



**THE HON RICHARD MARLES MP
SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE
MEMBER FOR CORIO**

**E&OE TRANSCRIPT
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PYNE & MARLES
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CHRISTOPHER PYNE: Well, good afternoon and welcome to *Pyne & Marles* here on Sky News Live. It's Friday, 1 December, 1 o'clock Eastern Standard Time. I'm Christopher Pyne here in Adelaide, and my comrade in arms on this show is Richard Marles, and he's Geelong. Welcome, Richard, I understand you're having a leaky old time of it down there in Geelong at the moment.

RICHARD MARLES: Well, I like being addressed as a comrade there, Comrade Pyne. I am-

PYNE: -I do it to keep you happy.

MARLES: I was going to ask you about how the great flood is going in Adelaide. Certainly, it's starting to happen here in Geelong and I posted a photo on Twitter, but the Sky studio here is now officially leaking, and more so in fact than a Turnbull Cabinet, but how are things-

PYNE: -Oh yeah, boom boom.

MARLES: -going over there?

PYNE: Well, last night, of course, we were told that there was going to be this catastrophic weather event so I was out clearing out my drains in the carport while my 17- and 15-year-old sons watched me bemusedly, which I found most unsettling and gave them a good mouthful about that.

But in the end we ended up with a lovely rain that lasted all night and was very deep and good for the garden, so I hope that's what ends up happening in Geelong. It was quite floody in Port Lincoln, but Adelaide last night escaped the worst of it, I think, although we did have the ubiquitous power outages that come with living in South Australia under South Australian Labor Government.

MARLES: Well, you had to get your dig in.

It is projected to happen here. Erin Pearson, who is the Sky technician and her day job [AUDIO BREAK] Geelong Addy journalist, she's covering the great flood, told me that Ocean Grove Primary School is asking for sand bags, that the Barwon River is expected to flood Saturday night, Sunday morning, so we will what transpires.

But there's a lot going on in Canberra and we should talk about.

Yesterday, of course, we had the announcement of a banking royal commission by the Prime Minister. We're going to talk about that. Next week we are back in parliament. We'll have a chat about what's in store. And Senator Sam Dastyari has been in the news again, and we'll be talking about Sam.

PYNE: Your mate.

MARLES: Our guest today is Peter FitzSimons, the Chair of the Australian Republican Movement, and in the which saw the announcement of the marriage between Prince Harry and Meghan Markle we're going to talk to him about the Australian Republican Movement is faring.

First of all, the banking royal commission. We had an announcement yesterday that the Government is now going to conduct a royal commission into the banks. Have a look at this.

MALCOLM TURNBULL [CLIP]: We have made it very clear we are not going to establish a royal commission.

JOHN HOWARD [CLIP]: I would be staggered if the Coalition proposed a banking royal commission. That is rank socialism.

TURNBULL [CLIP]: Cabinet has met this morning and has determined that the only way we can give all Australians a greater degree of assurance about the financial system is through a royal commission into misconduct into the financial services industries.

BILL SHORTEN [CLIP]: Why don't you just for once in your life, rather than bag the Opposition, sit down with us, because after all the banking royal commission was our idea.

MARLES: So, Christopher, the backflip of the Prime Minister on a banking royal commission is absolutely breathtaking. Either there is a need for a banking royal commission or there is not. What does this guy actually stand for?

PYNE: Well, Richard, if we needed any more evidence of the economic irresponsibility of the Labor Party, then the banking royal commission demands and the issue that you created was it. The reality is none of the people in the Coalition who agitated for a royal commission would have got anywhere if it wasn't for the fact

that the Labor Party was prepared to throw economic responsibility to the wind in order to once again press on the bruise of grievance against the banks.

What we've ended up with is a royal commission to be headed by Kenneth Hayne, it's just been announced before our show started, that will look into the general insurance companies, industry superannuation funds, and the banks. I hope it'll produce a good outcome. What the Government did was to act, to act to deal with the damage that Labor was doing to the banking sector for your own base, political motives yet again.

MARLES: OK, so let's take it from there. If the point of this is actually a political fix to shut everyone up, can I just ask you this question: is the banking royal commission going to be a serious royal commission?

PYNE: Well, Kenneth Hayne is a very serious royal commissioner, a very serious former justice of the High Court, so of course it will be a serious royal commission. We're in charge of the terms of reference. What the Government's done is taken back control of the political agenda from the attacks on the financial sector which was hurting the economy. We are getting on with the job and ensuring that we don't have a royal commission initiated by the Senate, supported by the Labor Party, which damaged the economy. We'll ensure that we get a good outcome, and at the same time make sure the financial services sector, which is one of the basic foundations of our economy, is not damaged by Labor irresponsibility.

MARLES: OK, so if there is going to be a serious royal commission, then doesn't that mean, Christopher, that there is a serious issue to look at?

PYNE: We felt that we were acting, Richard, on the issues around banking, and that we were getting on with the job of strengthening the powers of ASIC, strengthening the powers of APRA, giving them more resources, changing the law, but Bill Shorten once again wanted to play populist politics with the issue. Attacking the banks is not very hard if you're in politics. People look at the banks and see them making big profits. They don't necessarily recognise the foundational nature of their role in the economy. I'm sure plenty of Labor people do, but they were prepared-

MARLES: -So we don't need a royal commission?

PYNE: Well, we've got one now, so we might as well get on with it.

MARLES: [LAUGHS] You are all over the place. That's the whole point. You've got a prime minister who has no idea what he stands for and has no consistency at all.

PYNE: Well, if you hadn't been so irresponsible attacking the banks we wouldn't be in this position now, but we're taking control.

But we're also taking control of this show, and moving onto the next subject, because the clock tells us we have to, and that is the parliament next week, so let's take a look at some of the comments that have been made ahead of next week's sittings of the parliament.

GEORGE BRANDIS [CLIP]: I am so proud of Australian democracy today.

PENNY WONG [CLIP]: There are some days which are of great moment which change our country for the better. This is such a day.

PAULINE HANSON [CLIP]: I will be abstaining from voting.

MATT CANAVAN [CLIP]: I unfortunately cannot support this unamended bill.

LINDA REYNOLDS [CLIP]: I have never been prouder to stand up in this place.

DEAN SMITH [CLIP]: In a world where there are more tensions people than ever our country has offered a loving embrace to its own.

SCOTT RYAN [CLIP]: The result of the division is ayes 43, noes 12. The matter is resolved in the affirmative. The bill is passed. [CHEERING]

PYNE: Well, Richard, next week the parliament will sit. We'll deal with citizenship and the dual citizenship issues. We'll get a motion passed on Monday which I hope will be supported by the Labor Party to ensure that matter is resolved.

We'll also deal with marriage equality, and exactly as Malcolm Turnbull promised marriage equality will be law by the end of the year, before Christmas. It couldn't have come soon enough, and quite frankly I hope that we don't have the Labor Party playing stunts all next week, but instead we just get on with the job of delivering marriage equality. I hope you feel the same way.

MARLES: Well, firstly on citizenship, it is important that we get some process which enables the country to move beyond what has been a very farcical situation.

On marriage equality, I'm looking forward to next week. It was hard not to be moved by the scenes that [AUDIO BREAK] had a look at there that have been going on in the Senate during the week, and I very much look forward to a similar moment in the House of Representatives come this week, so I think it's going to be one of those great days in parliament.

But I suspect, Christopher, as the Leader of the House your riding instructions are to get us in the parliament and out of there as quickly as possible, because one thing you don't want to see next week is an extended meeting of the Government party room discussing the Prime Minister's leadership.

PYNE: Richard, I'm not worried about that. I'm more worried that Labor will instead use the parliamentary sitting week, knowing that we're two members down, to create stunts and distractions that would take away from what should be a national unifying week. We've had a plebiscite. 62 per cent of people want marriage equality. I think Labor should guarantee, I think you should promise today, that Labor will not distract on other issues and will just focus on citizenship and marriage equality next week. Can you give that guarantee?

MARLES: We'll pursue, consistently, the issues we always have, and I can absolutely assure you that seeing marriage equality become the law of the land will be a critical issue in the coming week, but the Deputy Premier of New South Wales rang the bell-

PYNE: -No guarantee.

MARLES: -this morning. Let's see where it goes.

But we do need to move on. This week has also seen Senator Sam Dastyari be in the news again. Have a look at this.

SAM DASTYARI [CLIP]: A recent audio recording shocked me, as it did not match my recollection of events. I take responsibility for the subsequent mischaracterisation.

GEORGE BRANDIS [CLIP]: Senator Dastyari lied to public.

BILL SHORTEN [CLIP]: Senator Dastyari, as best I can tell, and I believe this, hasn't broken any laws, but he's exhibited poor judgement.

MALCOLM TURNBULL [CLIP]: That is disloyal conduct of the highest order. Dastyari should the leave the Senate.

MARLES: So, obviously the Prime Minister [AUDIO BREAK] the end there were hysterical, but what we have seen here is Senator Sam Dastyari expressing views which have been contrary to the position which was taken by the Labor Party when he did, and they remain contrary to the position the Labor Party holds now in relation to the South China Sea, and you know Cristopher that I feel very strongly about the need for Australia to take a very tough position in respect of the South China Sea.

He's paid a price for that, and it's a big price. He's no longer any part of the Shadow Executive. He's not in a leadership position within the Senate [AUDIO BREAK] is firm leadership on the part of Bill Shorten. It's a difficult decision. At one level it's a very sad decision, but it's the right decision, and it's a decision that the Prime Minister can't take, for example, in relation to Michalea Cash. I mean she, on five different occasions-

PYNE: -Honestly Richard, you can't try and distract with that.

MARLES: -said things which were not true in the Senate. She is still there. There is a huge chasm between the leadership of Bill Shorten and Malcolm Turnbull when it comes to these issues.

PYNE: Oh rubbish. I mean, seriously, you're too good for that nonsense. If you seriously think that Michalea Cash and Sam Dastyari are on the same plane then you're cooked, as my children would say to me.

Answer me this question, Richard: do you think the leaks against Sam Dastyari are coming from within the Labor Party in New South Wales?

MARLES: I have no idea where the leaks are coming from. I do know this, though: some of the information which has made its way onto the front pages of our national media during the week, I feel very confused about in terms of how it could have come to light, and indeed I think the Attorney-General has made that comment during the week as well, so if we want to talk about national security I think there does need to be an explanation for how some of this information has made it onto the front page, but there is-

PYNE: -OK, but unpack this for me, Richard: so in 2015 Sam Dastyari was accused of being a rorter of the ALP leadership ballot that saw Bill Shorten elected against Anthony Albanese. That hasn't been resolved yet. Is this payback against Sam Dastyari for the alleged role he played in being accused of rorting Bill Shorten's election as leader of the Labor Party?

MARLES: Of course not, and I know you love the political soap opera. Of course it isn't.

PYNE: What was the result of the investigation?

MARLES: Sam made an error of judgement. He has paid a very significant price. It's a difficult decision to make. It was the right decision to make. The leadership in making stands in stark contrast to the Prime Minister – but Christopher, unfortunately, we've run out of time. We need to go to a break.

PYNE: We could keep going, if you like?

MARLES: Join us afterwards when we'll be talking with Peter FitzSimons.

[AD BREAK]

PYNE: Well, welcome back to *Pyne & Marles* here on Sky News Live. Earlier Richard and I caught up with Peter FitzSimons, the head of the Australian Republican Movement, in a week where the royals announced the engagement of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle. Let's take a look at how that interview unfolded.

[INTERVIEW BEGINS]

PYNE: Peter, thank you very much for joining us. While I've got you as the head of the Australian Republican Movement, do you see any irony about the fact that members of parliament like John Alexander, whose dad's been in Australia since 1907 apparently can't sit in the Australian parliament, but our head of state couldn't sit in the Australian parliament, even if they wanted to?

PETER FITZSIMONS: Absolutely. I mean, it's been, I must say, it's been extraordinary from the Australian Republic Movement, because a lot of Australians just look at it and go 'what?' I mean, you look at Senator Larissa Waters. The constitution said 'you're what? You spent the first three months of your life in Canada? You're technically a Canadian citizen? Well, get the hell out of this parliament!', at the same time saying 'you want to be the head of state of all of

Australia? Well, you have to be 100 per cent English', and you have the extraordinary situation last week where the three new senators were sworn in replacing the three senators that had gone out because of dual allegiance – what is their first act as the cleanskins come in? 'I swear allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen of England.' I mean, absolutely breathtaking, but what it's seen in the republican movement we've had, mostly when the membership goes up it's because we're rowing hard, making it all work. Just lately the extraordinary thing is overnight and every day it's going up and it's going up and it's going up because people are looking at this and saying we have a colonial constitution. It needs to be modernised, it needs to be brought into the 21st century so that we can run our own show. The first peoples were independent beneath the Southern Cross. We are nudging toward 250 years since Captain Cook set foot in Australia, and it's about time that we, all of us together - I am, you are, we are Australian – all of us together were independent once more beneath the Southern Cross.

MARLES: Well, Peter, the three of us in this conversation are all republicans, so I certainly think that is absurd, what you pointed out in terms of the allegiance to the Queen in the context of the citizenship debate, and I'm glad to hear that numbers in the republican movement are going up.

I guess one of the things that I'm interested about is we've seen a lot of coverage during the last week around Prince Harry and his marriage, impending marriage to Meghan Markle, and I think it is fair to say this generation of royals are a pretty attractive proposition in the public eye. Do you reckon that makes it harder for the republican movement in Australia today?

FITZSIMONS: Not particularly. I mean, I know I do think and speak on behalf of the republic movement on this. We wish Prince Harry and Meghan Markle very well. That looks like a great romance and they seem so clearly in love and we all wish them to live happily ever after.

The point that I have made on this very issue: there's a huge amount of interest in them, like there is with the Kardashians. It's a similar, fabulous story and people love that, and the point is after we become a republic all of that will go on. I daresay that 15 years from now wee Prince George will go out on his first date and *The Women's Weekly* will cover it in full, and the *Today Show* and *Sunrise* will cross breathlessly because he's been seen outside this nightclub. We'll be a republic. Everybody will be still interested. I'll be interested. It's great stuff, but it's not to do with us.

The thing that really interests me on that is that you have an English man, Prince Harry. You have a wonderful American woman, Meghan Markle. They meet. Their first progeny, whenever that may come, if they're blessed to have children, their first progeny will be the sixth in line to be the Australian head of state. Can anybody see a problem with this?

I mean, in all of this stuff, we need to be our own people and I think more and more people are seeing that, and if I may recall, Minister Pyne, my admiration for your support of same-sex marriage. It was fantastic, and I believe there has been a progressive energy released in our country where people are looking at that. That was so fabulous. There's such euphoria around it, so widespread, this has

happened, it's all happened despite some pretty hardline opposition to it. What can we move on next?

And I also think that's responsible for the surge in republicanism, and I also want to say, Minister Pyne, if I call Malcolm Turnbull, our Prime Minister, I have no doubt that he is the most passionate republican in the land. You, even though you deny it, are the most eloquent, and I reckon you should give us a quick verse on how come your for the republic and why, because I've heard you speak on it. You're as good as it gets.

PYNE: Now, Peter, I'm the interviewer on this occasion. You have to answer our questions.

So, my next question to you, and probably the last one because we're running out of time, is the ARM doing work on the model? Because last time we lost because we couldn't get the Australian public to embrace the kind of model that I think they wanted. I think they wanted a directly elected president, and they didn't understand why they couldn't have one, but that had hairs on it itself, in terms of the powers of the new head of state. Is your ARM doing the work that's needed to be done so that next time we don't have those confusions?

FITZSIMONS: Not only have done work on the model, we have done work on communicating to the Australian people what the model will look like, or one of the models will look like, because the answer is if I right now said 'so, I'm passionate for the minimalist model'. So, just very quickly, the minimalist model is under the current system the democratically elected leader of the people, the Prime Minister, selects the Governor General, then he asks the Queen of England is it ok? So under the current system the democratically elected leader of the Australian peasantry is reduced to asking the unelected leader of the English aristocrats 'is it alright with your unelected Englishness what I, as democratically elected leader, have decided to do.'

Under the minimalist model, everything stays the same: we stay the Commonwealth of Australia, the Governor General stays called the Governor General, and the Prime Minister chooses the Governor General, simply doesn't ask the Queen of England – asks the parliament of the people. It would be a version of that.

Direct election, again, that model's being worked on, which will be, I suspect, when it's all come through, it'll be something like the Irish system which works very well.

There are still other people who would rather have no tier above the Prime Minister whatsoever.

But the point with the Australian Republic Movement, it's not for us to say 'this is our model.' If I said the ARM stands for the minimalist model or the ARM stands for the direct election model, for example, or the no tier model, the answer is what the ARM stands for is trust Australian democracy. We're going to go through, shortly, a robust debate between us as to which is the preferred model of the Australian people. Then, I imagine, that model will be put up against the status quo and I am for the minimalist model, but if the Australian people in their collective wisdom say 'no, we

believe we want to have a direct input into who should be our Governor General', I'll be first to form up the queue to say it worked really well in Ireland, let's do it like that.

I met with the Irish President, wonderful man, President Professor Michael Higgins, the other day, and he was addressing a crowd in Sydney, and it was fantastic. I had a moment of understanding of how well that system works because he stood there not as a great power, he doesn't have anything like the political power of the Irish Prime Minister, but as a symbol of Ireland and a representative of the Irish people overseas.

We have, as our Governor General, a very, very fine man in Sir Peter Cosgrove, who I like and admire a great deal. With the greatest respect to him, however, when he stands before the people he is representing Her Majesty, the Queen of England, in Australia, and it's a different vibe. We need an Australian who represents Australia to the world and to us, and we're getting there.

MARLES: And that is exactly, exactly where we need to be, Peter. We've run out of time. Thank you very much for joining us this afternoon.

FITZSIMONS: Thank you.

MARLES: It is a really important debate. All power to your arm, and I really hope we can celebrate the ups and downs and the joys of the royal family but do so as a republic at some point.

FITZSIMONS: Thank you, and if I can say one more thing: Minister Pyne, you're a powerful voice in your Cabinet. Bill Shorten has made a commitment that should the Labor Party win the next election they will bring on a referendum with one simple question. It will be: do you think Australia should have an Australian as our head of state? It'd be fantastic if the Liberal National Party could match that commitment, take it beyond the political realm, give it bipartisan support. We, the ARM, are totally bipartisan, if not tripartisan, quadripartisan. We're non-partisan. We support you all, but what we most support is the republic movement, and what would be great would be if the Liberal National Party could match the Shorten commitment to take it out of the realm of politics and just say 'we're Australians, this is the 21st century, it's time to get this done.'

MARLES: And there's the challenge.

PYNE: Thank you for joining us. You're pan-partisan.

FITZSIMONS: That's the one I'm looking for. Thank you.

[INTERVIEW ENDS]

MARLES: And that brings us to the end of the show. Great talking with you again, Christopher, and join us next week on *Pyne & Marles* on Sky News at 1 o'clock next Friday. We'll see you then.