



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Media Release

Wednesday, 27 August 2008

Politicians need to get their hearing tested

Politicians may have talent in talking, but most would agree they can always improve their hearing and listening skills and now they have their chance as part of national Hearing Awareness Week.

One in six Australians have some form of hearing loss and this is expected to increase to one in four by 2050, making hearing loss more common than cardiovascular disease, diabetes, asthma, cancer and mental illness.

Tasmanian politicians, parliamentary staff and the public are having their hearing checked as part of the Week and many politicians are taking the opportunity to have a free hearing screening, including Murchison MLC, Ruth Forrest.

Ms Forrest said Hearing Awareness Week, which runs from 24 - 30 August 2008, raises community awareness about the deaf and hearing impaired and educates the public about hearing loss.

“This is an annual reminder to all Tasmanians to take care of their hearing and get regular hearing screenings,” Ms Forrest said.

“With such a large incidence of hearing loss in Australia, it is important to have regular hearing screenings as early detection means better treatment outcomes for preventable hearing loss.”

Ms Forrest is also calling for the Tasmanian Government to offer a subsidy scheme to enable those suffering from severe to profound hearing loss to have access to specialised smoke alarms.

“Many people with a serious hearing impairment do not have the financial capacity to purchase a specific smoke alarm device suitable for those with hearing loss,” she said.

“Affected individuals require a portable tactile smoke alarm with a flashing strobe light and vibration warning.

“I urge the Government to make this issue a priority before the potential for serious injury and loss of life is increased.”

Ruth will be having her hearing checked at the Reception Room at Parliament House from 1.15pm TODAY (Wednesday, 27 August 2008)

ENDS

For further information: Ruth Forrest 0419 879 524