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BARBADOS SHOWS HOW IT'S DONE

The Real Republic Australia says the small Caribbean island nation of Barbados has proved yet again that becoming a republic will not conflict with membership of the Commonwealth of Nations and respect for Queen Elizabeth II.

Chair of the Real Republic Australia, David Muir, said once it became a republic Barbados would join 31 other republics in the 54-member Commonwealth of Nations headed by Her Majesty.

“News of the move by Barbados proves yet again that there is no conflict between a nation being a republic and its membership of the Commonwealth,” Mr Muir said.

“The former British colony of just 430 sqkm with 300,000 people has been an independent nation since 1966 governed by a Westminster-style parliamentary system and its government has rightly declared that one of their own should be their head of state, not the British monarch.

“I believe most Australians would have the attitude — an Australian should be our head of state, preferably chosen through a direct election.

“The words of the Prime Minister of Barbados, Mia Mottley, sum it up: ‘This is the ultimate statement of confidence in who we are and what we are capable of achieving.’

“The words in response from Buckingham Palace — that it’s a matter for the people of Barbados to decide — show the Royal Family is relaxed about the Commonwealth nations becoming republics. They know that it’s not a sign of disrespect to Her Majesty or her family.

“The question of Australia becoming a republic has never been about the Royal Family. It is about what Australians want and how they see their future in the world.

Mr Muir said the Real Republic Australia advocated a move to a republic with a directly elected head of state as well as other Constitutional changes to deliver greater integrity and better government at the federal level:

- investing in our elected head of state the role of appointing and overseeing those responsible for integrity and anti-corruption agencies at the federal level;
- recognition of indigenous Australians,
- parliamentary reforms to deliver greater stability through cutting Senate numbers for each state from 12 to the original six while maintaining two for each Territory;
- implementing synchronised, fixed, four-year terms for both Houses of Parliament to ensure voter mandates are reflected in both Houses; and
- adopting a casual vacancy system for the House of Representatives to deliver greater stability and cut costs to taxpayers;
- recognition of local government; and
- a better system for initiating referendums.

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