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#### TIME TO FIND A BETTER WAY

The [Real Republic Australia](#) says if the Albanese Government defers a promised republic referendum if re-elected to a second term it must start now to establish a better process to secure beneficial constitutional reforms.

“We need to know if the government is closing the door to beneficial reform because there are measurable savings to taxpayers that could flow from constitutional changes such as fixed four-year terms for the federal parliament, recognition of local government, and a republic itself,” said David Muir, chair of the Real Republic Australia which advocates for [a genuine directly elected head of state](#).

“Fixed four-year terms for both the upper and lower houses would save at minimum more than half-a-billion dollars every 12 years given that [Australian Electoral Commission](#) figures show the 2022 election for the House of Representatives and half the Senate cost \$522.4 million,” Mr Muir said. “That’s more than \$1 billion available for other government services, capital works, or cost-of-living support in little more than two decades.

“A second beneficial reform proposal – [supported](#) by National Party leader David Littleproud – is the constitutional recognition of local government that could deliver real savings to taxpayers through the more efficient transfer of funds from the federal government directly to councils instead of funnelling them via state bureaucracies.

“An Australian republic itself would bring tangible advantages by establishing our status as a truly independent nation with our own head of state to promote Australia and all it has to offer to the world – something that our current head of state King Charles III does exclusively for Great Britain, not us.”

Mr Muir said the government could tackle cost-of-living issues as well as plan for beneficial constitutional reforms.

“Governments can do more than one thing at once, so if the Albanese Government is stung by the defeat of the Voice referendum last October it now needs to invest time and effort into finding a better way to achieve constitutional reform,” he said.

“Instead of seeking illusory bipartisan support for reforms, it should look to a readily available process that can secure non-partisan support that gives reform proposals the best chance of success at a referendum.

“A big lesson from the Voice referendum is that people need to see, understand, and be comfortable with the model being put to them for approval and that can be achieved through a non-partisan process involving Australians themselves, not politicians, in assessing constitutional reform proposals.”

Mr Muir said the Real Republic Australia had proposed [a roadmap for reform](#) involving Australian Constitutional Assemblies based on [Citizens’ Assemblies](#) used successfully in Ireland to achieve constitutional and law reforms.

“Our suggested Australian Constitutional Assemblies would comprise 99 average voters proactively chosen to broadly reflect the composition of the wider Australian community,” he said.

“Led by an independent expert chair, each Assembly would examine a proposed reform, hear evidence, filter facts from fictions, and report its recommendations to the federal government which would decide when to hold any referendum.

“In the case of a republic we believe such an Assembly should shortlist workable republic models which should be put to voters in a non-binding plebiscite with the most popular model then proceeding to a referendum.

“In that way the model on the ballot paper will not belong to the government, politicians, nor the Real Republic Australia or the Australian Republic Movement or any other group. It will be the people’s preferred choice and it will have the best chance of success.

“That process will also help make Australians familiar with the model being proposed which is important because although it may be simplistic, it’s also true – people will not vote for a blank cheque.

“We need such a non-partisan process involving the Australian community that delivers outcomes if we are to achieve real and beneficial reforms.”

Mr Muir said the Albanese Government needed to explain if its proposed Australian Constitutional Commission was a body similar to the Real Republic Australia’s proposed Australian Constitutional Assembly anchored in the Australian community.

“If the Commission is open to political point-scoring or its membership does not reflect the wider community, it may have limited effect and could damage the chances of future referendums,” he said.

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