



20 May 2005

Professor John Warhurst
Chairman
Australian Republican Movement
PO Box A870
SYDNEY SOUTH NSW 2001

Dear Professor Warhurst

Thank you for your letter of 17 March 2005 requesting a call on the Governor-General. His Excellency has asked me to respond on his behalf and I apologise for the delay in replying.

At the outset may I say that the Governor-General is pleased to note your organisation's support for initiatives to improve awareness of Australia's Constitution, including his views as expressed in his 2005 Australia Day Address.

The Governor-General made clear in that Address that any changes to our existing system of government are decisions for the community and the parliament. As you say, correctly, the Governor-General should not be, nor be seen to be, aligned with any one view on a politically contested issue. Based on that very principle, the Governor-General has not met the group *Australians for Constitutional Monarchy*. Likewise, he considers it would be inappropriate to meet you as Chairman of the *Australian Republican Movement*. Any views you or your organisation might have are therefore best directed to our elected representatives.

Your assertions regarding the *Constitution Education Fund – Australia* have been drawn to the attention of the Governor-General, as have related comments by the National Director of the *Australian Republican Movement*, Allison Henry, in a speech on 2 March 2005 to the Sydney Institute published on the *Australian Republican Movement* website. In that context, may I draw

your attention to an answer given by the Prime Minister to a Question-on-Notice (QN145) recorded in Hansard of 14 March 2005 at page 161 which notes that the *Constitution Education Fund – Australia* consists of eminent Australians who could be expected to have a range of views on Australia's Constitutional arrangements.

I also draw your attention to comments attributed to the Governor-General published in *The Canberra Times* in November 2004 and reproduced on the *Australian Republican Movement* website. The article twice quotes the Governor-General using the phrase 'Head of State' in reference to Her Majesty The Queen. General Jeffery did not use that phrase. He answered two questions about The Queen. In line with the Constitution, the Governor-General said 'I am her representative' but at no point did he use the words 'Head of State'. This was confirmed by a recent check of an audio-tape of the interview which was conducted in April last year, but not published until seven months later.

I should therefore be grateful if you would correct your website by removing the reference please.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MH' with a stylized flourish.

Malcolm Hazell
Official Secretary to the Governor-General