

Examiner Newspaper

Republic talk overstepped mark: Barnett

By EMILY BAKER Nov. 24, 2013

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

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.

[Link to online story here.](#)