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SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE  
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**E&OE TRANSCRIPT  
TV INTERVIEW  
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AM AGENDA  
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***SUBJECTS: Newspoll; Bourke Street attack; Republic***

**HOST:** Let's go live to Melbourne, now. The Shadow Defence Minister, Richard Marles, joins us. Richard, what do you make of the comparison between Latham and Shorten? Is there a risk that Shorten could do a Latham here?

**RICHARD MARLES, SHADOW MINISTER FOR DEFENCE:** Well, I think what's relevant is that we're talking about politics and the volatility of it and political landscapes. Simon Benson is right when he makes the point that there is a long time to go between now and the next election and anything can happen and that's the attitude that we're taking to this.

The Newspoll happens every two weeks and there'll be another one two weeks from now. They'll say what they say, but our job is actually to present ourselves as an alternative government, to do everything we can to try and win the next election because I think Australians are desperate for us to try and do that. We've very much got our feet on the ground and we're focused on that end and we're not so much worried about what happens every fortnight on Monday.

**HOST:** Yeah, we're saying six months and that's right of course, in terms of the overall time, but when you factor in Christmas and various other focuses like on Victorian and NSW elections, for example, the time for any change here or getting people to listen is not as big as some might think in terms of, you know, the summer period, of course, when we're all focusing on the cricket and the tennis.

**MARLES:** I get that, Kieran, but I think ultimately a lot happens in the election campaign itself. I think the truth is that most people don't focus on politics until a couple of weeks out from an election, and that's really when you get into the business end of the season. It is a bit like the finals in the footy, so what we're seeing is the home and away season at the moment and who's at the top of the ladder, but finals is a different issue and that's the same with an election

campaign.

We really have our heads around the fact that anything can happen, that there is a long way to go, and that in order to get through the campaign and do it in a way such that people vote for us on election day we have to be focused on being an alternative government, being policy big, having ideas out there and propositions about the major challenges which face our country and that's what we're trying to do.

**HOST:** The events of Friday, Richard Marles, shook Melbourne, no doubt, but also shook the psyche of the nation somewhat. Do you think everything was done that could be done to prevent what happened?

**MARLES:** Obviously I'm not privy to all the details around that. What I can say, Laura, is that we do have the best national security agencies, intelligence agencies, that exist in the world and we should take some comfort in that. It's not to be complacent and it's not to say that there shouldn't be scrutiny and inquiry in respect of any particular incident. Obviously there should be, because that's a part of the process of making sure that our agencies continue to be at the highest standard they're at and that they continue to improve, but we are looked after by very, very competent people and we shouldn't forget that and we should take considerable comfort from it.

**HOST:** One of the debates that is ongoing is about the extremists who are residents, as opposed to citizens, and it's an understandable one, but my understanding is the Government and the Minister has already ample power under the legislation to deport extremist residents, so to speak, versus citizens, as this individual, this perpetrator, was an Australian citizen, so it's fine for us to be having that discussion, but as I mentioned that individual who carried out this atrocity was actually an Australian citizen anyway.

**MARLES:** That's an absolutely fair point to make, Kieran. We can have a conversation about the character test, section 501 of the Migration Act and how strictly that's applied, and actually we've been supportive of it being applied very strictly and we've been supportive of the way the Government has acted in respect of this over the last five years. We ourselves applied that test in the same way when we were in government, and if there is any particular measure in relation to our legislative regime which needs to be looked at here we're willing to sit down with the Government and have a look at it, but your point is fundamentally right: the perpetrator on Friday was an Australian citizen and the Migration Act doesn't come into play in that context.

**HOST:** Anne Aly has come under fire for parading - not my words - her, I guess, academic record, but it's really wrapped up in a lot of politics. What do you make of her comments about there not needing to be any extension of police powers, instead authorities should be doing more to work with families? Isn't that already being done?

**MARLES:** Well, Anne is an absolute expert in this area. Her work on counter-terrorism and dealing with extremist elements has been lauded not only here in Australia but internationally, so the last thing I'm going to do is put criticism in respect of what Anne says. I think when Anne makes comments in this space it's compelling listening, really.

Obviously, we need to be doing, or our agencies need to be doing, everything they can, and I know that they are in terms of working with the communities involved to, as I think David Irvine said, the head of ASIO, or former head of ASIO, that this is the first line of our defence, so it is a really important thing that that continues to occur.

**HOST:** Do you think, though, it's appropriate? As you say, Anne Aly is well-trained in this area, knows a lot about it, but I guess the comparison that jars for some observers in this debate is when she says that violent jihadi behaviour, violent jihadism terrorism as it's known, pales in comparison to the amount of violence perpetrated through domestic violence? That was the point she made yesterday on Sky News, and I guess, you know, is it really something you can compare when, for example, and you've already alluded to this, our counterterrorism officials have seen 90 people charged with terrorism offences as a result of counter-terrorism related operations around this country since 2014 - 90 people charged with those potential offences. The only reason it hasn't been a whole lot worse is because of our agencies have been so effective. Is it appropriate to compare one form of violence with another, in that sense?

**MARLES:** I'm not going to cast judgement on the way in which Anne has put this. The truth is that we do need to be doing everything we can to deal with the question of violent extremism within our community. We need to continually be vigilant about it, and last Friday was an example of it. It is obviously also true to say that domestic violence is a scourge within our society as well and we need to have a really important focus on it.

**HOST:** Richard Marles, just one final question. Do you think it was a good idea to announce your policy for a republic on Remembrance Day?

**MARLES:** Firstly, we've had policies in respect of a republic out there for some time now. I think it's really important that we are developing our national sense of identity and our national institutions. I get that it's not as present an issue for people as things like health and education, and of course they will be the priorities of any incoming Labor government if we're given the opportunity to govern, but but it's also really important that we are developing our national institutions along the way. I think the point that we're trying to make here is that if given the opportunity to govern this this will be something that we will tend to and ultimately the foundational questions to our nation underpin a lot of what government is about, so I think it is completely appropriate and I think it's actually really important and we can do that while dealing with you know the immediate exigencies of government which will present themselves.

**HOST:** Shadow Defence Minister Richard Marles, thank you for that.

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