

## **Bernardi Weekly Newsletter, 8 November**

Dear Des,

The citizenship fiasco looms as the last nail in public confidence in this parliament and threatens the legitimacy of parliament itself. It is clear that some MPs have been blatantly making false claims about their eligibility to sit in the Australian Parliament whilst others have fallen foul of the Constitution by ignorance – wilful or otherwise.

We are now on the cusp of a full blown constitutional crisis with many more questions still to be answered.

When this farce started, I called on the Prime Minister to suspend parliament pending the High Court judgment, along with a full audit of all MPs to ascertain who is actually eligible to be a parliamentary representative. Like so many good ideas, the Prime Minister rejected this one which would have prevented parliament from becoming a national laughing stock.

We've had the Labor leader assuring us that all his MPs are ok due to the extensive processes undertaken by the Party administration. However, this morning two of their number admit there may be a problem. There are also questions about the status of Labor frontbencher Senator Penny Wong who continues to refuse to provide the documentation showing she renounced her Malaysian citizenship.

On the Liberal side, senior ministers have advised their colleagues to remain silent about citizenship problems. In announcing his new 'plan', the Prime Minister assured the media that a check of all Liberal MPs showed there were no problems – until two hours later, a new problem emerged.

Pauline Hanson swore hand on heart that she had seen the papers of Senator Malcolm Roberts and that he was in the clear - until it was proved that he wasn't. Given that Roberts' staff were admitting privately that he hadn't complied with the Constitution it beggars belief that his leader didn't know. One Nation even tried to make a virtue of his self-referral to the High Court after they were dragged kicking and screaming to that position, having realised the Senate was set to do it anyway.

Little wonder it is nigh impossible for everyday Australians to accept as truthful what their political leaders tell them.

How this will end is anyone's guess but I have consistently said there will be more dual citizen revelations. I expect a number of by-elections will be required and the results could actually see a change in government. That would mean our seventh Prime Minister in only eleven years and yet another delivered without a general election.

There simply has to be a better way because we cannot afford for our country to continue down this path.

It is more important than ever that a credible, principled alternative to the major parties emerges from the rubble of the strange and tarnished politics of the last ten years. Australian Conservatives are working to provide that alternative. There's a lot of work to do but now, more than ever, we cannot be deterred from our course.

Our culture, our values and our way of life are simply too important to abandon to the present parliamentary circus brought to us by rudderless major parties and personality cults. In politics, as in life, it is character and principle that are the defining qualities in leadership. Our country is in desperate need of both in our political options.

Until next week,

Cory Bernardi