

THE MONARCHY IS INCREDIBLY COST-EFFECTIVE

Here's betting a pound to a penny that the pundits at the Australian Republican Movement (ARM) are all sympathetic to the recent decision of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex to withdraw from their duties as members of the royal family.

Doubtless they think the royal couple have been hard done by.

Why, one may ask, would republicans be sympathetic to the decision of the Duke and Duchess?

Well, in my view, the answer is not far to seek.

It is simply just another opportunity, as I suspect they see it, to attack the Monarchy and so continue their unprincipled campaign to bring it down.

In reality, of course, they couldn't care less about the Duke and Duchess even if the couple themselves risk damaging the Monarchy in their own way.

Certain media commentators speak of a "slimmed down" Monarchy, and of removing minor royals from funding, but then complain sanctimoniously and hypocritically when these same dispossessed royals try to earn a living like the rest of us.



In so commenting, these media cynics – and many politicians, too - simply demonstrate how little they know of the subject.

To begin with, they do not even know that minor royals are no longer funded by the Civil List. The Queen and the Prince of Wales pay for them, out of their own money.

The real truth is that the Monarchy is incredibly cost-effective – for the British, for Australians and, indeed, for the whole Commonwealth.

The Monarchy is funded by money that has always been the Monarch's own money and by a royal largesse that is quite extraordinarily generous.

The Sovereign Grant currently amounts to a mere £44 million p.a. (excluding sums to be spent on re-servicing Buckingham Palace) with everything else being paid for by the Queen, or Prince of Wales, themselves out of their own pockets or from other royal sources.

The Sovereign Grant Act 2011 came into effect from 1 April 2012 to consolidate the funding provided to support the official duties of the Queen and to maintain the occupied royal Palaces.

It replaced the funding hitherto known as the Civil List.

However, these sums were originally "granted" in exchange for the surrender by the Crown of the revenue from the Crown Estate i.e. from the estate that has always been the property of the Crown.

Until 1760 the British Monarch met all official expenses from hereditary revenues which included net income from the Crown Estate, the sum of all property owned by the Monarch.

The value of the Crown Estate today is about £Stg14.1 Billion.

In 1760, King George III (pictured alongside) agreed to surrender the hereditary revenues of the Crown in return for a sum, tiny by comparison, voted by Parliament and called "the Civil List".

The Crown Estate thereby remained the property of the Monarch but the hereditary revenues of the Crown were placed at the disposal of the House of Commons.

In short, this was an enormous gift by King George III to the nation, in return for relinquishing the responsibility for the maintenance of civil government.

However, under the Civil List, this surrender by the Crown, of the revenues of the Crown Estate to the Treasury, had to be renewed at the start of every new reign.

Yet even this was deemed insufficient and, under the Sovereign Grant Act 2012, the gift is now considered permanent, no longer renewed at the start of each reign, and the size of the Sovereign Grant is fixed by Parliament.

Parliament simply decided that it would seize these revenues permanently, whether the Queen liked it or not, and in return would give her back a sum that they decided upon, in their own absolute discretion.

If this were done to any private citizen, it would be called theft on a grand scale.

In short, the Crown have, for centuries, been progressively "fleeced" by politicians of the lion's share of its income. Now, in return, the Crown receives but a fraction of that income, the amount of which only the politicians decide.

And yet still some complain that the Monarchy costs too much!

Moreover, the government's profits from the Crown Estate always vastly exceeded the amounts effectively paid back to the Crown under the Civil List.

For instance, the Queen received an annual £7.9 million a year from the Civil List between 2001 and 2012 but the income to the Treasury from the Crown Estate was about £Stg211 million in 2007-8.

Further, she has no control over the management of her own "public" estate which is in the hands of Commissioners.

Yet further, the Queen and the Prince of Wales now voluntarily pay the equivalent of tax (income, inheritance and other taxes) to the Treasury out of their incomes from the Duchy of Lancaster, the Duchy of Cornwall and their private incomes.

Yet further still, since the Sovereign Grant Act 2012, minor royals no longer receive the grants they had under the Civil List and so have to be paid for by the Queen and the Prince of Wales.

The Crown Estate surplus for the financial year 2016-17 amounted to £Stg 328.8 million, but the amount paid back to the Queen, i.e. the core Sovereign Grant to meet all her royal obligations, was a mere £49.3 million for 2018-19 (excluding the sums for reservicing Buckingham Palace).



The Civil List (now Sovereign Grant) is, in fact, simply money provided by the royal family in the first place.

Thus, the real cost to the British taxpayer is, in reality, very much less than nothing.

Compare and contrast this with a US President who costs the US taxpayer \$1 billion (yes -billion with a "b"!) in a non-election year – and much more in an election year.

And for your money what do you get? Bill Clinton, Barack Obama or Donald Trump!

The British, on the other hand, get the best monarch in the world for nothing – and Australians get her virtually for free, too.

If a republic were introduced in Australia, the Australian taxpayer could expect to be presented with a similar bill to that of the US taxpayer, instead of the tiny sums they have to pay for the present Monarch.

Let's face it, there is simply no comparison.

So – ignore the "Megxit" shenanigans.