

MEDIA RELEASE

FOREIGN BUY UP OF AGRICULTURAL LAND NEEDS TO STOP

THE frightening trend of international consortiums purchasing large slabs of south-west farmland is threatening the future of Australia's agriculture sector, says Vote 1 Local Jobs founder James Purcell.

More and more international companies and governments are looking to our prime agriculture region to grow and develop products destined for international markets. The most recent is Linear Capital, with its Chinese partners planning to purchase dozens of south-west dairy farms.

"We've all heard the saying that Australia was built on the sheep's back. Our agriculture sector is one of our strongest economic bases and in the south-west the absolute foundation of our success," Mr Purcell said.

"If we continue to allow the foreign buy up of our prime agricultural land, what does that mean for our future?"

"It will mean the end of the family farm, the end of the next generation's farming aspirations and the end of Australia's independence.

"We need a strong structure in place to support the agriculture sector and we need it in place now."

Vote 1 Local jobs is proposing a First Farm Owners Grant to encourage young farmers to take to the land and continue Australia's agriculture sector.

"We should be charging 50 per cent stamp duty on all foreign purchases of Victorian land, be it farming or residential. That stamp duty should then be used to fund a First Farm Owners Grant and continue the First Home Owners Grant, to support the next generation.

"If we're not careful we will be working for foreign governments, not for Australia. South-west Victoria has the most valuable agricultural land in Australia and it is vital we keep it in Australian hands.

"Historically overseas companies pay less tax than their Australian counterparts, when operating here. If international companies own the land and run the businesses from the farm to the overseas consumer who will pay the taxes? If the taxes aren't paid in Australia who pays for our education, health, roads and pensions?"