



DAVID MORRIS MP
Member for Mornington

Environment Minister Must Meet Mount Martha Community on 'The Pillars'

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Mr MORRIS (Mornington) - I raise a matter this evening for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change.

The action I seek from the minister is that she meet with Shire of Mornington Peninsula councillors, local emergency services representatives, interested community members and myself to hear firsthand the issues with "The Pillars" at Mount Martha and that she do so as a matter of urgency.

I raised this issue in the House in February 2016, in September 2016, in February 2017 and now in October 2017. I have even tabled a petition about this matter, and we still have not seen any real action — lots of talk, lots of words, but no real action — to try to resolve this issue, and it is a significant issue.

This is a location remote from Mount Martha village and a long way from any beach. It is a cliff that people jump off, that kids jump off, and they have done so for generations, but whereas there were two or three or four or 10, there are now two or three or four or five or six or seven hundred at a time, and it is causing significant problems.

The Mornington Peninsula Shire has identified that there are significant environmental and cultural heritage impacts. The sheer volume of foot traffic is causing significant erosion in the locality.

There are obvious safety risks associated with jumping from The Pillars in terms of injury from jumping into shallow water, but there are also safety risks associated simply with accessing The Pillars in the first place and the number of pedestrian movements on a road that is simply not capable of handling that sort of traffic.

There are an enormous number of illegally parked cars, and it is clearly unsafe in the vicinity of The Pillars. There is antisocial behaviour, there is offensive behaviour, there is increased fire risk and there are challenges for emergency services simply getting through the cars that are illegally parked.

The council has written to the minister and asked for her consent to fence off the site as a temporary measure. She has written back and said, 'No, you can't do that'.

But I think what she does not appreciate is the enormous diversion of resources, particularly

for the emergency management services and for the police.

The strain that this situation is putting on those services is immense. It is greatly inconvenient for the local residents, and there are some security issues and concerns for them, but the strain being placed on the local emergency services is intolerable.

I urge the minister to come down and talk to the groups I have identified as a matter of urgency.