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REGIONAL AND REMOTE INPUT VITAL FOR REPUBLIC DEBATE

Chair of the Real Republic Australia, David Muir, will brief members of the Longreach Regional Council in Ilfracombe on Wednesday on the need for a genuine directly elected Head of State in an Australian republic as part of the group's efforts to reach out to regional, rural, and remote communities.

Mr Muir, who grew up in the Longreach district on his parent's sheep property, said: "We feel that any discussions about an Australian republic must not be dominated by those in Canberra, Sydney or other big capitals. We also feel very strongly that the republic debate should never sink to 'cheap shots' directed at the royal family.

"Australians need to be well informed about the issues involved in becoming a republic before a referendum is held as promised in the next term of federal parliament if the Albanese Government is re-elected.

"King Charles III is our current Head of State under the Australian Constitution. The Real Republic Australia has no difficulty respecting him and the position he holds while at the same time advocating for changes to the Constitution to make an Australian our Head of State.

"The republic debate should be a reasoned and respectful discussion that uses the democratic system we enjoy to make constitutional changes. Attacking the monarch and other members of the British royal family as the Australian Republic Movement has done during the recent coronation does nothing to advance the republic debate and can actually erode the chances of a successful future referendum."

Mr Muir said the Real Republic Australia had released a comprehensive discussion paper – [available at realrepublic.au](https://realrepublic.au) – seeking feedback on its model for a republic with a genuine directly elected Head of State.

"We want a genuine directly elected Head of State. We do not support federal politicians picking a Head of State for us and we do not support the Australian Republic Movement's idea of having more than 800 federal and state politicians hand down to voters a shortlist of candidates," he said.

"That is not direct election and echoes the 'politicians' republic' model that failed at the 1999 referendum."

Mr Muir said it was appropriate to begin canvassing the issues involved in moving to an Australian republic because many Australians were unfamiliar with the process of changing the Australian Constitution.

"The last referendum was held in 1999 when questions on the republic and a preamble recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were both defeated," he said. "The last successful referendum questions were passed in 1977 when Anthony Albanese was 14 and Peter Dutton was 6.

"There is a high bar for amending our Constitution – the so-called 'double majority' requiring a nationwide 'yes' vote across all states and the NT and ACT plus a majority 'yes' vote in a majority of states but excluding the territories.

"Those criteria have seen only eight out of 44 referendum questions approved since Federation in 1901 which is why we believe the more public discussion we have, the more informed voters will be on referendum day in the next term of Federal Parliament if the Albanese Government is re-elected.

"The last thing we need is voters to be turned off even discussing a republic by senseless and pointless attacks on the royal family who themselves have acknowledged that a decision on a republic is one for Australians to make and they will respect what we decide."

Mr Muir said the Real Republic Australia's discussion paper was an avenue for people to become more familiar with the issues involved and to have their say on a genuine direct-election model.

"Not everyone needs to agree with everything in the discussion paper, but at this stage we need to start informing people of our ideas and seeking theirs," he said.

"Our discussion paper puts forward ideas for eligibility criteria, how to limit campaigns and campaign spending, but most importantly it outlines the sort of powers we want to see codified in law or in the Constitution to ensure an elected Head of State is never a rival to the PM."

Mr Muir said the key issue to be resolved in the republic debate remained the need for Australia to be a truly independent nation on the world stage with an Australian chosen by Australians as Head of State.

"Other Commonwealth countries have made the move to ensure they are truly independent on the world stage – 36 out of 56 member nations are republics – and none has done so out of disrespect for the royal family," he said.

Mr Muir said the Republic of Ireland showed how a directly elected Head of State could work comfortably within a Westminster-style parliamentary system and never be a rival to a prime minister leading a cabinet government.

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