

Governor-general Quentin Bryce offers support for Australian republic

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/22/governor-general-quentin-bryce-australian-republic>

Queen's representative ends speech with the wish that an Australian will become head of state, and backs gay marriage

Helen Davidson theguardian.com, Friday 22 November 2013 19.55 AEST



Quentin Bryce: groundbreaking speech. Photograph: Daniel Munoz/AAP

The governor general, Quentin Bryce, has used the final words in her last Boyer lecture of the year to offer support for an Australian republic.

The Queen's representative in Australia told the crowd in Brisbane she hoped to one day see a young Australian boy or girl grow to be the first Australian head of state.

Bryce also appeared to express support for same-sex marriage, speaking of an Australia where "people are free to love and marry whom they choose".

It is thought to be the first time a sitting governor general has expressed support for a republic.

Bryce's speech spoke of the lack of women in positions of power, and the equality and health gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

In the last portion of her speech, according to an earlier transcript, Bryce suggested a nation "where an ethic of care guides the way we lead. Where the young, the elderly, the Indigenous, the newly arrived, people with disabilities are treated with dignity and respect, and able to be the best and healthiest they can be.

"Where every child is given the opportunity of a good education from their very early years. Where women's contributions to civil society, the workplace, the economy, the family and home are valued equally with men. Where streets, homes, schools, women and girls are spared violence. Where people are free to love and marry whom they choose. And where, perhaps, my friends, one day, one young boy or girl may grow up to be our nation's first head of state."

The Boyer lectures are given by a prominent Australian, chosen by the ABC board. They have been broadcast on ABC radio for the past 40 years.

Past speakers have included Marcia Langton, General Peter Cosgrove

Bryce's remarks more than appropriate: PM

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/bryces-remarks-more-than-appropriate-pm-20131122-2y1kx.html>

November 22, 2013 Kirsty Needham, Jill Stark and Aisha Dow

Prime Minister Tony Abbott has backed Governor General Quentin Bryce's decision to speak out publicly in favour of a republic.

"It is more than appropriate for the Governor General, approaching the end of her term, to express a personal view on a number of subjects. That's what she was doing... and as you would expect with Quentin Bryce, she did it with grace and style," Mr Abbott said in Sydney on Saturday.

Ms Bryce, the Queen's Australian representative, will step down in March, and used a Boyer Lecture on Friday evening to speak in support of same sex marriage and a republic.



Governor General Quentin Bryce with Prime Minister Tony Abbott and Julie Bishop. *Photo: Andrew Meares*

She said she hoped the nation would evolve into a country where "people

"And where perhaps, my friends, one day, one young girl or boy may even grow up to be our nation's first head of state," she said in the lecture on Friday night.

Ms Bryce, the former governor of Queensland, was appointed Australia's first woman governor-general in 2008 by then-prime minister Kevin Rudd.

Governors-general serve at the Queen's pleasure but five-year appointments are typical.

Bryce is the first governor-general in Australia's history to declare their support for an Australian republic.

In her wide-ranging speech, Ms Bryce said that Australians needed to acknowledge that there were still many aspects of Australian life that needed reform.

She called for women's contributions to Australian society to be valued equally with men's and for a "fairer Australia" that "regards giving as a natural way of living".

"I suggest a nation where an ethic of care guides the way we lead. Where the young, the elderly, indigenous, the newly arrived, people with disabilities are treated with dignity," she said.

Her speech received an immediate and warm response on social media, with some declaring Ms Bryce a likely candidate for Australia's first Australian-born head of state.

"Can we make Quentin Bryce our first President already," Declan Pye said on Twitter.

But Australian Monarchist League chairman Phillip Benwell reportedly described her republican statement as "a disgrace", as she was the Queen's representative.

Addressing a 500-strong crowd at an equal love rally in Melbourne on Saturday, Greens Senator Sarah Hanson-Young said the Governor-General had shown real leadership with her support for marriage equality.

“The position put forward by the Governor-General so eloquently last night really displays the desire and the aspirations of Australians to have a fair and decent country that understands and accepts that two people if they love each other and they’re in a committed relationship they should be allowed to get married regardless of their gender or sexuality,” she said.

“Tony Abbott has gagged his members in the federal party room, he couldn’t gag the Governor-General.

“She recognises this is an issue of human rights.”

Antony McManus, told the rally that he wants to marry long-term partner Ron Van Houwelingen and he was heartened by Quentin Bryce’s stance.

“Unfortunately at the moment the government are dragging their feet on this issue and her comments yesterday are a huge help to the cause. It’s really unfortunate that marriage is such a political issue when it’s really just a basic human right and I think she’s showing that she’s a human with a heart and she can see no problem with people getting married. I’ve been with my partner 26 years and that’s all we want and if we got married tomorrow it wouldn’t hurt anyone.”

Australian Governor General suggests the country should become a republic

<http://www2.macleans.ca/2013/11/22/australian-governor-general-suggests-the-country-should-become-a-republic/>

by Emily Senger on Friday, November 22, 2013 11:41am



Reuters

Australian Governor General Quentin Bryce is making headlines Friday for suggesting the country should break its ties with the British Monarchy and become a republic.

It’s revolutionary talk, coming from the woman chosen to represent the Queen in what is, traditionally, a very non-political role. It’s nearly impossible to imagine her Canadian counterpart—Governor General David Johnston—doing the same thing.

Bryce made the comments Friday night **as she delivered a lecture in Sydney**, which was hosted by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

Speaking about the country she envisioned, she described the Australia of the future as a place “where perhaps, my friends, one day, one young girl or boy may even grow up to be our nation’s first head of state.”

That statement has the potential to re-open constitutional debate in the country. The **Sydney Morning Herald** writes: “It is the first time an Australian governor-general has offered such a clear statement of support for a future republic, and appears designed to re-open the debate, from the highest level, on the nation’s constitutional arrangements.”

Bryce’s comments on Australia as a republic weren’t the only controversial thing she said in her speech. She also implied her support for same-sex marriage, saying she envisioned a state where “people are free to love and marry whom they choose.”

This opinion goes against the views of the current Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott, who is **challenging the legitimacy of same-sex marriage** in court. In October, one **Australian territory legalized same-sex marriage**, becoming the first part of the country where same-sex marriage is legal—or not legal, depending on what the court decides.

Appointed Governor General in 2008, Bryce was the first woman in Australia to hold the position. Her term ends in March 2014.

Australian republic debate reignited

<http://tonybondtravel.com/australian-republic-debate-reignited/>

Saturday, November 23rd, 2013 at 2:45 pm



Quentin Bryce, Australia's first female governor-general, was appointed in 2008

The Queen's representative in Australia has reportedly become the first serving governor-general to publicly back the country becoming a republic.

Quentin Bryce, 70, made the comments during a speech in Sydney in which she outlined a future vision for Australia.

"Perhaps one day, one young girl or boy may even grow up to be our nation's first head of state," she said, reigniting the republic debate.

Australians voted against becoming a republic in a 1999 referendum.

The country is a parliamentary democracy that retains Britain's monarch as its head of state.

In the 1999 vote, Australians opted to preserve the status quo, with Queen Elizabeth II remaining as the head of state – although the republican movement was split between those who wanted an elected president and those who preferred a parliamentary appointee.

The issue has largely **fallen into the political doldrums in Australia** in recent years.

'Personal view'

Ms Bryce, the country's first female governor-general, was appointed in 2008 by then-prime minister Kevin Rudd in 2008. Her term ends in March next year.

Her comments, made at the end of a four-part lecture series, have reignited a debate about the nation's ties to Britain.

"We will always be friends with Britain, but now we should be equals," said Geoff Gallop, the head of the **Australian Republican Movement**.

"We need an unambiguous, independent national identity that reflects and celebrates our freedom, our unity, our values of the fair go and our place in the world."

However, David Flint of the [Australians for Constitutional Monarchy](#) described her comments as “a pity”.

“The constitutional system requires that the Crown be above politics... it goes against the position. There are a number of people who are now going to wonder about her.

“There’s this sense of division that she’s created... we’ve got commentators everywhere on these issues, couldn’t she have left them alone until she was out of the office?” Mr Flint told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

Prime Minister Tony Abbott, a staunch royalist who used to be the executive director of the Australians for Constitutional Monarchy, said Ms Bryce was entitled to her opinion.

“It’s more than appropriate for the governor-general approaching the end of her term to express a personal view on a number of subjects and that’s what she was doing, she was expressing a personal view and, as you would expect from Quentin Bryce, she did it with grace and style,” he said.

Ms Bryce also voiced support for same-sex marriage – a position that Mr Abbott, a devout Catholic, also opposes.

Article source:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-25065030#sa-ns_mchannel=rss&ns_source=PublicRSS20-sa

LIBERAL candidate for Lyons Guy Barnett has expressed his disappointment in comments made by Governor-General Quentin Bryce.

<http://www.examiner.com.au/story/1928258/republic-talk-overstepped-mark-barnett/?cs=95>

Ms Bryce implied support for same-sex marriage and backed Australia becoming a republic on Friday.

It is the first time an Australian Governor-General has offered clear support for a future republic.

Despite Prime Minister Tony Abbott's public support for Ms Bryce's freedom to share her opinion, Mr Barnett, a former Chairman of the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, said Ms Bryce "overstepped the mark".

"She has undermined the position of the Governor-General and placed Tony Abbott in an invidious position," Mr Barnett said.

"The role of the Governor- General is to unite, not divide Australia.

"The Governor-General should act in an impartial and unbiased manner, and to always act on the advice of her government. Her public intervention on two sensitive political issues make it almost inconceivable that she can fulfil her role appropriately and with dignity.

"Clearly, the Governor- General has upset and caused division in the community."

Ms Bryce's comments came during her final Boyer lecture for the year, delivered in Sydney and broadcast on ABC television.

NSW state Liberal MP David Elliott said Ms Bryce should retire immediately for "partaking in a blatantly

political debate over the constitution".

"If Quentin Bryce wants to debate policy and legislation she should run for parliament, not use her vice-regal position to pursue her own political agenda," Mr Elliott, who led the 1999 "no republic" campaign, said in a statement.

Australian Republican Movement spokesman Geoff Gallop told reporters in Canberra Ms Bryce had given authentic reflections on her views for the future.

He dismissed criticism that she had acted inappropriately.

"She sees what's happening in the community, she sees the pain, she sees the happiness, she sees Australia from a particular vantage point and we're delighted she's reached this conclusion," Mr Gallop said.

Opposition Leader Bill Shorten has defended his mother-in-law's comments saying he supports both gay marriage and Australia becoming a republic.

"The Governor-General has made a remarkable contribution to our country and she is entitled to express her views," a spokesman for Mr Shorten said.

He's married to Ms Bryce's daughter, Chloe.

Why take the Queen's shilling?

THE AUSTRALIAN NOVEMBER 25, 2013 12:00AM

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/opinion/editorials/why-take-the-queens-shilling/story-e6frg71x-1226767318740>

five years as Governor-General, Quentin Bryce has offended many of her fellow Australians by backing the idea of the nation becoming a republic. This newspaper has long believed Australia's ultimate destiny should be a republic. It is not a first order issue, however, and there is no need for it to be revisited during the reign of the Queen, who is highly esteemed. The public also had their say at the 1999 referendum, when not one state supported constitutional reform after the republican lobby splintered over the proposed model.

Tony Abbott, an avowed constitutional monarchist, has chosen to be gallant about Ms Bryce's comments, which is probably a smart way to dampen down any fracas and stop the issue gaining traction. Ms Bryce has only four months to serve and regardless of a couple of minor controversies has worked hard in office. But her comments were an indulgence that politicised her role to a degree that was unacceptable.

First, it is difficult to understand why a woman whose vision for the future includes a young girl or boy growing up "to be our nation's first head of state" has spent the past decade as the Queen's representative in Australia and before that in Queensland.

Second, Australians are entitled to ask why Ms Bryce was happy to accept the lucrative salary, allowances, travel opportunities, stately mansions and staff attached to such prestigious positions when it now appears she did not wholeheartedly support the offices she has occupied.

Third, if she wanted to influence public debate on controversial political questions, including constitutional change and same-sex marriage, she should have run for elected office.

When delivering the Boyer lectures, Ms Bryce could have steered clear of such issues and waited until

she was a citizen like any other to have her say. Instead, she has sullied her term and will depart as our most controversial governor-general since John Kerr, an unfortunate epithet.

As someone often hailed as a role model for young women, Ms Bryce failed to grasp an important tenet of her office. Feminists will cringe, but like our first female prime minister, our first female Governor-General fell short of the mark. Long-term, her comments may also prove counter-productive to the republican cause.