



White Paper Submission

United Commonwealth Society

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Introduction

The United Commonwealth Society was established in 2002 to bring together likeminded individuals who believe that the Commonwealth of Nations is a force for good in the world and should be strengthened, and that through their shared allegiance to the Crown as its head, shared history, language and cultures, the Commonwealth Realms should work together more closely for the future prosperity of Her Majesty's peoples.

With over two thousand members around the world, increasing followers to our social media channels and branches in Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and the United Kingdom, the United Commonwealth Society is fast gathering support reflecting the growing interest and allegiances to our Commonwealth nations and the benefits of these alliances.

Uniting the realms. Emboldening the Commonwealth.

[UCS motto]

Stephen Jones, UCS Representative – Australia

From Hobart, Tasmania Stephen has represented Australia in the UCS' Council since 2015. He is a senior teacher and has also held various senior education positions throughout the state. He has a strong interest in the Commonwealth and is also a member of the Royal Commonwealth Society Tasmania branch, Royal Over-Seas League Tasmania branch and The Australian Monarchists League, Tasmania branch.

Jon-Paul Teasdale, Chair

Recently elected Chair of the UCS, Jon-Paul previously held the positions of Vice-chair and United Kingdom Representative from 2015 and 2013 respectively. Passionate about the Commonwealth and the realms he has been a public officer in Lancashire, England for over fifteen years.

Our Proposals – Quick Wins

We believe that the Commonwealth Realms, and in turn the wider Commonwealth, would benefit greatly by working more collaboratively and closely together, as a united voice on the world stage so that they can maximise their collective and individual influences and opportunities. Without it, acting individually, the Commonwealth may find their shared values undermined and ignored in a fast changing world.

We are proposing that governments of the Commonwealth Realms meet once or twice a year. A precedent set in 2011 when governments attending the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Perth, Western Australia did so. The prime ministers held a sub-meeting to discuss the changes proposed to the royal succession laws.

This template could be made more permanent where the prime ministers, and/or appropriate cabinet ministers, and representatives from the overseas territories and dependencies could meet to discuss mutual topics and issues to further the ideals of the Commonwealth.

Further reading

Realm Union in Action series:

Part 1 – British-Irish Council

Part 2 – Nordic Council

www.unitedcommonwealthsociety.org

The proposal could be implemented as soon as invites are issued to the delegates. Without any formal, or legal processes to follow (although terms of reference and procedures for facilitating would need to be agreed either before the first meeting or at the first meeting), no treaties or pacts to sign, there would also be no impediments in the laws of any of the sixteen realms or their territories or dependencies.

With the United Kingdom in the process of leaving the European Union this proposal is the easiest and quickest to implement, and is a perfect time for re-invigorating the Commonwealth. Planning and organising for meetings to discuss common and shared issues and strategies for progressing the shared vision can start straightaway and provisions can be made for when the

United Kingdom is able to agree without interference from the European Union.

Benefits at a glance

- ✓ No loss of sovereignty- in fact increased sovereignty, as we work more closely with other Commonwealth nations.
- ✓ Closely aligned with those who share common bonds and goals.
- ✓ English is the primary language used in both verbal and written communications.
- ✓ Favourable conditions and benefits for Australians in the realms.
- ✓ Control over specific terms including Australia's specific terms.
- ✓ States and territories could have individual representation to address more specific needs.
- ✓ Access to markets of over 120 million people across the Commonwealth realms in addition to the home economy.
- ✓ Other realms could be used for enabling Australian businesses to access wider market shares.
- ✓ Reciprocal arrangements for travel and citizenship across Commonwealth countries, particularly CANZUK nations.
- ✓ Reduction in costs in diplomatic missions, military equipment, healthcare etc. through joint business partnerships.
- ✓ No legal implications affecting legislation or treaties across the Commonwealth.
- ✓ Share a unified voice on the world stage to protect Australian interests and our allies, with the support of other Commonwealth countries.

Our Proposals – Long Term

At the 2011 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Perth, Western Australia, the Prime Ministers of all sixteen Commonwealth Realms held a sub-meeting to discuss reform of the royal succession laws. The United Commonwealth Society believes that this amicable and successful initiative should form a template for ongoing regular meetings between realm leaders, including representatives from the various territories and dependencies in order to further Commonwealth ideals.

These meetings should be reinforced institutionally, and be guided by an agreed constitution and terms of reference. The meetings would comprise a permanent body of realm representatives, loosely modelled on the Nordic Council, and should be established to promote trade agreements, foreign and defense policy development, and speak with a united voice on the world stage on matters directly affecting the Commonwealth, and particularly Australia.



CHOGM Meeting, Perth 2011

In the future we propose the beginning of a more formal Realm Union or a political federation with its own government, Prime Minister and bicameral legislature, directly elected by all citizens focused on furthering the interests of the Commonwealth across the globe. Owing to the vast scale and dispersal of the realms, such a government's powers would necessarily be limited to areas of common importance, such as trade policy, cultural and multicultural understandings, international affairs, and defense, and be tightly circumscribed by a constitution.

Statistics

Population

The Commonwealth Realms make up over 144 million people of the Commonwealth of Nations' 2.2 billion.

Trade

Using data from <http://dfat.gov.au/trade/resources/Pages/trade-and-economic-fact-sheets-for-countries-and-regions.aspx> the following summary of trade figures shows the huge potential for Australia if she were to fully engage with the Commonwealth Realms and/or the whole Commonwealth. In comparison to the European Union (EU) and United States (US) the Commonwealth provides a better balance of exports and imports, especially if the Commonwealth (CW) members (Cyprus, Malta and UK) are taken out of the EU's figures.

	Export \$ billion	Import \$ billion
Realms	19.3	7.5
Commonwealth	44.4	46.6
EU	16.2	48.9
EU minus CW	9	41.3
US	13.7	32.4

Full breakdown of the population and trade figures can be found at www.unitedcommonwealthsociety.org

Conclusion

By speaking with a common voice on the world stage, with either some or all of the Commonwealth Realms, Australia could maximise our influence and opportunities. We would benefit from a better position when interacting with other world powers such as the United States, the European Union, and emerging Asian countries including China and Indonesia closer to home. Australia would also better ensure that our values, shared by the Commonwealth, continue to be promulgated and understood in an ever-changing world.

With the confirmed exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union Australia can act now to ensure we get the best deal when the negotiating period is over. With a more flexible UK it is also the perfect time to revisit previously established alliances and strengthen existing ones, particularly with the realms.

The United Commonwealth Society urges the Australian Government to consider in future foreign policy the massive benefits that could be gained with a new, fresh concerted effort to revitalise the Commonwealth, quite possibly one of the greatest achievements of mankind.

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