

ACM Toowoomba Branch AGM, 22 March 2026

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On the State of Australian Republicanism

I discuss this topic as a synthesis of the last five years of so – which is about the time that I have been involved with the Australian Monarchist League. I refuse to defend monarchy any more. Monarchy does not need defending. It works, and it is all around us. The burden to propose meritorious change to the Constitution that would bring about a republic is not on monarchists but on republicans. It is they that must defend their ideas, not us.

The Australian Republic Movement

Peter FitzSimons resigned as Chair of the ARM in early 2022, after releasing the Australian Choice Model, the ARM's latest republic model. The model is obviously defective. FitzSimons succeeded in taking the ARM to the Left. Successive co-chairs after FitzSimons, Nova Peris and Craig Foster, took the ARM even further Left. Peris and Foster fell out with each other over the War in Gaza. Successive and current co-chairs Esther Anatolitis and Nathan Hansford were hitherto unknown to the monarchy-republic debate and therefore seem to me to command little influence. Conclusively, the ARM is a shadow of its former self. I do not see it rehabilitating any time soon, because of the way grassroots organisations are generally going, and because of other factors that I detail below.

Voice to Parliament Referendum

I argued at the time and continue to argue that the Voice was more about a republic than anything else. The Voice was a test to see if constitutional change would be approved by the people if that change was argued emotionally. In other words, could the people's compassion be weaponised against them? This strategic question arises out of the 1999 referendum, wherein the republican case provided far too much technical information, leading to confusion and fear. The Voice represents the total opposite end of that spectrum. No information was provided deliberately. Republicans were behind the Voice: the Uluru Statement from the Heart itself originates during the Turnbull prime ministership. The prime minister is more interested in the republic, as a life-long republican, than he is aboriginal affairs. During the Voice, there was never an Assistant Minister for the Voice under the Minister for Indigenous Australians, but there *was* an Assistant Minister for the Republic under the Attorney-General. It was all one, great, big exercise in market research.

My view is that the government intentionally derailed the Yes campaign on discovering that the Voice did not in fact align with republican ambitions. Republicans seek a *redistribution* of sovereignty, from the Crown to the Parliament and/or President. On the other hand, the proponents of the Voice like Thomas Mayo, Marcia Langton, Noel Pearson, Megan Davis and others revealed during the campaign that they do not seek a redistribution of sovereignty but a total *reconception* of it. That is, they want Australia to totally reimagine from which instruments and institutions the nation derives authority. This does ill-suits republicans, who seek merely to rule rather than to rebuild. Secondly, republicanism stands for the centralisation of power. The Yes campaign was run centrally by the government, effectively. However, when it became apparent that proponents of the Yes campaign were venturing 'off script' from the government – such as in supporting treaties, Makarrata, etc. reveals this – the government realised it could not control the Yes campaign and

that, by extension, the Voice would not be a mechanism by which republicanism could be advanced. Therefore, in simple terms, Albo tanked it.

Control and Institutions

The history of the Voice referendum reveals much about contemporary Australian republicanism. Through centralisation, republicanism is now manifest in many Australian institutions, even the institutions that we as monarchists defend. Government House is a key example. Our governor-general was a committed republican prior to her appointment and my belief is that she remains so today. She has adopted an unprecedented approach to public life by frequently speaking with the media and at times making constitutional *faux pas*. Her behaviour is presidential in manner. No government would allow a governor-general to behave in this fashion unless they had given the governor-general permission to.

Another example is Bob Katter. In July 2025, Katter did not lawfully swear the Oath of Allegiance or lawfully take the Affirmation of Office as required by s 42 of the Constitution and the House of Representatives standing orders. To date, he has not been held to account by any authority, despite the Australian Monarchist League's efforts to bring the matter to a head. This is one of the greatest contemporary parliamentary cover-ups and a sorry reflection on the integrity of our politicians, public servants and even High Court justices. Whatever one may think of Katter, the fact is that when he instead declared, "No, I swear allegiance to the Australian people," not just the prime minister but the entirety of the Labor front bench laughed. That is the brazen, unashamed contempt which republicans have for the Constitution, and it should terrify us.

Fundamentally, Australian republicanism is only kept alive by the Labor Party, which includes the creation of an Australian republic in its national manifesto. This means that the issue is inherently a political one, not a constitutional one, and in pursuit of the Labor Party's political agenda. From the Voice, republicans know that the only way to bring about a successful republican referendum is to ensure that there is, in essence, no referendum. That is, that the Opposition agrees to bipartisan support for a republic, that any debate is quickly stifled and that the government uses fully the resources it has available to it to achieve its goals.

What Can We Do?

It is vital that we speak with family, friends and colleagues about these matters to the extent that we can. It may be that in defending what we love, sacrifice is required. Personally, I have made sacrifices and endured loss to uphold the Crown. I am the stronger for it, and for every negative experience my advocacy has brought upon me I have enjoyed five positive experiences in return. Fear and apathetic complacency are draughts sold and force-fed to us by the enemy. We must transcend cowardness and find authentic courage, no matter the cost.

It is equally vital that we or our like-minded friends, families and colleagues begin to join political parties. Democracy is not about electing the best candidate on the ballot paper, though that is a part of it. Rather, democracy is about playing an active role to the extent one can in ensuring that the ballot paper itself comprises *only* the very best candidates. Elections are not the whole democratic process but rather a ratification of a previous democratic process. By joining political parties, you can influence the party's policy and its elected representatives. For our purposes, if we are despondent as to the quality of our leaders and parliamentarians, we must 'leap into the lion's den' and to actively insist upon and bring about better representation. This is one way in which we can ensure more monarchists and constitutionalists become parliamentarians, which significantly impedes the contemporary republican strategy.