



Friday 15 April 2022

**STATEMENT BY DAVID MUIR, CHAIR OF THE REAL REPUBLIC AUSTRALIA**

**REPUBLIC TIMETABLE NEEDED**

The Real Republic Australia says the Labor Party's decision to prioritise recognition of First Nations' people in the Australian Constitution if elected is understandable, but a firm timetable for progressing the republic transition and other constitutional reforms is still needed.

"All parties need to outline their plans for giving Australians the opportunity to have a say in moving our nation towards becoming a republic," said Chair of the Real Republic Australia, David Muir.

"We understand that indigenous recognition must be resolved. It is an issue that is critical to the identity of our nation and has been delayed too long already.

"So it is understandable that Labor wants to give it priority if it wins office. But that does not excuse Labor, or the Liberals, Nationals, Greens, and other parties, from the need to outline their proposed timetables for constitutional reform including addressing the republic question."

Mr Muir said the Real Republic Australia had suggested that once the issue of indigenous recognition was resolved, a range of beneficial constitutional reforms – including a republic – should be addressed through a long-term workplan.

"Our idea is for the establishment of new bodies called Australian Constitutional Assemblies composed of 99 average Australian voters broadly representative of the wider community and led by an independent expert chair," he said.

"The Assemblies – inspired by the successful Citizens' Assemblies used in Ireland – would be formed to consider a separate proposal for constitutional reform and would each have a year in which to examine an issue and report back to the government which would decide whether to hold a referendum."

[The Real Republic Australia](#) wants to see a republic with a directly elected Head of State and in coming months will release a discussion paper on its model for public comment and feedback.

"We do not support the concept of politicians picking a Head of State for us or giving us a shortlist of people to vote for. That is not direct election," Mr Muir said.

He said in addition to a republic and indigenous recognition, the Real Republic Australia had suggested other beneficial reforms to update Australia's Constitution including:

- eliminating costly by-elections with a referendum question creating a Senate-style casual vacancy system for the House of Representatives
- four-year, fixed, and synchronised terms for both houses of Federal Parliament to stop prime ministers gaming the system by picking election dates, cutting the number of elections now costing more than \$300 million, and ensuring government mandates are not hostage to Senators elected years earlier
- breaking the constitutional nexus that demands the lower house is twice the size of the Senate – a reform that if not taken would one day see a lower house of 300 MPs and around 150 Senators
- cutting the number of Senators for each state while retaining two apiece for the NT and ACT,
- constitutional recognition of local government,
- instituting a fairer process for changing the Constitution.

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