

MICHAEL O'BRIEN MP

Leader of the Opposition
Leader of the Liberal Party
Shadow Minister for Small Business
State Member for Malvern

PETER WALSH MP

Leader of the Nationals
Deputy Leader of the Opposition
Shadow Minister for Regional Victoria and Decentralisation
Shadow Minister for Agriculture
Shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Shadow Minister for Bushfire Recovery
State Member for Murray Plains

GEORGIE CROZIER MP

Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council
Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party in the Legislative Council
Shadow Minister for Health
Shadow Minister for Ambulance Services
State Member for Southern Metropolitan Region

Friday 28 August 2020

State of Emergency legislation

The Liberal Nationals will oppose Labor's proposed legislation to extend State of Emergency powers over Victorians for a further 12 months.

Victorians deserve a plan out of lockdown. Labor only has a plan to keep us locked down.

Victoria is only in the second wave of COVID-19 due to the inexcusable failures of the Andrews Labor Government including the botched hotel quarantine program and shortfalls in contact tracing.

Recognising that Labor's mismanagement of this pandemic means that some public health measures need to continue beyond 13 September 2020, the Liberal Nationals will be proposing a number of amendments to Labor's legislation that will better protect the rights of Victorians.

The Liberal Nationals amendments are essential to ensure that the Andrews Labor Government does not continue to bypass Parliament and misuse these extraordinary powers in ways that damage Victorian lives and livelihoods.

Five key principles include:

- 1) State Of Emergency may only renewed on a month-by-month basis subject to Parliamentary approval in both chambers
- 2) Removal of Clause 6 of the Bill which lowers the threshold for the Chief Health Officer to exercise State of Emergency powers
- 3) Confirming that the right of Parliament to meet cannot be undermined by State of Emergency directions
- 4) Remove the proposal for current State of Emergency powers to apply even when there are no COVID-19 cases in Victoria
- 5) Any amendments to renew State of Emergency powers are only applicable to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other oversight and transparency measures will also be proposed by the Liberal Nationals.

The State of Emergency is the legal framework under which the current wide-ranging restrictions on people's lives and livelihoods including restrictions on leaving your own home, business closures, travel bans, quarantine arrangements and curfews are made.

Labor is demanding a blank cheque to keep Victorians subject to these extreme powers for another year with little accountability or oversight.

This is dangerous to Victorians and to our democracy.

The Liberal Nationals will always stand for Victorians' rights and freedoms in the face of government overreach.

Comments attributable to the Leader of the Opposition, Michael O'Brien:

"Never before have millions of Victorians had their livelihoods and freedoms ripped out from under them.

"These essential and sensible changes enable us to continue the fight against COVID-19 without giving Daniel Andrews a 12-month blank cheque with no accountability.

"Victorians deserve a plan out of lockdown. Labor only has a plan to keep us locked down for another year. The Liberal Nationals will fight that all the way."

Comments attributable to the Leader of the Nationals, Peter Walsh:

"The reason why State of Emergency is time-limited is because it gives government huge powers over the lives of Victorians.

"The Premier wants a 12-month extension of these unprecedented powers which would allow him to limit accountability, including shutting down Parliament.

"We need to ensure that some powers are in place to ensure we can continue this fight, but we're not prepared to give this power hungry Premier 18-months of increased power."

Comments attributable to the Shadow Minister for Health, Georgie Crozier:

"Labor's failures to manage this COVID-19 pandemic have caused enormous damage to Victoria, including costing hundreds of lives.

"Our amendments recognise that we cannot go from Stage 4 to Stage Zero overnight, but Labor must be accountable.

"The Liberal Nationals will support Victorians to get through this pandemic while holding the government to account for the damage it has caused."

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