

MEDIA RELEASE

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KONS CONFIRMS PAL POLICY TO INCLUDE REVIEW OF FORESTRY

Minister for Planning, Steven Kons on questioning during Budget Estimates yesterday by the Member for Murchison, Ruth Forrest MLC acknowledged that the terms of reference for the long overdue review of the Protection of Agricultural Land (PAL) Policy would provide for opportunity for comment in relation to prime agricultural land use, including the use of forestry plantations.

“The two areas that have caused a great deal of angst with regard to the application of the existing policy include the inability to build a residence on agricultural land and the increasing incidence of plantation forestry on prime agricultural land” said Ms Forrest.

“Whilst I fully support the forest industry, many agree that prime agricultural land, that is land classed 1, 2, and 3, is best utilised for vegetable and beef growing or dairying enterprises, and I consider it a threat to these industries to have plantation forestry encroaching on this valuable resource, especially when the water uptake issues are taken into account” stated the Member for Murchison.

“Most prime agricultural land that is currently utilised by the dairy, beef or vegetable industries, is surrounded by similar land and this increases the water availability issues” Ms Forrest said.

“I do not suggest that we should be dictating to land holders how or to whom they dispose of their property, however agricultural land use that ensures the long term viability of our primary industries must be assured” Ms Forrest stated.

It is very pleasing that the Planning Minister has acknowledged that this policy does need reviewing, not just for the building of dwellings on agricultural land, but for the plantation forestry industry on prime agricultural land” said Ms Forrest.

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For further information, please phone 0419 879 524.