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### **Next PM needs to flesh out republic plan now**

The Real Republic Australia says both Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Opposition Leader Bill Shorten need to outline prior to polling day their plans for consulting Australians on the nation becoming a republic, especially giving voters the opportunity to express their views on what model they want for choosing their head of state.

Chair of the Real Republic Australia, David Muir, said it was disappointing Mr Shorten's policy launch in Brisbane on Sunday did not expand on his previously released plans for a national plebiscite in his first term of office if elected to government on 18 May.

"I hope he will give more details on his plan in the next few weeks before election day," Mr Muir said.

"So far Scott Morrison hasn't given any firm idea to voters of how he intends to give Australians their say on a republic, if at all.

"He too should outline his plans for polling day."

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; and
- recognition of local government.

Mr Muir said unlike Mr Morrison, Mr Shorten had outlined his plan for a plebiscite asking voters to say 'yes' or 'no' to becoming a republic.

"While that has revived the republic debate, the Real Republic Australia firmly believes any plebiscite must also offer voters a chance to say which model for a head of state they wish to embrace — the major ones being a directly elected head of state or a head of state chosen by the government and endorsed by Federal Parliament," he said.

“Without a choice of model there is a real risk that voters could decide against approving a republic on the basis of not wanting to give politicians ‘a blank cheque’ about the type of republic voters want.

“This could spell disaster and end the republic debate even before a second plebiscite on a model was held.”

Mr Muir said he believed most Australians would support a directly elected head of state if given the opportunity.

**Media contact: 0431 101 533**

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*The Real Republic Australia is supported by the Clem Jones Group which carries on the work of Brisbane’s longest-serving Lord Mayor, businessman, community worker, and philanthropist, Dr Clem Jones, who was a delegate to both the 1975 and 1998 Constitutional Conventions. Dr Jones died in December 2007 and in his will he expressed his wish for a national campaign for a republic based on his preferred model of a directly elected head of state. The Real Republic Australia continues his campaign.*