speak for themselves).
5. It would be unique in an Australian republican constitution – no other country has this requirement or anything like it.

Alternating gender for head of state was originally proposed by Professor Marilyn Lake (History, Latrobe University) in the lead up to the 1999 referendum with later support from Professor Kim Rubenstein (Law, University of Melbourne and ANU). WfaAR formally adopted this policy in 2006.