



## MEDIA RELEASE

# Republic Movement Says No to More Taxpayer Funded Ads

11 January 2018

The Australian Republic Movement (ARM) will oppose a monarchist proposal for a taxpayer-funded year-long “public education campaign” about “Constitution and Crown”.

Recently, the national chair of the Australian Monarchs League Philip Benwell wrote to all members of Parliament arguing for a year-long program. The letter has not been made public until now.

“Australians don’t want more taxpayer-funded advertising,” responds Michael Cooney, National Director of the Australian Republic Movement, in a letter to all Senators and members of Parliament this week. “If the monarchists want to shout everyone in Australia a Netflix subscription and pour us a cup of tea while we watch The Crown Series 2, that’s fantastic. Just don’t ask the Government to pay for it.”

Labor and Coalition governments have funded similar public education programs in recent years. Campaigns offering the public information on policies ranging from carbon pricing to school funding, innovation to childcare, university changes, the Intergenerational Report and border protection. These sort of campaigns have cost as much as seventy million dollars each.

Mr Cooney also criticises monarchists for patronising young Australians and Australians born overseas when they say that millions of Aussies are too ignorant to decide our country’s future. The monarchists argue that “several million voters, both new Australians as well as those born after 1982” need to be re-educated before they vote about whether Australia should have an Australian as head of state.

“The republic campaign is all about giving Australians a greater say, while the monarchists want to use taxpayer money to talk down to Australians with a monarchist public relations campaign.

“Maybe that’s the difference between an inclusive, democratic, patriotic institution like an Australian Republic, and a hierarchical, hereditary, exclusive institution like the Crown.”

The Australian Republic Movement proposes that in 2020 there should be two national votes. One vote should answer the in-principle question of whether Australia should have an Australian as head of state. The other should answer the question of how Australia’s head of state should be chosen. These could be held at the same time.

### For comment:

National Director Michael Cooney (Canberra)  
0417 248 650 and [michael.cooney@republic.org.au](mailto:michael.cooney@republic.org.au)

**Letter of 10 January 2018 to Members of the Federal Parliament from ARM CEO and National Director Michael Cooney**

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[recipient name]  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

10 January 2018

Dear [recipient name],

Late last year you would have received an email from the Australian Monarchist League proposing a taxpayer-funded year-long “public education campaign” about “Constitution and Crown”.

I am writing to reassure you that the Australian Republic Movement will oppose such a campaign.

Australians don’t want more taxpayer-funded advertising. If the monarchists want to shout everyone in Australia a Netflix subscription and pour us a cup of tea while we watch The Crown Series 2, that’s fantastic. Just don’t ask the Government to pay for it.

Our opponents argue that “several million voters, both new Australians as well as those born after 1982” need “education” before they can be expected to vote about whether Australia should have an Australian head of state.

Supporters of the monarchy may think Australians they disagree with need educating – supporters of a republic believe in listening to our fellow citizens.

Maybe that’s the difference between an inclusive, democratic, patriotic institution like an Australian Republic, and a hierarchical, hereditary, exclusive institution like the Crown.



**Michael Cooney**  
National Director and CEO  
Australian Republic Movement

**Subject: Education Necessary Prior to Plebiscite Question**  
**Reply-To: <[chair@monarchist.org.au](mailto:chair@monarchist.org.au)>**

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29 December, 2017

Dear [REDACTED]

### **Education Necessary Prior to Plebiscite Question**

In the event the current push to initiate a plebiscite or survey question on a republic reaches the Parliament prior to the next general election, we would appreciate your supporting a move to ensure that as a part of any legislation on a plebiscite or ministerial implementation of a postal ballot there should be a year-long unbiased civics education programme with a strong emphasis on the Australian Constitution and Crown.

It is now nineteen years since the 1999 referendum on a republic and there would be several million voters, both new Australians as well as those born after 1982 who were not exposed to the constitutional debates of the 1990s. It is totally unreasonable to expect such voters to be able to make an informed decision on a question which will fundamentally alter the way we are governed without first having all the facts placed before them.

Yours sincerely,

Philip Benwell  
National Chair  
Australian Monarchist League  
M: [REDACTED]