

MEDIA RELEASE

RUTH FORREST MLC
PO BOX 104
WYNYARD TAS 7325
TEL: 03 6443 8600
FAX: 03 6443 8603

FOOTBALL PROMOTION FEVER

Murchison MLC Ruth Forrest has stated that the proposal to pay the Hawthorn Football Club \$1.5 Million per year to play four games in Tasmania from the funds allocated to the Tourism Promotion Plan is ill-considered and premature.

"Whilst AFL football is indeed a great drawcard for football enthusiasts in this State and a source of many players to the AFL, these funds have been provided to promote tourism in Tasmania in the face of the demise of Spirit 3 and it is very difficult to justify these particular funds being spent in this manner" Ms Forrest said.

It has been clearly identified that the regional areas in particular the North West and West Coasts will suffer the most in reduced tourist numbers from the withdrawal of Spirit 3.

"Before a decision such as this is made, surely some evidence is required to show that not only will Tasmania be promoted in this manner, but that any visitors to the State that come for the football, also stay more than just one or two nights in Tasmania, and visit beyond the CBD of Launceston, thus justifying the use of tourism promotion funds" Ms Forrest stated.

The Tourism Promotion Plan Working Party has been working with the community to determine the tourism promotion needs of the State. It has been clearly indicated through this process that it is the regional areas of Tasmania that require greater promotion than the metropolitan centres which are well serviced by low cost airline carriers.

"It would seem the Premier is either ignoring the working party or at least pre-empting their findings and ignoring the tourism promotion needs of regional Tasmania" Ms Forrest stated.

"When we consider the funds already provided to sport, including racing, by this Government, shouldn't this proposal be funded, at least partly through Sport and Recreation, especially when we consider that the majority of patrons at these games will be Tasmanians, not visitors to the State" Ms Forrest suggested.

16 August 2006

For further information, please phone 0419 879 524.