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Keating comments put spotlight on PM

Chair of the Real Republic Australia, David Muir, says Paul Keating is correct to point out Malcolm Turnbull's lacklustre performance on the republic issue when in office, but his comments also put the spotlight on current Prime Minister Scott Morrison's position.

"Despite his previous advocacy of a republic, Malcolm Turnbull was disappointingly wishy-washy on the issue when he was Prime Minister and while he had the opportunity to show national leadership," Mr Muir said.

"His position as PM was for Australians to wait until the end of the Queen's reign to even debate the issue.

"That was never a sensible or logical approach. He effectively sat on the fence and did not take the lead on this significant issue that goes to the heart of our nation's future and our national identity.

"By wanting to wait for the end of the Queen's reign, Mr Turnbull was laying the groundwork for a negative and divisive 'get Charles' campaign.

"The republic issue should never be viewed as a negative anti-Royal Family argument. It is a question for Australians to decide through a positive debate about our nation's future.

"Members of the British Royal Family from the Queen down would recognise that simple fact."

Mr Muir said Scott Morrison had so far not made any significant statement on the republic issue and had not outlined how he planned to give Australians their say.

"Mr Morrison has said little on the republic issue in the past except that he supports the current Constitutional arrangements," he said.

"If he wants to maintain the status quo he needs to make a clear declaration to that effect. He needs to explain to his fellow Australians why he doesn't believe an Australian should be Australia's head of state.

"Bill Shorten has outlined a plan to consult Australians on the republic issue which is the only one on the table, so Mr Morrison needs to outline his own plan — if he has one — so voters can consider them both before the next election," Mr Muir said.

The Real Republic Australia supports a republic with a directly head of state as well as a package of Constitutional reforms to benefit Australians, including recognition of indigenous Australians, recognition of local government, and parliamentary reforms to deliver greater stability through cutting Senate numbers and implementing synchronised, fixed, four-year terms for both Houses of Parliament.

"These are Constitutional reforms that would lead to cost savings and more stable government," Mr Muir said.

"The Real Republic will be asking candidates in the Wentworth by-election where they stand on the republic and these types of Constitutional reforms. They too are all seeking to replace a republican as a local MP so voters need to know where they stand."

Media contact: 0431 101 533

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