



Nationhood, National Identity and Democracy

Introduction

The Australian Monarchist League

The Australian Monarchist League is arguably Australia's largest member-based monarchist organisation. We are an incorporated association with a large membership, support and social media base and operate on a totally voluntary basis. The majority of our members under 50 with many from Gen-Y and Gen-Z categories.

We believe that Australian governments should encourage patriotism, and in particular should foster all Australians' shared allegiance to the Crown.

Nationhood under attack

A sense of national identity can only be enduring and constructive if is based on a realistic understanding of the nation's people, culture, history, values and place in the world. For this reason governments must not attempt to distort the national identity in the hope of conforming the nation to a new ideology.

However, for many years exactly this manipulation of our national identity has been happening in Australia. One example is the suppression of the place of Christian belief and thought in our heritage, history, values and character.

The key role of the Crown

Another example, of particular concern to the Australian Monarchist League, is attempts to deny the importance of the Australian monarchy to our national identity.

Loyalty to the Crown has been a central aspect of Australian life since 1788. This loyalty has been pervasive. The Crown remains at the heart of our system of government.

Although there have always been republicans in Australia, even republicans have benefited from the Crown. The Crown is an institution under which all Australians are equal irrespective of racial, ethnic, religious, class or political identity.

Over the past 25 years the monarchy has come under a concentrated attack from politicians, media and individuals, resulting in one attempt by referendum to make us into a republic and thereafter a continuous push for a republic by politicians, cultural leaders and the much of the media.

The ongoing suppression of Australia's monarchical identity takes many forms. Most obvious are the constant attempts to remove public reminders of the Crown from public life, such as:

- the removal of royal portraits and symbols, even from badges of the Australian Defence Force;
- the suppression of the Royal Anthem even at events at which members of the Royal Family are present;
- the repeal of requirements for naturalised Australians or public officials to take the Oath of Allegiance to the Queen;
- the dropping of the Queen and the monarchy from primary and secondary school curriculums.

Why loyalty to the Crown must be fostered

Immigration and multiculturalism have changed the face of Australia forever. Much that previously fostered a sense of unity between Australians – a common religion, history, culture, value system and even language – can no longer be considered universal or defining of our nation. Politics is becoming more and more fractious and divisive, and the radical left and right are using identity politics as a screen for appeals to base and degraded selfishness and division.

However, all Australians are equal under the Crown. Our common allegiance to it is perhaps the one thing we all share; it is the actual defining characteristic of what is to be an Australian. Not all Australians share such quintessential values as mateship, larrikinism or athleticism, but all of us owe allegiance to the Crown, embodied by the Queen, and are under her protection. This common allegiance is greater than the allegiance we give to ourselves, our "tribe" (however we identify it) or our political or social agendas. The Crown inspires us to serve the greater good. It is the true and irreplaceable ideal of a "common wealth".

The Crown denies ultimate power, honour and allegiance from those who grasp for power over their fellow Australians. It is for this reason that so many leaders in government, politics, culture and business have for several decades sought to suppress this loyalty to the Crown. When the Crown is downplayed, attention and loyalty must shift to far more divisive and less universal institutions, such as political parties.

We submit that it is the responsibility of governments to foster loyalty to the Crown, rather than to pretend that it does not exist or to attempt to remove the Crown from the affections of the Queen's subjects. This responsibility is an aspect of the duty of loyalty which governments owe to the Crown in whose name they operate and by whom they are appointed. For the reasons stated above, it is also in the national interest.

What governments should do

The Australian Monarchist League believes that Australian governments should encourage patriotism, and in particular should foster all Australians' shared allegiance to the Crown. There are many ways this can be done. We make the following suggestions.

Oath of Allegiance

As part of the naturalisation process, all new Australian citizens should be required to take the Oath of Allegiance to the Queen. This was required in Australia for decades. It was entirely appropriate for modern Australia. The requirement to take the oath was removed in 1993 simply because republicans refused to tolerate any admission that Australia is a constitutional monarchy. The change in the oath in no way limited the reality that all Australians have a duty of allegiance to the Crown. Australian citizens should be reminded of this duty and taught the benefits it brings to us all.

Federal politicians are constitutionally required to take the Oath of Allegiance. We are concerned by reports that some federal politicians make it obvious that they in no way consider the oath binding when they take it, not even mouthing the words of the oath. This undermines public confidence in the integrity of our elected representatives. Arguably, if a Member or Senator goes through the motions of making the oath but gives every indication that he or she does not consider him or herself bound by what he or she is saying, he or she is ineligible to sit. We have in the past asked Speakers and Presidents that there be an educational note for all elected politicians on the relevance, solemnity and importance of the oath and for greater care to be taken in the administration of the oath to ensure that full effect is given to the Constitution's requirements in this matter.

Education

Australian governments must educate Australians on Australian identity, the Australian system of government and the importance of the Crown, and should actively and deliberately foster patriotism and loyalty to the Queen.

Particular focus should be given in this regard to:

- educating recent immigrants to Australian and persons preparing for naturalisation; and
- government school systems.

Fostering loyalty

The Queen's portrait should be displayed proudly in all government buildings, whether a Department of State, Centrelink office, police station or embassy.

Our national broadcasters and other national cultural institutions should be given express mandates to foster loyalty to the Crown.

The Queen's Birthday public holidays should be used as an opportunity to remind Australians of the role of the Crown and the benefits it brings to us all.

Philip Benwell
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