

Common Cause

An Alliance of Commonwealth Republican Movements



For immediate release:

New alliance links Commonwealth republican movements

Sydney, Toronto, Wellington, London - April 6, 2005 --- Four leading republican organizations from around the world today launched Common Cause, an alliance of Commonwealth republican movements. In a move that's certain to strengthen the campaign in each country, the Australian Republican Movement (ARM), Citizens for a Canadian Republic (CCR), the Republican Movement of Aotearoa New Zealand (RMANZ) and Republic in the UK have formed the new alliance to share information, ideas and resources.

Common Cause is open to any republican movement within the Commonwealth and is committed to the ideals of democracy and equality in each member's national constitutions. Reflecting their distinctive political and constitutional circumstances, each of the organizations in Common Cause will retain their autonomous national campaigns while sharing resources and ideas to bring about their common goal.

Allison Henry, National Director of the ARM said today, "This is an exciting development for the republican movements in each of our countries. Common Cause demonstrates that the campaign for democratic Heads of State is no longer just an Australian issue; many countries in the Commonwealth are questioning the future of the monarchy."

"Recent polls show fewer Canadians than ever before want to retain the monarchy," said CCR National Director Tom Freda. "This historic alliance will contribute greatly towards helping us promote an option more in keeping with our values and status as an independent nation. We look forward to working closely with our counterparts within this new international initiative."

In New Zealand, RMANZ President Dave Guerin commented, "This is the first time all of the major republic movements within the Commonwealth have come together in this way. By working together we are confident we can demonstrate the strength of common feeling there is in favour of a democratic alternative to the monarchy."

Republic's Campaign Coordinator Graham Smith added, "Recent developments have highlighted that the prospect of a future King Charles is a cause of concern in many Commonwealth countries. This concern is reflected today in the launch of Common Cause."

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THE FOUR MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Australia (www.republic.org.au): The Australian Republican Movement (ARM) was formed in Sydney in July 1991. The movement was established around the central aim that Australia's Head of State would be an Australian citizen chosen by Australians and that this could be achieved in time for the centenary of Australia's Federation on 1 January 2001. Australia held a referendum on the republican question on 6 November 1999, which was unsuccessful by a margin of 55-45%.

Since 1999 the ARM has regrouped and reinvigorated its organisation and continues to work towards an Australian republic. While the issue has been off the political agenda in recent years, polls consistently demonstrate majority support for an Australian Head of State.

The ARM is a mainstream people's movement. Its campaign is supported by thousands of members and supporters: Australians from all walks of life and all parts of the country. The ARM is a non-partisan organisation with supporters drawn from all political parties and none.

The ARM campaigns for another referendum to address the question of an Australian Head of State through local community activities, the media and political lobbying.

Canada (www.canadian-republic.ca): Citizens for a Canadian Republic was incorporated in 2002 as a non-profit organization to promote discussion and awareness among the media, public and legislators of the advantages of amending the Constitution to patriate the office of Head of State.

To minimize the difficulties that Canada's constitutional amending formula presents, CCR has endorsed the 2003 parliamentary report, 'The Governor General of Canada: Role, Duties and Funding for Activities' which recommended reviewing the mandate, constitutional role, responsibilities, selection process and future evolution of the Office of Governor General. If acted upon in advance, these recommendations are viewed by CCR as integral to winning a referendum on transforming the office into that of Canada's own democratically selected Head of State. CCR also believes this is a process that must be initiated and completed before the end of the current monarch's reign.

A non-partisan, popularly based movement with chapters in all regions of Canada, CCR has in recent months seen its member and supporter base nearly double in size.

New Zealand (www.republic.org.nz): The Republican Movement of Aotearoa New Zealand (RMANZ) was formed in 1994 as the republican debate started in earnest in New Zealand.

Its commitments are: Involving all New Zealanders in the debate, providing relevant and reliable information, focusing on ideas, not personalities and winning a referendum to establish the republic. The ultimate goal is to replace the monarchy with a democratically elected New Zealander as head of state.

RMANZ operates as a network to encourage and support debate on republicanism, educate people on the options available and play an active role in the public debate.

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United Kingdom (www.republic.org.uk): Republic began in the early 1980s, when talk of a republic was taboo. During the 1990s it developed into a campaigning and lobbying group and in recent months Republic has committed itself firmly to a strategy of active campaigning.

Republic is a growing membership-based organization dedicated to the democratic alternative to monarchy and is active through local groups, media work, advertising, e-campaigning and events.

Republic is supported by an array of well-known politicians, lawyers, journalists and artists, such as Tony Benn, Claire Rayner, Andrew McKinlay, Julie Burchill and Benjamin Zephaniah.

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