

# MEDIA RELEASE

RUTH FORREST MLC  
PO BOX 104  
WYNYARD TAS 7325  
TEL: 03 6443 8600  
FAX: 03 6443 8603

## 22 YEARS OF DREAMS DOWN THE DRAIN

Flowerdale couple St John and Sylvia Smith planned for 22 years to build their retirement home on their block of land at Stutterds Road in Moorleah. However the Lennon Labor Government's policy on the Protection of Agricultural Land has put an end to their dreams. Under the Protection of Agricultural Land Policy houses can not be built on rural land unless they are an integral and secondary part of a primary industries enterprise.

"The Protection of Agricultural Land Policy introduced by Labor in 1998 had the original intention of protecting "Prime" agricultural land, that is land classed 1, 2 or 3. At times this policy is now being interpreted to include all rural land classed 4, 5, 6 and 7", said the Member for Murchison Ruth Forrest.

Ms Forrest said "No-one wants to see farms subdivided particularly those on prime agricultural land – but for existing titles of small acreage lots, it is ridiculous that people are not allowed to build their homes on or that they have to prove a business on the property before they can build on it".

Ms Forrest stated that she had personally viewed St John and Sylvia's block of 50 acres and agrees that a house is the only sensible use of the ground. "Forestry have said it is unsuitable for tree plantations, local farmers have said it is not suitable for expansion of their properties due to the poor ground and yet we have the government saying they have to make it financially viable before they would consider allowing a dwelling on the block – it is a ridiculous situation".

St John and Sylvia's case went before the Resource Management and Planning Appeals Tribunal RMPAT at the beginning of the year. "We were treated like criminals in a court of law – for just wanting to do what we had intended to do for the past 22 years – build our retirement home" said Mr Smith. "By being resident on site will ensure ongoing productivity of the land and minimising stock loss which has obvious benefits over leaving the land idle" said Ms Forrest

Ms Forrest said that a Legislative Council Select Committee had been established for Planning Schemes, however she said that with the State Election less than 2 weeks away the public have a right to know where political parties stand on reviewing this Policy.

7<sup>th</sup> March 2006.

For further information, please phone 0419 879 524.

St John and Sylvia are available to speak with the media on 64422521 or 0408 372 420