



MONDAY 19 MARCH 2018

REAL REPUBLIC MEETINGS TO OUTLINE REAL REFORMS

Townsville will this week be the venue for the first in a series of public meetings pushing for an Australian republic with a directly elected Head of State and other real reforms to the Constitution including recognition of Indigenous Australians, recognition of local government, and cutting the number of Senators.

Chair of the Real Republic Australia group, David Muir, said two events had been organised for Thursday 22 March 2018 to give locals the best chance to have their say:

- 11am — Room 101 Building 17 Faculty of Science and Engineering at James Cook University campus
- 7pm — Rydges Hotel, 23 Palmer Street.

“The Real Republic recognises Australians want real reform not empty symbolism, and that means a directly elected Australian as our nation’s Head of State, not one chosen for them by politicians,” Mr Muir said.

“The Real Republic is proposing real reform by giving a directly elected Head of State a role in appointing and overseeing anti-corruption and integrity bodies at the federal level.

“At the moment that is left to politicians in the executive government who are in effect appointing Caesar to judge Caesar and it’s one reason our politicians and our system of government are held in such low repute.

“When we hold a referendum on Australia becoming a republic we should also consider other Constitutional changes that deliver real reforms to benefit Australians.”

He said they included:

- recognition of Indigenous Australians,
- changes to the Senate including fewer Senators for each state,
- synchronised elections for the lower and upper houses of Federal Parliament and four-year terms,
- applying to the House of Representatives the casual vacancy system now used by the Senate to cut costs by avoiding by-elections, and
- local government recognition.

Mr Muir said the 1999 referendum that followed the 1998 Constitutional Convention failed because an unacceptable model was rejected by Australian voters.

“Australians clearly wanted a say in who would be their Head of State, and they still do,” he said.

“But at the November 1999 referendum they were asked to vote on a politicians’ version of a republic.”

“We want a Real Republic and that means a directly elected Head of State and other real reforms.”

The Real Republic was founded after the 1998 Constitutional Convention held in Canberra by delegates including:

- the late Dr Clem Jones AO former Lord Mayor of Brisbane,
- Ann Bunnell former Deputy Mayor of Townsville in Queensland,
- Brisbane lawyer David Muir, also chair of the Clem Jones Trust
- Ted Mack former mayor of North Sydney and independent MP in both the NSW and Federal parliaments, and
- Phil Cleary former independent federal MP for the Victorian seat of Wills.

Mr Muir said the Real Republic organisation continued to be supported by the Clem Jones Group.

“Clem’s track record in local government and his belief in talking to people at the grassroots level is a reason our first meeting is in regional Queensland,” he said.

“We have chosen Townsville for our first public meetings because the republic issue is one that’s relevant to all Australians wherever they live, especially in our regional communities. It is not just an issue for inner-city ‘elites’.”

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