

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP
Minister for Police
Minister for Water



Friday, 24 June 2022

STATEMENT FROM LISA NEVILLE

In what is one of the hardest decisions I have had to make, and only after consulting with doctors, family and my friends, I have decided to not re-contest the seat of Bellarine in the 2022 state election.

I have informed the Premier and will continue as a Minister until such time as he announces a new Cabinet.

I have had the privilege of working with three Premiers – Steve Bracks, John Brumby and Daniel Andrews – and taking on a range of portfolios during those times.

I thank Steve and John for the confidence they first showed in me, with Steve appointing me as Victoria's first Minister for Mental Health in 2006, and John later appointing me to critical social policy portfolios in 2007.

But I want to particularly thank Daniel who has been a great friend and support during my time in the Parliament. It has been a great honour and privilege to serve as a senior Minister in his Cabinet since 2014.

During much of this time, I have been responsible for the key portfolios of Police, Water and Emergency Services. Each portfolio has had unique and major challenges.

In 2016, I became Victoria's first female Police Minister and have since become the longest serving Police Minister in Victoria. I am proud to have worked closely with Daniel to deliver the single biggest investment and expansion in police resourcing, equipment and capability.

This investment is delivering record numbers of police members and introducing new laws and reforms to ensure police are better resourced and equipped than at any other time in their history. All of this during a time when the operational environment facing police is the most complex and uncertain it has ever been.

All of my efforts in this portfolio have been shaped by a deep and abiding respect for the work of each and every member of Victoria Police. We ask so much of Victoria Police. And they always deliver. To each member of Victoria Police, sworn and non-sworn, thank you so much for your work and service.

In 2014, I was appointed Minister for Water. During the eight years since, with the support of the Premier, I have transformed the water sector, with better and diverse leadership across the entire sector. The water grid has been expanded, there is far greater water security for Melbourne, and we are well positioned for the challenges of the future.

For the first time, Traditional Owners have had water returned to them, and we've met our Murray Darling Basin environmental obligations while at the same time locking in the future prosperity of northern Victorian irrigation communities.

Between 2018 and 2021 I was responsible for Emergency Services. All of the state's career and volunteer emergency services staff give so much of themselves in the service of Victoria.

It was humbling to work with all of them during this time, but particularly during the 2019/20 bushfires when half the state was on fire and their efforts saved the lives and property of so many Victorians. Fire Services Reform, including passage of presumptive rights for firefighters is another highlight.

The Andrews Labor Government has embraced policy reform at a pace never seen before in Victoria, and led strongly through the challenges of recent years.

We have advanced the social and economic interests of all Victorians and have always been driven by a deep sense of fairness and a need to protect the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community.

For the balance of this term, I will keep working to ensure Daniel and his reform driven government is returned at the next election.

Last year I was hospitalised after a long running fight with Crohn's disease. After a long and complicated battle with the disease, I was determined to return to work and the privilege of serving the Victorian community.

I also wanted to start a more open discussion about Crohn's. I wanted to prove that despite its debilitating effects, that anyone who experiences the disease does not have to be defined by it. That's why I was determined to return to work and resume my work responsibilities.

Being the Minister for Police and Minister for Water are jobs I love and am still so deeply passionate about. I share that passion for all of the portfolios I have had over my career.

I have only known one way to approach public life and that is to invest every ounce of energy into it. Being an MP and a Minister is a unique privilege and one that demands your total focus.

My recovery in 2021 allowed me to resume work in late 2021, but I know I cannot give another 4 years. I wish it were otherwise, but I must be honest with myself, the wonderful people I work with and the Bellarine community.

I will remain the Member for Bellarine until the election. Representing the diverse regional communities across the Bellarine has been my life for 20 years – it is a beautiful part of Victoria, and I am so privileged to represent the interests and aspirations of the wonderful communities in the electorate.

But while it is no longer sustainable from a health perspective for me to commit to being Minister and local member for the next term, I am not finished with public service and look forward to finding other ways to continue to contribute to public life after the election in November.

I have too many people to thank individually and there will be opportunity in the months ahead to properly acknowledge and celebrate the efforts of all who have worked with me.

For now, I want to collectively acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues and the fantastic staff at the Parliament, my caucus colleagues, particularly the Geelong caucus, my electorate and ministerial office staff over the many years, leaders in the union movement, the many and talented public servants I've worked with, my dear friends and family, and especially my son Sam who has sustained me through this journey for the last 20 years.