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STATEMENT BY DAVID MUIR, CHAIR OF THE REAL REPUBLIC AUSTRALIA

HOLIDAY HELPS FOCUS REPUBLIC DEBATE

Chair of the Real Republic Australia, David Muir, says the recent death of Queen Elizabeth II and the formal acknowledgement of the British monarch's birthday in Western Australia on Monday are reminders of the need to hold a sensible discussion on the prospects of Australia becoming a republic.

Mr Muir said the Real Republic Australia advocated for an Australian to be directly elected by voters as Australia's Head of State.

"We do not support the concept of politicians picking a Head of State for us and we do not support the idea of politicians giving us a shortlist of people to vote for," he said.

Mr Muir said as expected, the death of Queen Elizabeth II, had prompted debate on a republic which the Real Republic Australia would help foster with the coming release of a discussion paper on its model for a genuine directly elected Head of State.

"The Real Republic Australia never subscribed to the view that we needed to wait until the Queen's reign ended to start the discussion," he said.

"Our logic was simple. The debate has never been about the late Queen nor any single member of the royal family.

"Before Her Majesty's death, now, and in the future a public debate on a republic should never be seen as a slight or insult to the British monarch and our current Head of State, now King Charles III.

"In coming weeks the Real Republic Australia will release a discussion paper outlining our model for a republic with a genuine directly elected Head of State.

"Providing a discussion paper as a focal point for debate and feedback was always our plan because we want to see Australians involved in the debate so that they understand the issues involved by the time a referendum happens.

"The debate is and always has been about what we as Australians want for the future of our nation. It's not about the royal family and certainly not about denigrating or attacking them.

"Most republic supporters, myself included, were great admirers of the late Queen. It is absolutely right that Australians should recognise her service to our nation and as head of the Commonwealth, the many times she visited our shores, and the manner in which she accepted the transition of many of its member states to republics.

"In fact of the 56 members of the Commonwealth, 36 are republics."

Mr Muir said the Real Republic Australia respected the late Queen as the British monarch and Australia's Head of State under current constitutional arrangements.

"We do the same now that King Charles III has assumed the throne. But we continue to press for constitutional change through our democratic system to have an Australian elected as Head of State," he said.

"It was always our view that we should be respectful of the Queen and we have never viewed the republic debate as a vehicle to criticise her or members of the British royal family.

"Queen Elizabeth herself recognised that the republic debate was for Australians to have and that she would respect whatever decision we made. That is also the attitude of King Charles."

Mr Muir said the aftermath of the Queen's death has seen strident protests against the monarchy by some Australians, which was their democratic right.

"We think that some of the issues sparking such protests, for instance opposition to the current Australia Day on 26 January, can be addressed once we become a republic," he said.

"We do not join in any of the campaigns aiming to change our national day – viewing it as a separate issue – we do believe that the day on which we do become a republic could be set as a new day for national celebration and recognition. It can be a day that unites, not divides, Australians."

Mr Muir said while the Real Republic Australia advocated for an Australian republic with a directly elected Head of State it also proposed other constitutional reforms including recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the Constitution as well as:

- eliminating costly by-elections with a referendum question creating a Senate-style casual vacancy system for the House of Representatives
- four-year, fixed, and synchronised terms for both houses of Federal Parliament to stop prime ministers gaming the system by picking election dates, cutting the number of elections now costing more than \$300 million, and ensuring government mandates are not hostage to Senators elected years earlier
- breaking the constitutional nexus that demands the lower house is twice the size of the Senate – a reform that if not taken would one day see a lower house of 300 MPs and around 150 Senators
- cutting the number of Senators for each state while retaining two apiece for the NT and ACT,
- constitutional recognition of local government,
- instituting a fairer process for changing the Constitution.

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