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#### REFORMS ANSWER 1975 FEARS

The Real Republic Australia says the anniversary of the Whitlam Government's dismissal on 11 November 1975 is an opportunity to consider how a shift to a republic can prevent any similar action in the future.

Chair of the Real Republic Australia, David Muir, said the group advocated for a genuine directly elected Head of State in an Australian republic with clearly codified powers.

"The [discussion paper we have released](#) outlines the broad concepts of constitutional amendments we suggest to address any lingering fears that a Whitlam-style dismissal was a possibility in a republic with an elected Head of State.

"Basically the reforms we suggest will ensure an elected Head of State exercises powers and functions in line with those relating to the present office of Governor-General that are outlined in the Australian Constitution and relevant Acts of the Parliament of Australia as well as being dictated by the traditions and conventions of our Westminster-style parliamentary democracy.

"Our discussion paper makes it clear that current functions of the Governor-General contained in the Constitution such as summoning or dissolving the parliament, or issuing writs for elections can be taken by an elected Head of State only on the advice of the Prime Minister or Federal Executive Council.

"We also propose that the Head of State can refuse to dissolve Parliament on the advice of a Prime Minister who does not have the support of a majority of Members of the House of Representatives.

"In addition, our discussion paper includes a proposal for a three-person Council of State comprising former elected Heads of State, former Governors-General, former state Governors, or former High Court, Federal Court, or state Supreme Court Chief Justices to provide independent advice to an elected Head of State on constitutional matters.

"It is similar, but not identical, to [a suggestion](#) by eminent jurist and former Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia, the late Sir Gerard Brennan.

"The Head of State would be required to advise the Prime Minister of their intention to consult the Council of State and the outcome of such consultations – something the late Sir John Kerr did not do prior to sacking Mr Whitlam and his government after consulting senior judges."

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