



The Republican Movement of Aotearoa New Zealand

Policy Statement

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Republican Movement is a campaign group for a New Zealand republic with a New Zealander as Head of State. We aim to:
- (a) Campaign for, and win, referenda establishing a New Zealand republic
 - (b) Involve all New Zealanders in the debate
 - (c) Provide voters with relevant and reliable information and
 - (d) Focus on principles not personalities.

2. Our framework

- 2.1 This section sets out the framework for a New Zealand republic advocated by the Republican Movement.
- 2.2 Development of a New Zealand republic
- (a) New Zealanders are to choose whether the country becomes a republic using the referendum process outlined in section 3 below and
 - (b) If they so choose, New Zealand will become a parliamentary republic with an independent non-executive Head of State replacing the Governor-General and Monarch.
- 2.3 Appointment and dismissal of our Head of State
- (a) New Zealand voters choose whether our Head of State is either elected by voters or by a super-majority of Parliament
 - (b) Irrespective of that choice, there is a fair and effective method for public nominations for the office of Head of State and
 - (c) Our Head of State can only be dismissed by a super-majority of Parliament.
- 2.4 Powers of our Head of State
- (a) Our Head of State has the same functions and powers (exercisable in accordance with current constitutional conventions) as the Sovereign and Governor-General have presently and
 - (b) The Constitutional Commission described in section 3 considers whether these functions, powers, and conventions are codified (and, if so, in what form) in the transition to a republic.

2.5 Focus on our Head of State

The Republican Movement is committed to ensuring that the process of becoming a republic is focused on the office and role of the Head of State. Until otherwise decided with due process, a New Zealand republic will:

- (a) Not change the current standing of the Treaty of Waitangi
- (b) Not change New Zealand's membership of the Commonwealth
- (c) Retain New Zealand's current flag
- (d) Use God Defend New Zealand as the only national anthem and
- (e) Retain New Zealand's national system of honours.

3 The referendum process for a New Zealand republic

3.1 We support a democratic process for our transformation into a republic, in order to ensure the informed consent of New Zealanders. This section describes the process advocated by the Republican Movement.

3.2 The democratic process involves the following stages:

(a) *Initial blueprint*

- Development by a Constitutional Commission of two alternative models for a republic, one involving election by voters and the other parliamentary election of the Head of State

(b) *Indicative referendum*

- Determination of support for a republic and for the alternative models

(c) *Detailed blue-print*

- Development by the Commission of draft legislation based on model favoured in indicative referendum
- Adoption of legislation by Parliament

(d) *Binding referendum*

- Single question referendum on whether we become a republic, based on legislation, or continue with our present constitutional arrangements

(e) *Transformation to a republic*

- Election of a new Head of State and declaration of the new republic

The Constitutional Commission

3.3 The Commission comprises at least 8 people with relevant expertise and is appointed with cross-party parliamentary agreement.

3.4 The Commission develops initial and detailed blue-prints for a republic:

- (a) For the initial blue-print, the Commission will develop the alternative models described above, outlining the key legislative changes required by each and

- (b) For the detailed blue-print, the Commission will draft legislation consistent with the initial blueprint and the outcome of the indicative referendum for adoption by Parliament.

3.5 With reference to the Head of State, the matters the Commission addresses include:

- (a) The alternative methods of their election, including:
 - (i) the process for election by voters
 - (ii) the nature of any super-majority for parliamentary election
- (b) A fair and effective method for public nominations for both election methods
- (c) Their term of office
- (d) Their title
- (e) The super-majority of Parliament required for their dismissal
- (f) Whether their functions and power and applicable constitutional conventions are codified (and, if so, in what form)
- (g) The form and description of the nation-state that is to succeed our present realm
- (h) Options for the present realm if New Zealand leaves, including arrangements for the territories of Tokelau and the Ross Dependency and the self-governing states of the Cook Islands and Niue, and
- (i) The detailed timing of the transformation into a republic.

3.6 The Commission will also recommend a democratic process for the future review of the office, functions and powers of the Head of State. This process must be open and transparent in order that the New Zealand people themselves determine any future changes to the office of the Head of State.

3.7 The Commission adopts an open and transparent process, including:

- (a) Taking into account the views of the New Zealand people by consulting widely and allowing the public to make submissions and
- (b) Publishing its findings, along with supporting explanation.

Indicative and binding referenda

3.8 The indicative referendum asks two questions:

- *Should a binding referendum be held to establish a New Zealand republic?*
- *Regardless of how you answered the first question, do you believe the Head of State of a New Zealand republic should be elected by voters or by Parliament?*

If at least 50% of votes cast are in favour of the first question, a binding referendum must be held.

3.9 A binding second referendum asks whether to retain the status quo or whether New Zealand transform to a republic based on the model supported in the second part of the indicative referendum, that is:

- *Should New Zealand become a parliamentary republic, with the Sovereign and Governor-General replaced by a non-executive head of state elected by a super-majority of parliament/the voting public for a term of term length?*

Transformation to a republic

- 3.10 If voters support New Zealand becoming a republic in the binding second referendum, a new Head of State is to be elected as soon as practicable.
- 3.11 A declaration of the new republic is to be made and the new Head of State sworn in. The British monarch, or their representative, is to be invited to attend.

Timing

- 3.12 The following timing is recommended to the Commission:
- (a) *Initial blue-print*: Commission to be constituted within 6 months and to report within 18 months.
 - (b) *Detailed blue-print*: Commission to report within 12 months of the indicative referendum and Parliament to adopt and pass the draft legislation within 3 months of the Commission's report.
 - (c) *Binding referendum*: To be held at the next general election at least 6 months after the draft legislation is passed.
 - (d) *Transformation to a republic*: On a date or event identified by the Commission not later than 18 months after the outcome of the binding referendum.

Our endorsement of this process

- 3.13 We will monitor the different stages of the process to ensure it is undertaken in good faith, allowing the people of New Zealand to make an informed choice on the transformation to a republic. If we decide, in our discretion, that this is not being allowed, we may withdraw our endorsement of this process.