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Proposal for New addition to Current Democratic Process

This submission will propose a new addition to the current democratic process which we hold in Australia.

The system will involve a government run website which allows citizens of Australia over the age of 18 years to create a petition for new laws and decisions that they want to see the current government discuss.

The paper will go into further detail about how this system could potentially function. Along with the many benefits that having a system like this would have, and how it would advocate further public interest and involvement in political and social issues.

Your time would be greatly appreciated.

Proposal for new addition to current democratic process

The idea to improve our current democratic system and society by further allowing the public of Australia to decide some of the decisions that they want to see discussed in parliament.

The following is a practical proposal in which the public would like to see brought to discussion in parliament.

There will be a government run website which has questions that can be written by anyone detailing suggested change that they might want to see. For example:

Should drugs be legalised? (Petition for legalisation of drugs).

Should we remove our armies from overseas? (Petition for withdrawal of armies from overseas).

Should we teach students how to learn life skills in school by changing the curriculum? (Petition for change of curriculum to make students more aware, successful, content and happy with their lives).

Should parental leave be longer? (Petition for added length to parental leave).

Should women with the same qualifications as men be legally granted the same pay as men in the workforce? (Petition for equal qualifications pay for both sexes in the workforce).

The regulations or rules for these questions must have two clear sides, a yes and a no. The question has to be set in a way which addresses both sides of the issue. For instance a question such as: "Should all drugs be legalised or only a few?" would not be allowed as it is not a question which addresses both sides of the issue. A permitted example of such a question would be "Should drugs be legalised?" Or "Should we allow the legalisation of drugs in society".

Once a question has gained the support of 50,000 votes on the website, then the question needs to be addressed in open parliament within 3 months and televised live on television. If a question receives 1,000,000 votes then it needs to be addressed within 1 month.

The relevant question will be posed to parliament along with 2 qualified speakers from each point of view. These speakers will detail their perspectives on why they believe the law should either be passed or not. Before this sitting the members of parliament will have received the relevant information from each point of view provided by each qualified specialist. This information includes any research already or currently being undertaken, along with any other necessary data. This will give time for the members of parliament to prepare their views and will also minimise any potential bias information or previous prejudices to a particular point of view that members of parliament might have developed over time. The same information that the members of parliament receive from the speakers will also be released at least 2 weeks prior to the parliament meeting. This will be available on the government website for all of the public to see.

The expert for the For Side will be chosen by the people who voted for the question to be taken to parliament. Once the tally for the question has reached 50,000 votes, a sub category on the website will appear which will give people a chance to supply their choices of who they would like the expert to be on this particular issue. They will have 1 week to decide and vote for which expert they want to represent their point of view. The expert which has received the most votes at the conclusion of the week will be the speaker for that point of view and will appear in front of parliament at the time of the sitting.

The expert for the Against Side will have a total of 3 weeks to be decided by the citizens of Australia. Any question that has acquired 50,000 votes will be advertised on the website and broadcasted on national television and in newspapers to inform the public. Within these 3 weeks all people who did not vote for the relevant question will have a chance to supply a choice for the expert who will be discussing the against point of view. At the end of the 3 weeks a final vote will be recorded, and the expert which has received the most votes in the subcategory will be the expert speaking for the against side.

These experts will be contacted by the appropriate government agency and will receive an invitation for them to be speakers at the parliament voting meeting. If they deny the request the next highest person on the vote count will be contacted to fill that role.

The format of the meeting will be held in parliament but there will be no segregation of different parties, and people will be randomly allocated in different seats across the room no matter what their status is in their party. The reason for this is to give every member of parliament the same power and reduce the egos and superficiality that dominate the current form of government. (What does it say about our society, that our platform for making decisions in our country is made by two parties sitting on opposite sides of a room yelling and arguing at each other to prove a point).

Once the two qualified speakers have presented their point of view, the parliament sitting will open up to debate and a Q&A to the general floor. During this time only one member of parliament can speak at a time with no interruptions from the rest of the members. The qualified speakers will be allowed to answer these questions if they have been addressed by a member of parliament and they can also join in on the debate if they wish. Once this part of the meeting has been completed, the members of parliament will each be given a choice of yes or no in order to pass or deny the new legislation.

This choice will be digital and once all the votes are received the tallies will be displayed live in the room and on the website. These final tallies will also be accompanied with the names of what each member of parliament put down out of their yes, no choice. These details will be visible to the public so each member of parliament can be more accountable for their choices. It will also provide people to think more about who they want to vote for in the next state and federal elections.

For a citizen of Australia to put their vote on a question they must enter their personal details: Full Name, Home Address, and Phone Number. Once they have entered this information on the website they will receive a phone call and or email from the appropriate government agency asking if they want to confirm their vote and they will be also asked to supply their password that they supplied along with their personal information. Every time they have registered a vote they will receive a phone call or email asking them to confirm their vote with their password.

The ramifications of this type of government are huge with little effort or distraction taken away from the main democratic process. The aim of this system is to give the power back to the people of Australia and let them decide some of the issues that they want to see discussed in government. This is important as there is an ever more growing disconnect between what the citizens of Australia want to see discussed and what the government is taking action on.

This system of government gives more power to the people whilst still holding the current democratic process almost in its entirety.

This new addition to the government would strengthen Australia as a country because it will allow young adults and other people who take a disinterest in areas such as politics to start gaining an awareness of this world and get more involved in becoming active citizens. Under this new addition to the democratic process, citizens of Australia would literally be able to pose a question which could be discussed by the current government and then see that question be undertaken with action. It would also encourage more young adults to run for political positions in parties nationally. (It may be a good idea however to have certain prerequisites before you can run for one of these positions. Enough studies and information is out there for *you* to decide what they need to be).

Of course there is the risk of corruption where certain interests and entities would seek to run for political positions and then vote for a certain side. This could potentially lead to new laws such as: Killing is legal, Robbery is legal, Alcohol and Petrol should be made half the price etc.

For this reason a common sense approach needs to be taken by the process and questions which get the appropriate amount of votes will not be considered for debate if they are of a foul nature. For a vote to be deemed as a foul nature, over 50% of the workforce who works for the governmental agency needs to classify it this way. If one question is deemed to be classified under this nature by the agency, then the vote will need to acquire 500,000 votes on the website in order for it to be reconsidered again. (However **all** records on this website are to remain public and if a question is deemed under this nature then it is to be highlighted on the website).

If this tally of 500,000 votes is reached then the question and issue will get discussed on national television and streaming internet live along with 2 experts reporting their point of view and supplying appropriate evidence. Once this is done, 1 week later a hand ballot vote will be conducted for 1 day only and this will be open to the entire country. The vote does not have to be compulsory like current elections. However if the vote does not receive over half of the countries population in votes it will not be accepted to be voted on and will not be discussed to a further extent in parliament.

If the no choice wins in this 1 day hand ballot voting or in a regular parliament meeting, the vote will be denied for a further 12 months until it can again be reopened on the website by another 50,000 votes in the future. If the yes choice wins it will be brought to parliament to be voted on once more. The idea of this regulation is to stop certain interests and small amounts of Australia's population from corrupting this new addition to the current government. Such a way they could do this, would be by suggesting irrational questions which gain the support of 50,000 votes. With this regulation, Australia's citizens can have the trust that no questions which have been deemed irrational or dangerous will go through to parliament unless half of Australia's public have voted on it.

If a question gets voted yes by the majority of 50% in parliament then action must be taken within 2 months to implement the change of law and devise intricate measures which ensure the finer details of the issue get implemented. For example should drugs be legalised? If the answer is yes then within 2 months they will have to devise a structure and put measures in place to incorporate this law into society. They will also need to provide any necessary financial information that comes with this law. (For example if further tax needs to be taken in order to generate money for the new laws implementation).

The reason for giving two experts a chance to talk to the parties, is to allow both points of view to be heard and to allow bias to not be so prevalent in decisions which will influence all. The other reason to have these professionals is so they can bring in sound knowledge and other professionals to the table which will help draft the new law once a vote has reached 50% majority in parliament. The planning process of these laws and their integration into society will require updating at the end

of each day. This is in case the people who originally put their vote in for the question have further objections. If 30,000 people submit on the subcategory of the question that they do have a problem with the drafting of the new laws then a Q&A will be set up live on television with the first 50,000 people who voted yes and the members of parliament and experts who drafted the laws. This will give the opportunity for these people to discuss any concerned issues. It will also inform the Australian public of how the new law is progressing and how it will eventually be integrated into society. These 50,000 people will have 3 times to object to the new format of the law before the law or issue is finally passed and or resolved. Once a new issue and or law has been discussed and resolved in parliament, the same question can not be brought to the attention of parliament for another 2 years. This is in case the people who voted for the question to be discussed still have any remaining issues regarding the law. The reason for this regulation is to stop parliament focusing on the same issue for extended periods of time, thereby not wasting the precious time they need to effect change.

Why do we need this addition to our government?

This addition to our government will help rebuild Australia and allow it to regain strength in a time where society around the world is struggling. The current democratic process is designed to stop the current system and society from falling into chaos. The country could be a lot worse than it is now but because we have had a democracy in place we have been able to stop society from further digressing into a worse place. With that being said, this new addition to the current democratic system would help relinquish some of the corruption and vested interests which run the current government and provide an opportunity for a process which would give more power to the people. This would create a system which improves this society and positively builds upon it, instead of spending all of our efforts trying to improve it from a democratic system which is far to outdated.

Some people might say this system is taking a step backwards because we need a government that is not ruled by the “stupid” or “unaware” masses and instead ruled by an elitist system which is more intelligent and has more awareness to look after such a complex system. After all Benjamin Franklin did say “When the people find that they can vote themselves money, that will herald the end of the republic.” However the democratic system we have now is not working as well as it use to and as well as it was envisioned to. This is simply because the world is a different place to what it was a few hundred years ago, and the principles that the old democratic process had can not effectively deal with the different issues that are now emerging.

Any new system has its risks and above all else every system has its flaws, but if this addition to the current democratic process were to be approved, there are now enough intelligent people who come from the so called “oppressed” part of society that have good ideas and have great intentions. If these people (or you) were granted some more power than they would be given a chance to change this world and help create a society in which people would become more aware and intelligent. Imagine if you could go home, switch on the TV and watch a meeting take place which is discussing the very change that you wanted to see happen in this world.

This new addition to our current democratic system is nothing more than a vehicle or stepping stone which has the ability to raise intelligent and aware people who are capable of thinking for themselves. One of the ways this can be done is through suggested change that the middle class of Australia wants to see.

This new addition to the democracy is a system which promotes the wise and aware people to bring their ideas out and have them be acted upon. As apposed to those who share no interest in politics until they have to vote on election day. (It is usually the middle class which has the inspiration to create a new type of growth in any system). The benefit however as mentioned above, is that

through this new addition to the democracy people will become more aware and more interested in these types of politics and world issues.

It is for these reasons that this addition to our current democratic process would solve many issues that the world currently faces. This new evolved system would fit perfectly with the issues that our country and world faces today and it could exist until a time where a new system of government can take its place which better reflects the time that *it* resides in.

Some people may say that this addition to our democracy has potential, but it is not the right time to adjust our system of government because of the many complex and fearful issues that are present around the world today. It is for that reason that a system like this one needs to be adopted sooner rather than later. There will never be a perfect time to discuss and implement a change as big as this, and that is why it is so important that this addition to the current democratic system happens sooner rather than later. Otherwise it will be forgotten and never implemented. There is always the argument “you have to look on the bright side of life, our current system works ok, the world could be worse”. Something to remember though, is that while it is important to adopt a positive attitude on life for your health, this approach often leaves the particular problem unsolved.

The other critique that this proposition is likely to receive is from politicians who's first initial reaction is “this paper sounds like it's written from a sociologist major who doesn't really understand how politics and the system of government works”. That is an understandable response coming from their perspective but to respond to those comments, perhaps one should look into the system of government British Columbia in Canada has adopted. Then look into how beneficial that particular citizen inclusion has been for their politics and state.

The time that we reside is now has and will soon have many more important decisions which will effect the future of us all. And in this time it is important more than ever that the people of this country can make some of the decisions that effect them, and not the few who refuse to discuss *all of* the issues. This new addition to the government is a way of allowing those very important decisions to be discussed and implemented with less corruption, political games and bias. What those important decisions are I will leave for you to decide.