

## Roads `neglected'

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Benalla Ensign

The Benalla Ensign visited Lima East last week at the request of local residents who felt their perceived risks were being "neglected" by council.

Locals Robert Farrell, Michael Wignay, and Frank and Dana Kalousek discussed issues that concerned them during the Ensign's tour of Lima East Rd, Tulley Rd and Gandini Lane.



Puel: Robert Farrell points out a "furnace waiting to happen" on Lima East Rd.

Branches - both dead and alive - were pointed out overhanging the roads, while piles of logs and branches lined both sides of the road. A thick canopy some locals called the "alley of death" cloaked parts of Lima East Rd.

Tulley Rd resident Mr Farrell said people who live in Lima East "have still not got through to council", despite years of asking for help.

"There are logs piled up on the high side of the road," Mr Farrell said.

"They will all roll onto the road when a fire burns away debris under the logs.

"This poses a danger to vehicles driving through smoke ahead of a firefront," he said.

"We saw examples of this during the Black Saturday fires with following vehicles piling into one another and then being engulfed in flames.

"Overhead branches and damaged trees will also fall.

"Isn't council obliged to provide a safe escape route in the event of bushfire for the 60 people in the immediate area?"

Other concerns were for children travelling along local roads, particularly Lima East Rd.

"Look at that canopy over the road," Mr Farrell said. "Kids travel up and down here - who's going to be responsible for the school bus being crushed?"

The Kalouseks bought land in Tulley Rd in 1974 when farmland was subdivided, and built their house in the 1980s. Mrs Kalousek said it was "lovely" when they first lived there, with a communal area of several acres featuring a dam for firefighting purposes, all maintained by council.

"It used to be nice and clear," Mrs Kalousek said.

"The grass was all cut and we used to walk around."

Mr Kalousek said the area used to be popular with residents for a picnic and get together.

"A local man made a couple of tables about 15 years ago," he said.

"It used to be well-maintained by Delatite Shire but now it's all overgrown.

"This subdivision was created under the old shire and maybe councillors have a different opinion of how to treat us now."

Mr Kalousek said it was "not fair" on local residents who clean their gutters and keep their properties weed-free.

"There should be co-operation on both sides with keeping clean blocks."

The Ensign has learned that the CFA cut the existing path from Tulley Rd to the dam to access the water, however the majority of the area had scrubby growth of up to 2 m high.

Mr Farrell said the area was a "disgrace" in its current state.

"It's overgrown with all the things we're not allowed to have on our properties: teatree, blackberry, bracken and rabbits," Mr Farrell said.

"Why can council get away with it?"

Mrs Kalousek said council took photographs of a property across the road after neighbours complained about the dangers of the long grass.

"The person is not there, but the grass still is," she said.

"This is dangerous to all of us living here.

"We are neglected."

Gandini Lane resident of four years, Michael Wignay, said local residents felt ignored by council over their concerns.

"Our main worry is the access in and out of here in a fire," Mr Wignay said.

"Everyone living out here knows the environment they're living in; they clean up their own block and do everything they're supposed to.

"We should be able to clear the roadside ourselves and use the fallen trees as firewood," he said.

"But all we'll get is a fine.

"This is out of control."