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Farmers acknowledge Hurlstone decision

NSW Farmers' Association Rural Affairs Committee Chair Sarah Thompson says Education Minister Verity Firth's announcement on the future of Hurlstone Agricultural School acknowledges the importance the facility has as an agricultural learning centre in NSW.

"We commend the Government for its commitment to the challenge recognised within the Peters Report for the need to teach cutting edge, scientifically based agricultural sciences and practice.

"However, the Association remains opposed to the reduction of any land size at this facility," Sarah Thompson said.

Minister Firth has indicated that the Government will secure an additional 30 hectare area to be leased for educational purposes, as well as selling off 10 hectares of land.

"This lease must be secured in perpetuity before the sale of the 10 hectares recommended in the report.

"While we applaud the Government's commitment to re-invest the proceeds of parcel of land into re-vitalising the school, the Association is concerned that this comes at a cost," Sarah Thompson said.

"The Government must recognise agriculture and food security as a key foundation of the State's education system and direct resources towards it.

"Agricultural education is a critical issue for the Association. The next generation will need to participate in a changing and increasingly globalised world, and they must be able to understand the resource needs for future food security.

"We need to excite young people to tertiary study in Agriculture, and find innovative solutions to the dynamic challenges facing agriculture. Current data show fewer than 800 graduates per year are produced across Australia each year - to fill more than 2000 jobs," Mrs Thompson said.

"Yesterday's commitment to the school's future as a centre of excellence, gives Hurlstone the opportunity to be one of the providers of that education," Sarah Thompson concluded

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