Letter to The Canberra Times

from Kathryn Kelly, published 12 June 2013

Uneasy State of Play on our Head of State

Crispin Hull ("Easy as...we can be a republic with stroke of pen, Forum, June 8, p2) and Dr Benjamin Jones ("Advance Australia further", Times2, June 10, p1) have raised the important issue of how to move to a republic. While I agree with the sentiments, they haven't addressed the critical issue – what model for a republic will be acceptable to Australians?

The parliamentary model preferred by Hull hasn't been the sort of model that is likely to be accepted by Australians. And it doesn't get over the need to change the constitution to formally become a republic.

Another model has been suggested by Dr Mike Pepperday (Google his name and republic for more detail), whereby a minor change to the constitution could deliver a result Australians very likely would embrace. That change would have the words "the Queen" being replaced by "the people" in the relevant section – the people would become sovereign.

So you could still have a two-thirds majority sitting to approve a name (or some other process) to then be put to the people, either at referendum or by a simpler process, such as a postal vote. This model would be more likely to appeal to those who are favouring direct election as well as those opposed to direct election. The third way might just get over the hurdle facing us.

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