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Police break up East West protest

POLICE yesterday morning broke up a group of East West Link protesters who had gathered at a North Carlton site to disrupt drilling work. It was the third time in recent days that police had moved picketers from tunnel drilling sites to allow workers to get to the rig. Protester Mel Gregson said picketers were "thrown to the ground" as the police moved them from the drill site at the corner of Princes and Station streets at about 9.30am. Collingwood resident Keith Fitzgerald, 70, whose Bendigo Street house is to be acquired as part of the road project, fell or was knocked as police moved protesters on. About 30 protesters returned to a caravan base at the corner of Brunswick and Westgarth streets in Fitzroy. The protest delayed drilling for about three hours. A Victoria Police spokeswoman said police monitored the protest and were investigating reports of criminal damage at the site. There were no arrests and no injuries, she said.

Police pursue paroled killer

THE search continues for Wayne Leslie Norris, 30, who has not been seen since August 22, when police say he did not comply with his parole conditions. Police said the parolee, who has 50 convictions, had missed an appointment and was not living at an approved address. Detective Superintendent Peter De Santo said Norris was believed to be somewhere in the Latrobe Valley or along the Victorian-NSW border, near Wodonga, but police had been unable to find him. "He's high-risk," he said yesterday. "As far as we know, he has not committed any further offences whilst he's breached his parole." He said police had held off on notifying the public about the missing parolee for six weeks because publicity could sometimes escalate the risk to the community or cause the offender to flee. Norris was paroled in June from a minimum jail term of 6 1/2 years for a 2005 killing.

Warning on fire under-insurance

THE official in charge of handing out Tasmania's disaster recovery money has warned that too many households were under-insured as the bushfire season approaches. Pat Leary, who chairs the committee overseeing the distribution of money raised after Tasmania's worst bushfires in half a century, said the danger of under-insurance was one of the lessons of the crisis. "It's become pretty obvious that we're possibly all under-insured when push comes to shove," Ms Leary told reporters in Hobart, as the final instalment of the Tasmanian Bushfire Appeal's \$8.7 million was released. Three hundred applications for help to ease ongoing hardship are being assessed. A complex formula has been developed to determine how much applicants should get, with factors such as insurance payouts being considered. Ms Leary said

adequate insurance and the necessity of a bushfire plan were the major lessons of January's blazes, which destroyed 400 structures but, remarkably, claimed no lives. ``We just need to come to terms with the fact these things happen. We have no control over them," Ms Leary said."

No ill will from Collingwood star

DALE Thomas yesterday declared that he held no ill-feelings towards Collingwood after confirming his desire to join its historical rival Carlton in a multi-million-dollar deal. The 26-year-old did not attend the Magpies' best and fairest awards last Friday after being advised that fans would be angered by the move. Collingwood president Eddie McGuire declared the club was determined to put to an end to the ``self-first" attitude that had crept into the club, a message that seemed clearly aimed at those departing the club.