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Hurlstone Agricultural High School: Farmers welcome independent investigation

The NSW Farmers' Association has expressed its support for an independent inquiry into the proposed sale of land at Hurlstone Agricultural High School, announced by the NSW Minister for Education Verity Firth this week.

NSW Farmers' Association Rural Affairs Committee Chair Sarah Thompson says the inquiry provides an opportunity for members of the public to have input into the decision making process.

"The Association has long been working to increase the profile of agriculture and the message of sustainable food and fibre through our State's education system," Ms Thompson said.

"The practical agricultural education available at Hurlstone provides a key opportunity to develop this message and foster the agricultural leaders of the future.

"We are strongly opposed to the sale of land at Hurlstone, and we see this inquiry as an opportunity to raise our concerns directly with the Government.

"We encourage the Government in setting the terms of reference, and the independent panel in conducting the review, to ensure that they bear a true and accurate reflection on the broader context of agricultural education," Ms Thompson said.

Hurlstone is an extremely unique school in that it is the only State funded agricultural boarding school in a metropolitan area, and has a commercial farm running dairy, beef, pigs, goats, sheep, poultry, alpacas, cropping, vegetable production, orchards, horticulture and an agro-forest.

"Students at the school have the opportunity to work on the farm and learn all aspects of livestock reproduction, disease control, digestion, nutrition, farm business operations and agronomy – which is not a claim many, or indeed any, other schools in a metropolitan area could make," Ms Thompson said.

"With over 100 years of agricultural education history and a high number of graduates who go on to study and work in the agriculture field, saving Hurlstone's land isn't just about preserving the school, but also ensuring agriculture and farming continue to be a priority in the future," Ms Thompson concluded.

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