

Media Release



Victorian
Farmers
Federation

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VFF calls on Parliament to block harmful camping legislation

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) is urging Victoria's Legislative Council to block the harmful legislative proposal to remove the existing prohibition on camping on licensed water frontages.

VFF President David Jochinke said the proposal was an ill-conceived election promise that has not been properly thought out and would have negative impacts on the environmental values of Victoria's rivers and streams, threaten farmers' livelihoods and create undue stress for landholders.

"The Government has failed to talk to farmers and landholders about the potential impact on them and the river environments."

"Put simply, this legislation is akin to letting people camp on someone's nature strip."

"Farmers are at their wits' end because they are the ones that have been managing this licensed land for years, improving vegetation, protecting stream health and reducing grazing," Mr Jochinke said.

Licence holder Angus McKinnon of Licola who has led the Petition that has attracted over 3000 signatures from concerned Victorians said that licence holders had to be included in decision making.

"There are serious biosecurity, workplace safety and environmental impacts from people entering farms and we need a regulatory system that respects that."

"It comes back to making sure campers are accountable. We can't have a situation where landholders are left with rubbish strewn all over the place."

"If cows are calving, dangerous weather is predicted or revegetation works have just been completed then farmers need to be able to say 'no, camping isn't appropriate at this time'."

Licence holder Stuart Gilmore of Thornton said it's vital camping is limited to regulated, approved zones to ensure the safety of campers and the community is maintained.

"There's real concerns around emergency services and access to some of the proposed water frontage camping areas."

"Whether it be ambulance access in the event of a medical emergency or the ability of a CFA tanker to even get to the site of a fire, it only takes a small delay for a tragedy to unfold."

"Add to the fact there are no proper toilet facilities, bins and fire pits, this proposal just makes no sense."

"That's why we need to ensure camping only remains in regulated sites throughout Victoria," Mr Gilmore said.

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