

From: Graham Springett <Graham.Springett@parliament.vic.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 25 August 2020 10:05 AM
To: Graham Springett; 'bob_mann@thecommunityforum.com.au'
Subject: Proposal to extend the Andrews Government's emergency powers

Thank you for reaching out about the proposed extension of the Victorian Government's emergency powers.

I share the concerns about giving the government extended emergency powers, particularly given how they have used them so far.

Premier Daniel Andrews is trying to work out how he can introduce a State of Emergency with no expiry date, having already extended it by four weeks to September 13 and pushing it to the six-month legal limit.

I have been inundated with requests to oppose any such attempts, and that is absolutely what I intend to do.

This virus needs to be managed, but not at the expense of livelihoods and wellbeing. We have been reading every day of damage to health, society and local economies as a direct result of the actions enabled by the State of Emergency declaration.

Our civil liberties have been taken by grasping emergency powers under an enabling act, and it has been an epic failure: we have seen COVID-19 cases rise throughout the declaration, which demonstrates how ineffective it has been.

People who forget to wear a mask or go to a supermarket outside a specified zone are not criminals and should not be treated as such. Victoria has issued more in fines than any other state or territory in Australia.

The Liberal Democrats are a party dedicated to defending the freedom of the individual. While those freedoms are usually slowly being chewed away by the ordinary actions of government, the last six months has seen the ongoing attack on freedom turned up to 11. If allowed to continue, the freedoms lost will never be regained in full.

To be clear, I don't believe there is a conspiracy to overthrow our democracy. Instead we are dealing with the usual encroachment of government into our lives, but the virus emergency has put this erosion of freedom on fast-forward, and suddenly it is clear to many people who otherwise would not have paid attention. Instead of the slow boil, the heat has suddenly been turned up, and some of the frogs have noticed.

If we don't make a stand now, not only will we be trapped in this ongoing nightmare for at least 12 months, but in future the government will be happily reaching for emergency powers more and more often, for smaller and smaller issues. There is always a life to be saved if only they have more power to control us. It has to stop.

David Limbrick and I, the two Liberal Democratic party members in the Victorian upper house, guarantee that we will fight this in every way we can. Fighting for freedom is what I campaigned on. It is what I have fought for during the last two years, and it is absolutely what I will do with this power grab.

I believe we need to not just stop the expansion of the emergency powers, but amend or repeal the legislation altogether, to ensure future governments never do this to us again.

Fighting for the Northern Victoria electorate, and the people of Victoria is what I have vowed to do and this attempt at the extension of emergency powers is the latest in many attacks under Premier Daniel Andrews' War on the Regions.

Together we can stop this.

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