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ALL PARTIES MUST LOOK TO THE FUTURE

The Real Republic Australia says federal MPs of all parties need to look beyond the current controversies surrounding the British royal family and decide now on a plan for constitutional reform including a shift to an Australian republic.

Chair of the Real Republic Australia, David Muir, said: “The question of Australia becoming a republic has never been about the royal family.

“Even the Queen and others in the royal family recognise that it is about what Australians want and how they see their future in the world.

“People like former prime minister Malcolm Turnbull have relied on the idea of waiting until the Queen’s reign is over before even discussing a republic.

“That sort of disrespectful ‘death-watch’ approach has always been unsustainable and has been used by Mr Turnbull as an excuse for not taking the lead as only a prime minister can.

“Section 128 of the Australian Constitution effectively makes the prime minister the gatekeeper to any reform process relying on a referendum.

“Scott Morrison has previously said little on a republic except to declare that he is satisfied with our current status as a constitutional monarchy.

“Even if Mr Morrison remains as PM, that casts doubt on claims by the co-chair of the Parliamentary Friends of the Republic, Liberal MP Jason Falinski, to the effect that a referendum bill would pass the parliament within a year of the Queen leaving the throne. ([The Guardian 11.3.2021](#))

“There is no referendum on any issue without the support of the prime minister, whoever he or she may be at the time.”

Mr Muir – who attended the 1998 Constitutional Convention as an elected delegate on the team of former Brisbane Lord Mayor, the late Clem Jones – said only one model for a republic would succeed at a referendum.

“Clem Jones and others knew in 1998 that only a model allowing the Australian people to directly elect their head of state would win approval at a referendum,” he said.

“Nothing has changed since then, and any canvassing of public attitudes will show that even monarchists would prefer to have their say – via their vote – on who is our head of state if we move to become a republic.”

Mr Muir said the Real Republic Australia advocated a move to a republic with a directly elected head of state as well as other Constitutional changes to deliver greater integrity and better government at the federal level:

- investing in our elected head of state the role of appointing and overseeing those responsible for integrity and anti-corruption agencies at the federal level;
- recognition of indigenous Australians,

- parliamentary reforms to deliver greater stability through cutting Senate numbers for each state from 12 to the original six while maintaining two for each Territory;
- implementing synchronised, fixed, four-year terms for both Houses of Parliament to ensure voter mandates are reflected in both Houses; and
- adopting a casual vacancy system for the House of Representatives to deliver greater stability and cut costs to taxpayers;
- recognition of local government; and
- a better system for initiating referendums.

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