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**E&OE TRANSCRIPT
RADIO INTERVIEW
NEIL MITCHELL 3AW
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SUBJECT/S: ALP Election Review.

NEIL MITCHELL, HOST: Deputy Leader Richard Marles, good morning.

RICHARD MARLES, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY: Good morning Neil, how are you?

MITCHELL: Bill has to go, doesn't he?

MARLES: Look, the situation of the last election was complex but of all the findings that were made, those in relation to Bill are in a sense the least relevant. The lessons that we have to take forward are about making sure that our message going into the next election is much clearer. It can be bold, it can be ambitious, but it's got to be clear and simple. The economy's got to be a part of it and we are very determined to make Anthony Albanese the Prime Minister in three years' time.

MITCHELL: But look at it a different way. Paul Kelly, very well respected commentator says, it is clear his ambition is undiminished, he leaves nobody in doubt of his availability to come back as Leader that's not good for Anthony Albanese or the party. How can you tolerate it?

MARLES: Well Bill is on the frontbench he's doing a good job there. He's made it clear he's

not interested in the leadership.

MITCHELL: In the next 20 years, he's going to stay around 20 years. You really think he wouldn't have a go at the leadership over 20 years?

MARLES: Well what I'm focused on Neil, is making sure that Anthony Albanese is the next Prime Minister of Australia because that's what we need to make sure happen. I don't think there is any affection for this Government.

MITCHELL: Do you think there is any affection for Labor?

MARLES: Well I think we went through a very difficult election and I think the review is a part of that-

MITCHELL: But whose fault is that? Was your own fault wasn't it, Bill Shorten's fault? Your fault?

MARLES: No, absolutely and I think there is a very deep sense that we all have- that we lost this by our own hand, no question about that. And that's why we needed to do this review and that's why we need to learn the lessons so that we are actually listening to the Australian people on the message that they gave us on May 18- and it was a very difficult message. Can I just say this Neil, at the end of the day- what happened on May 18 with Labor put forward a proposition and it got rejected. I think I think that's what occurred and we need to be really clear about that and we need to learn the lesson about that.

MITCHELL: But that's the lesson you should have learned in 2016 and really, really are you saying you lost because you put too forward too many policies?

MARLES: I think that's a critical part of it and I think that's the lesson that we need-

MITCHELL: Is it possible they were bad policies? I mean I was reading through this report and I thought these are precisely the editorials that I was delivering and other people were delivering through the campaign. You are not listening, you are targeting elderly people, there's an air of arrogance about it, there's class warfare all these things were starkly obvious and yet you can't blame policy detail when you were so far out of touch.

MARLES: It's part of it and I agree with everything you just said and we're not resigning from that. I mean this is a difficult reading there's no question of it. But be clear, maybe

you're ahead of the game-

MITCHELL: Well everybody was.

MARLES: Well sure and that was evident by the result that occurred on May 18 and I'm not pretending I saw this before May 18 but I am saying that 20-20 hindsight kicked in almost immediately. But this report is no holds barred, it's difficult reading but we are doing it and we are going to take this message forward. And I think your point is right. We know you can't go forward with a message which seeks to divide and that's what the review says in terms of all the language around top end of town. That's not what we're going to do going forward, our messages going forward are going to be very clear, very simple and they're going to have at its heart the economy and making sure that the Australian people know that we're a safe pair of hands with that. And that what we seek to do is to bring people together. It's not about trying to divide Australians.

MITCHELL: Well, where did the class warfare line come from? Whose idea was it to pursue that?

MARLES: Well what matters going forward is that that's not part of our message as well.

MITCHELL: Well you're asking us to trust you. Who blew it? Who said class warfare - there's a great idea?

MARLES: Look you can read the review in terms of those questions. What matters to me is that we learn the lessons that are relevant in terms of going forward. And, so you know apportioning blame is much less of a concern to me as it is to understand what was wrong and make sure we fix it going forward and that this is not a part of how we do business. Anthony Albanese is the person leading us right now. We're going to have a message which will have the economy at its heart and it will be a message which seeks to unite Australians not divide them. We'll leave the division up for the Government. That's the basis upon which we will seek people's support in 2022.

MITCHELL: There are a number of ex-leaders and sort of people around the Labor Party-State and Federal level- who are pretty wise old heads. I'm told some of them were saying to Bill Shorten and others during the campaign you're blowing it, you're getting it wrong, be yourself, stop this confected, character, stop the arrogance. Are you aware of that happening?

MARLES: Well I think there are people who will say things after the event-

MITCHELL: No, no this this was said to me during the election campaign. We have been trying to get to Bill and get him to do this. That was said to me by several people, who you would consider wise heads in the party. Are you aware of that happening?

MARLES: Well I was I wasn't aware of it at the time.

MITCHELL: Again you're aware of it now and where it has-

MARLES: I'm not trying to say to you that that we got it all right, we clearly didn't.

MITCHELL: The point is the Leader or somebody didn't listen because even the wise heads in your party, the old guys- if you like, the dinosaurs- were saying to Bill and others in the Party you're getting it wrong this way.

MARLES: But Neil, I guess the point I'm trying to make is an assessment of a Bill, It forms part of the story but it's the least relevant set of conclusions in terms of lessons that we draw going forward. Because he's not the Leader, the Leader is Anthony Albanese and he is the person who we are seeking to make the Prime Minister at the next election. And we need to draw- there are lessons from this election which are relevant to his leadership and that's making sure that our messaging is clear, that it doesn't seek to divide Australians because I think the points that you're making a right. We understand that and so that's not going to be a feature of how we go forward.

MITCHELL: Can I just look at it in another way? I know a number of people within the Shadow Cabinet were uneasy about the campaign. I don't know whether you were one of them or not but I know that others were. And then they'd go public and they'd be all 'oh it's all terrific, it's all supportive, you know Bill's doing a great job' and privately saying 'oh we're blowing this.' Can't we have some honesty in politics? Can't we have some careful criticisms? Say, 'well you know, I think we could be a little bit less concentrating on class warfare,' 'well maybe the franking credit policy has to be adjusted.' Do we have to have this facade?

MARLES: Well I think honesty is absolutely what we seek to achieve. To be honest, I wasn't wise before the event, I wish I was but I wasn't-

MITCHELL: Fair enough.

MARLES: But, I was invested in the strategy that we had and what is now very clear to me is that that strategy was very flawed and ended up in the result that it ended on May 18. So all I know is, I don't speak with any you know false sense of 'I told you so' because I didn't. If anything, I speak with a sense of guilt. And I know that we've got to get these lessons right going forward and we are really determined to win the next election. And I do think that there's not any particular affection for the Morrison Government. I think frankly you put it right. You know what happened on May 18 is; we blew it. It wasn't so much about what Scott Morrison did and I think there are millions of Australians crying out for us to make ourselves competitive at the next election and that's what we're going to do. The heart of matters is learning these lessons. And doing it in the most honest way possible and I actually think this review is searingly honest.

MITCHELL: What was the most damaging policy in your view?

MARLES: I'm not going to go through that.

MITCHELL: Why? Why not?

MARLES: Because I think there is a long process that we need to go through to make sure that we get those policies right.

MITCHELL: But surely you're not going to revisit franking credits or the negative gearing issue?

MARLES: I think the raft of policies that we had in the tax and the economic space meant that people did not feel that we are a safe pair of hands when it came to the economy. Now I don't think you can win an election unless you gain a licence from the Australian people to manage the Australian economy- and that's what we now need to seek. So we will be talking about the economy in terms of growth, in terms of productivity every single day between now and the next election to make sure that we win the confidence of the Australian people, to get that licence to manage the economy because that is essential to winning an election.

MITCHELL: So is it possible some of those policies could survive?

MARLES: Look, I think you will see a very different proposition before the election-

MITCHELL: Is it possible some of those policies could survive?

MARLES: We've got the time to go through this, Neil and we're not about to rush into it now-

MITCHELL: You're not ruling it out.

MARLES: But you will see a very different proposition from Labor going forward in the next election. And you know, I don't mind saying, I think that people with franking credits found that a particularly difficult policy. I think you will see a very different position from Labor as we go into the next election. But having said that, we're going to take the time to go through each of these policies in turn and make sure that we get it right and that the economic focus going into the next election is one of growth and productivity and seeking a license from the Australian people that we can manage the economy as a safe pair of hands.

MITCHELL: So a different sell or a different proposition?

MARLES: No, no different proposition.

MITCHELL: Fair enough.

MARLES: I mean I think a different sell too, but a different proposition.

MITCHELL: Do you accept it's not bad to be wealthy?

MARLES: Of course it's not bad.

MITCHELL: Do we accept that there are actually legal forms of tax reduction which people are intended to follow.

MARLES: Yes, totally.

MITCHELL: Do we accept that high taxing is bad even for wealthy people.

MARLES: I think that that can absolutely be bad.

MITHCELL: What do you mean?

MARLES: Well I think that the level of taxation needs to be appropriate and you can overtax the economy for sure.

MITCHELL: Okay, thank you very much for your time. Good luck with it.

MARLES: Thanks Neil.

MITCHELL: Richard Marles, Deputy Leader of the Labor Party, thank you very much.

ENDS

Authorised by Paul Erickson, ALP, Canberra.