

# MEDIA RELEASE

RUTH FORREST MLC  
PO BOX 104  
WYNYARD TAS 7325

Tel. 03 6443 8600  
Fax. 03 6443 8603

## FORREST RAISES CONCERNS ABOUT LONG-TERM VIABILITY OF WYNYARD AIRPORT

Member for Murchison, Ruth Forrest, said today there is widespread concern in the Wynyard community in relation to the proposed shortening of one of the runways at the Wynyard airport.

Ruth Forrest MLC said that she has sought assurances from the Burnie City Council regarding the potential effect on small aircraft, in particular the air ambulance service, in sub-optimal weather conditions.

"All residents of the community - particularly the West Coast in poor weather conditions - rely on accessibility to this airport," Ruth Forrest said.

"Road accidents where victims require transfer via air to major facilities for ongoing treatment, are more likely to occur in poor weather," Ms Forrest said.

"The Burnie City Council have given their assurance that their advice from aviation experts is that the proposed shortening of the runway would present no safety risk or any reduction in capacity.

"However, a lack of consultation with the Tasmanian Air Ambulance Service and other pilots who regularly use this airport, has resulted in increased concerns and frustrations," Ms Forrest said.

Ms Forrest said there is currently opportunity for community members to lodge representations regarding the proposal to rezone this area of land as residential.

"Concerned residents and interested parties should take this opportunity to raise concerns through the appropriate appeals process. I encourage them to do this; representations close on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2005," Ms Forrest said.

Ms Forrest said that expansion and further development of the airport is part of the Burnie City Council 20 year strategic plan.

The Burnie Airport Master Plan, under zoning and landuse states: 'Future development in or near the main flight path of Burnie Airport will need to be strictly controlled so that physical or operational expansion of the airport can be accommodated.'

"The Wynyard community is particularly concerned that the draft amendment to the Waratah-Wynyard Scheme may in the long term result in reduction of the airport's capacity if houses are built at the Eastern end of the runway," Ms Forrest said.

"Support for the Wynyard airport as the regional airport for North West Tasmania should be progressed over the next few years," Ms Forrest said.

"I call on the Burnie City Council to ensure wide community consultation and inclusion of all key stakeholders in decision making.

"The long term viability of the airport for all potential users must be assured," Ruth Forrest said.

Ends

May 13<sup>th</sup> 2005

For further information, please phone 0419 879 524