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ABETZ SHOULD NOT INSULT KING CHARLES

Chair of the Real Republic Australia, David Muir, says the national conference of the Australian Monarchist League being held in Sydney on Saturday should refrain from promoting the bogus argument that the Governor-General is Australia's Head of State.

Mr Muir said chair of the AML's anti-republic campaign, former senator Eric Abetz, regularly aired the baseless argument.

"Not only is the argument wrong, I believe it actually insults King Charles by belittling and misrepresenting the role he has as Australia's Head of State under our current constitutional arrangements," Mr Muir said.

"Mr Abetz suggests that King Charles is the Sovereign but the Governor-General is our Head of State and since the mid-1960s all Governors-General have been Australians, so we don't need to change the Constitution at a referendum to have an Australian as our Head of State.

"The problem for Mr Abetz is that Buckingham Palace itself [rejected the argument](#) in 1999 – more than 20 years ago – in official correspondence with then Governor-General Sir William Deane who had mentioned the same argument being touted by vice-regal adviser the late David Smith.

"Even former prime minister John Howard – a committed monarchist – has [dismissed the argument](#). He makes it very clear that the late Queen Elizabeth was Australia's Head of State as is King Charles.

"Finally, [Section 2 of the Australian Constitution](#) clearly says that the Governor-General is the Monarch's representative."

Mr Muir said Australians, including republicans, respected the late Queen Elizabeth for her dedication and her service to Australia and the Commonwealth.

"We should respect King Charles but at the same time there is no disrespect in wanting to use our democratic system to ensure Australia has an Australian as its Head of State," he said.

Mr Muir said the Real Republic Australia had released [a discussion paper](#) on its model for a genuine directly elected Head of State in an Australian republic.

"The Real Republic Australia has always advocated for an Australian to be directly elected by voters as Australia's Head of State," Mr Muir said. "We do not support the concept of politicians picking a Head of State for us. We do not support the idea of politicians handing down to voters a shortlist of candidates. That simply isn't direct election."

He said a genuine direct election model had the best chance of passing at a referendum.

"The 1999 referendum failed because the wrong model was put to voters," he said. "Historical [Newspoll figures](#) show that even immediately before the November 1999 referendum direct election had around 50% voter support compared with just 14% to 15% for the 'politicians' republic' rejected by voters.

"Significantly, support for directly electing a Head of State was still far ahead of other options in polling three years later in November 2002.

"The Newspoll figures from 2002 show that when those who were opposed or uncommitted to a republic were faced with the hypothetical inevitability of a republic, they opted by a huge majority for a directly elected Head of State – 79% compared with 18% for the 'politicians' republic'.

"This suggests that even constitutional monarchists will back a directly elected Head of State if the alternative is politicians picking one for them."

Mr Muir said the ARM's model was a "politicians' republic" that has been turbo-charged by widening the involvement of politicians in picking a Head of State from just the federal parliament to encompass more than 800 politicians in every federal, state, and territory parliament.

MEDIA CONTACT: 0431 101 533