



MEDIA RELEASE

RUTH FORREST MLC

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SMOKE ALARMS FOR HEARING IMPAIRED NEEDED BEFORE WINTER

Murchison MLC Ruth Forrest raised in Parliament late last year the issue of smoke alarms and the people in our community who suffer from severe to profound hearing loss. Ms Forrest informed the Government of the increased potential for serious injury and loss of life of these people as a consequence of many of them having only the financial capacity to purchase a standard smoke alarm rather than a specific device suitable for the hearing impaired.

As a standard smoke alarm will not provide an adequate level of warning protection for those with hearing difficulties Ms Forrest also asked the Government to consider a subsidy scheme to enable affected individuals to acquire a portable smoke alarm with a flashing strobe light and vibration warning, similar to that funded by the State Governments of South Australia, Victoria and more recently Queensland.

“Everyone agrees that operational smoke alarms save lives, however in the case of the hearing impaired they cannot hear their smoke alarm and to be afforded the same level of protection require an appropriate device” said Ms Forrest.

“As these devices are more costly than a conventional smoke alarm and many people with hearing impairment do not have the capacity to pay the full cost of an appropriate alarm, I urge the State Labor Government to provide a subsidy to those in need of this life saving technology” Ms Forrest stated.

In response to questions in Parliament last year, Ms Forrest has been advised that the Premier’s Disability Advisory Council has established a working group to look at assistive technology for people with disability and options to improve access to modern equipment and technology.

“Access to appropriate assistive technology, in particular appropriate smoke alarms must be a priority before the onset of winter, when the risk of house fires is much greater with the increased use of heaters and other potential sources of fire” Ms Forrest stated.

“Further delays have the potential to result in the loss of life, a much greater cost than \$50,000 per year for three years, a figure that I am advised would be the approximate cost to meet the needs of hearing impaired Tasmanians who would otherwise not be protected by a standard smoke alarm” Ms Forrest said.

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For further information phone Ruth Forrest MLC on 0419 879 524

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