



Monday 29 November 2021

BARBADOS SHOWS IT CAN BE DONE

The small Caribbean island nation of Barbados is about to prove a former British colony can become a truly independent nation on the world stage by transitioning to a republic, says chair of the [Real Republic Australia](#), David Muir.

Mr Muir said by early Tuesday afternoon (30 November Australian time) Barbados would mark its move to a republic and the end of its status as a constitutional monarchy by cutting ties to Queen Elizabeth II as its head of state.

“Barbados gained independence from Britain in 1966 and after many years of public debate, the Parliament of Barbados voted unanimously to pass a Bill making the country a republic from its traditional Independence Day of 30 November,” Mr Muir said.

“The government announced its plan last year and in September this year MPs in the Parliament of Barbados voted to support the *Constitution (Amendment) Bill* to deliver a republic.

“At the time the Prime Minister Mia Mottley said the move would make the nation truly independent and in control of its affairs as a republic,” he said.

The law passed by the parliament:

- revoked a 1966 Order in Council of Her Majesty granting Barbados independence,
- made provision for a citizen of Barbados to be head of state, and
- changed the oath of allegiance from an oath to Her Majesty to an oath to the state of Barbados.

Mr Muir said the current Governor-General, Dame Sandra Mason, had since been elected by MPs of both houses of parliament sitting together as the first head of state of Barbados as a republic and would formally assume office during official celebrations which will include “farewell” remarks by the Prince of Wales who would attend as an honoured guest.

“News reports suggest Prince Charles will acknowledge the decision to become a republic as one that has been made by the people of Barbados, that it is not viewed as a mark of disrespect, and that the strong bonds between Britain and Barbados will continue.

“It is important to remember that the status of Barbados as a member of the Commonwealth of Nations headed by Her Majesty will also continue. Barbados will become the 34th republic in the Commonwealth of 54 member nations.

“Only 15 Commonwealth states retain the Queen as their head of state and five have their own monarchies.”

Mr Muir said Barbados had shown Australia a way forward.

“We too have debated the republic issue for many years, but since the failure of the 1999 referendum we have lacked the political leadership to take action,” he said.

“The Real Republic Australia supports a directly elected head of state for an Australian republic. We believe that is the only model voters will support.

“The 1999 referendum failed because voters were given a ‘take it or leave it’ choice of a politicians’ republic – having politicians in Canberra pick their head of state for them.

“Australians want to have a say in choosing their head of state, so the model put to any referendum is vital. It must be a model voters will support,” he said.

MEDIA CONTACT: 0431 101 533