

LEGITIMACY OF THIS PANEL

Of great importance in this Inquiry is the public perception of the panel. Not only must it be legitimate but it must appear to be legitimate, since it's sanctioned by the law. There are occasions when government shows extreme contempt for the people. A classic case of this contempt was the 1999 debacle of John Howard's 'Republic referendum'—a travesty that shamed the nation in the eyes of the world. It was based in part on the low opinion officials have of the Australian voter and in other part as an instrument of the oligarchical government we've known for 226 years since the Botany Bay landing.

This panel has all the hallmarks of what Sir Humphrey Appleby called the ideal inquiry. 'Never have one until you know what the result will be, and appoint sycophants ready for a quid-pro-quo who'll do your bidding.' This stacked panel is what Humph had in mind and ought to hang its head in shame. Having an elitist (money elite, not intellectual elite) government confident of the deliberations of the panel guarantees its illegitimacy in the eyes of the public, not its integrity or morality. Without public assent and respect, the outcome of the inquiry—which is clearly already determined—will be held in contempt by the people. Governments have known this throughout our history and were able to count on public servility and docility in matters that affected their lives adversely.

What's different about today is that raw Capitalism has discredited itself so thoroughly that the usual public complacency can no longer be counted on. Our society—indeed our whole civilisation—is on the brink of a major restructuring from disparate forces both natural and social. The public is waiting for a clear and unambiguous sign from this inquiry that their representatives aren't corrupt. Disappointment will bring results no one wants. If accountability means anything anymore, we'll know who brought these consequences on, and why, and they'll be pariahs amongst us, unfit for public trust. This panel has no appearance *whatsoever* of being legitimate and—if it has any dignity—it would resign its commission forthwith.