

Axed fund safety fear

Schools, churches in security plea

EXCLUSIVE
JADE GAILBERGER

SCHOOLS, places of worship and community groups staring down race- and religious-based security risks are slated to receive funding under a new federal program being drawn up to boost safety and reduce crime.

Multicultural leaders and the opposition have voiced concerns about Labor's move to axe round seven of the Coalition's contentious Safer Communities Fund, worth \$50m, in the federal budget. But the Herald Sun can reveal the Albanese government is developing a new program to replace the fund, which provided grants for CCTV, lighting and support for groups working with high-risk youth.

"We are a government of integrity and we are looking at new measures to deliver support to local communities based on genuine need," a

spokesman for Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus said.

The Coalition was accused of using the \$184m Safer Communities Fund to help campaign in target seats. It is the subject of a parliamentary probe into commonwealth grant programs, after the Auditor-General found applications were not assessed fully in accordance with the guidelines.

But opposition community safety spokesman Jason Wood has slammed the decision to cut round seven, saying a new program would add millions in administrative costs and take months to establish.

"Labor has abandoned the multicultural community and young Australians by scrapping this funding," Mr Wood

said. "All Australians deserve to feel safe and secure in their communities."

Macnamara MP Josh Burns confirmed he had met with the Executive Council of Australian Jewry regarding its request for the government to provide support to bolster security, and its advocating measures to minimise the ongoing costs of security guards, which man most schools.

Kali Mata Mandir, at Craigieburn, is reeling following four break-ins in three years.

The Hindu temple's acharya, Bhawna Gupta, said it applied for a \$250,000 grant for new CCTV, alarms, security gates and fencing under round six of the Safer Communities program, but missed out.

Ms Gupta was hoping to re-apply for support but said it was "heartbreaking" that round seven was slashed.

"Please help us, just continue this funding," she said. jade.gailberger@news.com.au



Santa is joined by Sailor, 4, and Marlo, 4, as David Jones launches its "world of wonder" festivities at its flagship Bourke St store. Picture: David Caird

CHRISTMAS COMES TO TOWN

IT'S beginning to look a lot like Christmas at the David Jones flagship store on Bourke St, where the prettiest sight to see is its "world of wonder" festivity.

Things are getting very merry and bright for the department store's 184th Christmas season. Santa has arrived for the season, along with toy soldiers, ballerinas and special festive treats.

"Customers will be met with a full range of services to accommodate their gift-

buying and season-dressing needs," said flagship manager Monique Murray. Top of most visitors' Christmas wish list - a treasured picture with Santa himself - is set to be bigger and better this year.

"An all-new festive forest installation, and merry in-house characters (will be added) to create the ultimate Christmas photo experience," Ms Murray said.

Picture bookings are now open. davidjones.com

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Stop cruelty, choose empathy

The sentient, intelligent wild Brumbies roaming the Victorian plains deserve a chance at a new life.

There's a tragedy occurring at this very moment. In the rugged, alpine wilderness of Victoria, majestic Brumby horses are being killed by inhumane methods - and the Labor Government is condoning it by allowing Parks Victoria contractors to shoot these sentient horses in cruel ways.

According to the Australian Brumby Alliance (ABA), Parks Victoria is killing Brumbies by gunshot. The ABA alleges this is unlawful, does not comply with the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and is running a case in the Supreme Court of Victoria asking the Court to decide.

Management of a non-native species does not justify inhumane practices for population control, there are many skilled volunteer rehoming groups available to collect and retrain the horses for



domestic use. In fact, Parks Victoria has been trapping Brumbies for rehoming for over 10 years until recently when the Labor Government permitted Parks Victoria to abruptly cancel Brumby rehoming.

Understandably, the volunteers who had worked tirelessly to raise money for feed and other related costs for the Brumbies were angry and frustrated that Parks Victoria had suddenly reneged on their delivery - and extremely



saddened to learn that Parks Victoria would instead begin shooting them. It is a tragic waste of these highly intelligent, versatile, and easily trained animals.

With kinder, more humane alternatives available to the Victorian Government to control wild Brumby populations, the ABA urges Victorians to give Brumbies

the chance of new life as a valued domestic horse; instead of wasting the lives of so many intelligent, versatile horses with cruel bullets.

Stop the callous action that inflicts unnecessary pain on our sentient Brumbies by voting for parties and Independents who have a NO Brumby shooting policy.



ABA Australian Brumby Alliance

To help save our wild Brumbies and find out more, visit australianbrumbyalliance.org.au.

Authorised by Australian Brumby Alliance of 132 Kent St, Richmond VIC 3121