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STATEMENT BY DAVID MUIR, CHAIR OF THE REAL REPUBLIC AUSTRALIA

PUBLIC HOLIDAY SHOULD SPARK DEBATE

Chair of the Real Republic Australia, David Muir, says he hopes Monday's public holiday formally marking the British monarch's birthday will hopefully prompt some Queenslanders to think more about the prospects for Australia becoming a republic with a genuine directly elected Head of State.

"There may be some people in our state who, before the recent passing Queen Elizabeth II and the automatic ascension of King Charles III without any reference to Australians, may not have realised that the British monarch is Australia's Head of State," Mr Muir said.

"They may not realise that under our current constitutional monarchy the British monarch will always be our Head of State and no Australian can ever hold that position.

"That also means no descendant of our First Nations can ever be Australia's Head of State, which is a grave injustice on its own."

Mr Muir said the Real Republic Australia would soon release a discussion paper to give Australians the chance to express their views on an Australian public with a genuine directly elected Head of State.

"The Real Republic Australia advocates for an Australian to be directly elected by voters as Australia's Head of State," he said. "We do not support the concept of politicians picking a Head of State for us and we do not support the idea of politicians handing voters a shortlist of people to pick from. That's not direct election."

Mr Muir said the purpose of the discussion paper was to provide information on a workable model for a genuine directly elected Head of State and to foster community debate.

"We have our ideas but we want to hear what our fellow Australians think too," he said. "The Albanese Government is focussing its constitutional reform efforts in its first term on achieving a Voice to Parliament for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people but Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has signalled a referendum on a republic could be held in his government's second term if he is returned to office.

"So it's appropriate that we now start discussing how we might become a republic so we are all better informed when a referendum is held.

"That's the approach being taken by Assistant Minister for the Republic, Matt Thistlethwaite, who has also suggested a plebiscite prior to any referendum to narrow down the models on offer to one that has the strongest support.

"That approach of having a plebiscite before a referendum – one supported by the Real Republic Australia – means the model chosen will have the best chance of success at a referendum because it will belong to Australians not to just one pro-republic group or individual.

"But it also means we must use avenues such as our discussion paper to reach out to Australians and to inform them of our ideas while listening to theirs."

Mr Muir said the republic debate should never be used as an opportunity to attack or denigrate the British royal family.

"The outpouring of emotion following the death of Queen Elizabeth II showed Australians rightly respected her for the service she gave for more than 70 years," he said.

"The fact is that the republic debate has never been about the late Queen, the new King, nor any single member of the royal family.

"The debate has always been about what we as Australians want for the future of our nation. The late Queen herself and other senior royals, including the Duke of Edinburgh, and King Charles as Prince of Wales, always maintained that the republic question is one for Australians to decide and they will respect our decision.

"They have taken the same approach to other nations in the Commonwealth, which itself contains 36 republics among its 56 member nations."

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.

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