

NO MONEY TO POLICE RIVER FRONT LAWS

23 June 2021

The Victorian Labor Government will not provide a single cent of new funding under the 2021/22 State Budget to monitor and enforce new laws which allow camping on licensed water frontages, says Member for Benambra Bill Tilley.

At the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings, Minister for Environment Lily D'Ambrosio also confirmed no funding or support for farmers who are unable to obtain adequate insurance for the increased risks of pollution, fire and biosecurity hazards.

Late last year, the new laws removed the longstanding prohibition on camping on licensed water frontages. Under new regulations currently proposed to take effect in September, people could camp for 28 days within 200 metres of farmers' homes.

Mr Tilley was in disbelief at the lack of planning and the confirmation that \$601 million has been cut from the DELWP budget.

"This just demonstrates the ineptitude of this government that fails to resource these plans despite the exposure of everyone with river fronts leases," he said.

"What do they do, fence it off and leave it to the Labor Government?"

"DELWP's struggling to look after the public lands that they have now, how will they do it with \$601 million less than they had last year?"

"I'm sick and tired of having to identify and highlight this navel gazing government's failures – they are just completely ignoring regional and rural Victoria in just about everything that they do."

Labor promised new powers would be given to Parks Victoria Officers to enforce new offences created by the regulations such as interfering with livestock, damaging wildlife or native vegetation, or polluting the area with waste.

However, this week the Minister for Environment conceded that no additional money had been allocated to Parks Victoria to enforce these new camping laws.

The Minister told the Parliamentary hearing she was confident the new laws could be adequately managed under existing budget measures.

Mr Tilley said it was the frontline that copped the brunt of the cuts.

"I know the people on the frontline are as frustrated as anyone else over the lack of resources," he said.

"They have a big job to do and this doesn't help."

MLA
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