

**Submission to the Australia 2020 Summit on  
Australian Governance**  
by Mark Drummond, 9 April 2008

**WE NEED A NATIONAL BILL OF RIGHTS AND STRENGTHENED NATIONAL  
AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

Numerous politicians and other Australians have acknowledged in recent years that Australia's current system of government hosts grave dysfunctionalities and urgently needs to be reformed. Many support Unification (or the abolition of State governments), and it was much the same in the lead up to Federation in the late 1890s, as proven by the following quotes from the Federation Conventions of 1897 and 1898:

Mr William Lyne (NSW), Adelaide, 1897: 653:

Some hon. member has suggested unification. I say: far better go for unification than for a Federation which is going to tie our hands behind our backs for all time ...

Mr William Lyne (NSW), Sydney, 1897: 599:

... as the debates proceeded in Adelaide, as I had time to think what the result of federation on the lines of equal state representation would be, my ideas have converged very much in the direction of some sort of unification.

Mr Bernhard Wise (NSW), Sydney, 1897: 755-6:

For my part, I do not hesitate to declare myself an advocate of and a believer in unification. I have always believed in unification. ... I would be glad if Victoria had never separated from New South Wales. I would like to see Tasmania annexed to this colony, and I would like South Australia to form part of our western boundary; and I would not be averse to extending the jurisdiction of New South Wales to the farthest west of this continent; but I recognise, and have always recognised, that we cannot frame any scheme of federation except by recognising the equal existence – the broad, independent, national existence of all these colonies.

Mr George Reid (NSW), Melbourne, 1898: 675:

I, personally, would not mind unification at all.

Sir John Downer (SA), Melbourne, 1898: 2034:

I hate the word "unification," and will not use it. I have said before that there is much to be said for amalgamation. I can understand that there might be an immense amount of money saved by amalgamation in the way of carrying on the government of the country, and there might be an immense amount of force from the head of the Commonwealth which you cannot get from the partial disintegration which is involved even in federation. But it is not our mission to establish an amalgamation of these colonies. We are here under Bills passed by our various colonies, and there is a claim for federation, and not a claim for merging the colonies in one common concern.

Sir Richard Baker (SA), Melbourne, 1898: 2482:

I invite the honorable and learned member (Mr. Higgins) to consider this point: If the people of the smaller states are willing to adopt the type of government suggested by our Victorian friends, we can save the expense of ten Houses of Legislature and five Governors, and we can become a truly united people. But we have been sent here to frame a scheme of federation, not of amalgamation.