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Congratulations to royal couple

The Real Republic Australia says the Duke and Duchess of Sussex deserve congratulations and best wishes on the birth of their first child.

Chair of the Real Republic Australia, David Muir, said: “The birth of any child is a special event, especially when it is a couple’s first. I am sure all Australians would wish the young couple and their new son well.”

Mr Muir said reports of the birth pointing out the new child was seventh in line to the British throne highlighted the need for Australians to continue discussing and debating a move to a republic.

“It doesn’t matter where in the line of succession a member of the Royal Family stands, the fact remains Australians should choose their own head of state, preferably through a direct election,” he said.

“The republic debate has not featured in the election campaign so far, which is a pity because it is a key issue that touches on our national identity.

“In addition, it is a matter of Constitutional reform which means we should be considering the republic issue as part of a package of Constitutional reforms to improve our system of government and deliver greater certainty and more integrity.

“Only Bill Shorten has announced plan to test public sentiment on a republic. But comments by his deputy Tanya Plibersek on Brisbane radio this morning show the Labor plan has its flaws — the main one being the failure to ask voters about the model for a republic at the same time as the threshold ‘yes or no’ question.

“Mr Shorten wants to hold a plebiscite in his first term if Labor is elected on 18 May to ask voters a ‘yes or no’ question on whether Australia should become a republic. This would be followed later by a question on the model for a republic, with the main options being a directly elected head of state or a head of state chosen by the government and endorsed by Federal Parliament.

“But without being asked the threshold question and a question on a possible model in the same plebiscite there is a definite risk that voters could vote ‘no’ on the basis they will not ‘sign a blank cheque’.

“That would end the republic debate before a second plebiscite on a model was ever held.”

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

He said Prime Minister Scott Morrison needed to outline prior to polling day his plan for consulting Australians on the nation becoming a republic and giving voters the opportunity to express their views on what model they want for choosing their head of state.

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.

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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.