



Wednesday 24 January 2024

### **AUSTRALIA DAY – OPPORTUNITY LOST**

The Real Republic Australia says the indefinite deferral of a referendum on an Australian republic means an opportunity lost for uniting Australians around a new national day.

Chair of the Real Republic Australia, David Muir, said although the group did not actively campaign for abandoning Australia Day it recognised growing community divisions around using 26 January as a national celebration.

“Instead of a day that divides us we should be looking for a day that unites us all,” Mr Muir said.

“If a republic referendum goes ahead and is successful, then the day our nation becomes a republic offers a logical, and inclusive date on which to celebrate.

“Becoming a republic would involve a democratic decision taken by all Australian voters under the terms of our Australian Constitution.

“It would not only signal a new era in our nation’s history – it would be a new era shared by all Australians and could provide a focus for inclusive recognition and celebration.”

Mr Muir said the Albanese Government’s decision to walk away from a republic referendum meant such an opportunity had also dropped off the public agenda.

“Unfortunately, the government’s decision to walk away from that referendum following the loss of the Voice referendum in October appears to have been accompanied by a reluctance to proceed with any sort of constitutional reform, despite the tangible benefits even simple reforms could deliver,” he said.

“We need clarity about exactly what constitutional reform the Albanese Government is prepared to consider. It has promised a Constitutional Commission but has so far offered no details about it and how it would work.”

Mr Muir said the latest edition of the Real Republic Australia’s quarterly [Constitutional Conversation](#) newsletter showed the measurable benefits that could flow from constitutional reform.

“There are literally billions of dollars to be saved in the medium term alone through just one successful referendum approving fixed four-year terms for our federal parliament,” he said.

“Australian Electoral Commission figures show the 2022 election cost more than \$522 million which was \$150 million more than the 2019 election.

“So going to the polls every four years instead of every three means real savings to taxpayers and freeing up billions of dollars for other purposes,” he said.

Mr Muir said the newsletter also contained a story showing almost 50% of people polled on the issue by DemosAU supported a republic referendum being held in the next five years.

**MEDIA CONTACT:** 0431 101 533