



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## PAL POLICY ANNOUNCEMENT

Murchison MLC Ruth Forrest responded cautiously today to the State Government's announcement that the review of the long awaited Protection of Agricultural Land Policy is complete and in order to give immediate effect to the revised Policy the Government intends to introduce the Policy as an Interim State Policy.

This Interim State Policy will be referred to the Resource Planning and Development Commission (RPDC) for further consideration and public consultation.

The Premier further stated that, due to inconsistency in interpretation, the revised PAL Policy will be accompanied by supporting documentation. This documentation will include a comprehensive Implementation Guide and a set of Model Planning Scheme Standards which could be adopted by local councils if they so chose. He also stated that the revised policy and guidelines could be found on the RPDC website.

"The only policy on the RPDC website is the revised State policy final draft 2007 and the guidelines could not be found at all today and it is therefore difficult to comment on the value of these guidelines" Ms Forrest stated.

"Of further concern is the Premier's statement that local council's can chose to adopt the Implementation Guidelines, inferring that they can also chose not to and rely on their own interpretation as has occurred in the past with a variety of problems for land owners" stated Ms Forrest.

"In the past some council's interpretation of the policy has resulted in the rejection of building applications on small rural blocks of land classified as class 4 or above, in spite of the Parliamentary debate in 1999 when the policy was initially established, that clearly stated the intention of the policy is not to stop people building on land not classed as 'prime agricultural land'" Ms Forrest stated.

Ms Forrest would encourage any land owners or other interested parties to visit the RPDC website, when it is updated and be prepared to make a submission in the review process if they wish to raise any specific issue related to this revised policy.

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For further information contact Ruth Forrest on 0419 879 524