

High chance of drier and warmer than average autumn

Labor Will Improve Crown Land Management

According to the Labor Party, they will improve the way in which Crown Lands in NSW are managed by legislating greater protections, hiring more frontline staff and making the Commissioner for Crown Lands permanent.

Shadow Minister for Lands, Mick Veitch said that Labor would move quickly to provide greater parliamentary protection for showgrounds, travelling stock reserves, parks and other significant reserves by dedicating them under the Crown Lands legislation.

"This will mean a future Minister cannot transfer or sell important Crown reserves without going to Parliament first," Mr Veitch said. Labor would create 20 frontline permanent jobs across regional offices in Crown Lands focused on land management, bushfire mitigation and client services.

This represents a near 10 per cent increase in the entire Crown Lands workforce.

Daley Labor would also make the Commissioner for Crown Lands a permanent standing role to provide better advocacy and protection for our state's valuable crown lands.

"This Government doesn't care about future generations – all it cares about is a mad dash for cash."

Mr Veitch said the Government was selling off public land like TSR's and crown roads without giving thought to their broader community and public value.

"TSR's and crown roads can be key access points for anglers, canoeists and bushwalkers," Mr Veitch said.

"Labor's commitment will ensure greater community engagement with the community, and one of the first tasks we will set is the creation of local and regional plans for Crown lands so the community has input into the management of public land."

"Labor will invest in the management of public land so it is not mismanaged and lost for future generations."

Labor said under the Berejiklian Government it had got to the point where most Crown Land offices were no longer open to the public.

"This is an investment in regional jobs which will create opportunities for young people to get kick start their careers without having to move to the major cities," Shadow Minister for Lands Mick Veitch said.

The Opposition pointed to a recent study by the Australia Institute which showed the greatest impact of the Berejiklian job cuts was on regional NSW. In announcing its Crown Lands' policy, Labor also committed to



The Bureau of Meteorology has released its updated 2019 Autumn Outlook, showing drier than average conditions are likely for large parts of northern and eastern Australia, and warmer than average conditions are very likely for the entire country.

It comes on the back of what will be Australia's warmest summer on record.

The bureau's manager of long-range forecasting, Dr Andrew Watkins, acknowledged the outlook is not the news many would be wanting to hear. "After a record hot December and January, it won't come as a surprise that this summer will be our warmest on record, and apart from areas of northern Queensland, many locations fell short of their summer rainfall averages too," Dr Watkins said. "Unfortunately, the outlook isn't giving a strong indication that we'll see a return to average or above average rainfall in many areas over the autumn period. The only exception is for parts of inland Western Australia.

"Autumn is obviously a critical time of year for agriculture, particularly in the southern parts of the country. It's important to remember that despite what the outlook is suggesting, individual heavy rainfall events are always possible, and people should

stay up to date with the latest seven-day forecast and warnings for their area."

The outlooks also show that warmer than average conditions are very likely to continue through autumn.

"If we have a look at what's driving the outlook, we can see that Australia's two main climate drivers in the El Niño–Southern Oscillation and the Indian Ocean Dipole are currently in a neutral phase, meaning there's no strong influence from either," Dr Watkins said.

"But things have been warming in the tropical Pacific Ocean over the past month, so we are currently at El Niño WATCH – meaning double the normal chance of an El Niño forming in autumn.

"We are also observing cooler than average waters off the coast of Western Australia, which may reduce the number of rain-bearing systems impacting the south of the country.

"We also know that 24 of the last 29 years have seen a drier than average start to autumn in south eastern Australia, due to a long term southwards shift of our weather patterns."

The bureau said Summer 2018-19 is among the top ten driest since national rainfall figures started in 1910.

Extra Farm Funding Available



Extra Funding Now Available For Farmers Drought affected farmers who are receiving Farm Household Allowance (FHA) can access an additional lump sum payment of up to \$6000 from today. The payment is the second supplementary payment made available to struggling farmers by the Coalition Government this financial year, bringing the total value of additional support to \$12,000. Human Services and Digital Transformation Minister Michael Keenan said the payments are helping thousands of rural families to keep their heads above water during exceptionally difficult times. "We distributed more than \$18 million to over 5,500 farmers through our first round of FHA supplementary payments last year," Minister

Keenan said. "Eligible couples receive \$6,000, while single farmers are eligible for \$3,600. "These supplements are additional to the regular payments farmers receive each fortnight through the FHA scheme, providing some stability in their short and longer-term future." Recipients of FHA also have access to their own Farm Household Case Officer who can help them develop and action a plan to improve their farm business. Minister for Agriculture David Littleproud said more than 10,000 people have received FHA since it was introduced in 2014. "If you're already on the FHA you don't need to do anything. You'll automatically get this second payment," Minister Littleproud said. "Farmers in hardship who haven't applied for

FHA should do so before 1 June 2019 so they can get up to \$6,000 extra. "If you need help applying, contact the free Rural Financial Counselling Service. They'll help with the paperwork and can find other assistance you might be eligible for." Farming families also now have an extra three hours in the evening to access support and assistance, with the Farmer Assistance Hotline opening from 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday. Minister Keenan said the extra trading hours recognise the unique challenges farmers face, including the long hours they spend working on their properties. "We want them to be able to access our services at a time that works for them, which is often later in the evening when they've finished work for the day,"

Minister Keenan said. "Our phone staff are highly trained and can help farmers to determine their eligibility, assist them with the application process and tell them what additional support is available in their local areas. "I encourage anyone who is thinking of applying or would just like to seek more information about available support to call the hotline today," Mr Keenan said. For further information about Farm Household Allowance and how to apply, visit humanservices.gov.au/farm-householdallowance or call the hotline on 132 316