

# Push for planning laws

A STATE Government move to "preserve the unique rural character of the Swan Valley" has fuelled arguments for similar protection for the Hills.

Infrastructure and Planning Minister Alannah MacTiernan announced on Sunday special planning laws for the Swan Valley.

The amendments to the Swan Valley Planning Act of 1995 govern lot sizes in two precincts, stipulating a minimum area of 4ha.

Hills preservation campaigners, led by the Stoneville Progress Association, have been pressing for similar laws since March to protect the Darling Scarp from Muchea to Serpentine.

Association chairman Mike Davies said the Swan Valley proclamation showed the Government could act when it wanted to.

"South Australia has already acted to protect the Adelaide Hills and Victoria has similar legislation for the Dandenongs.

"Protection in Sydney is not as stringent and parts of the Blue Mountains are turning red with roof tiles.

"You will not find a single person in Perth who wants to look at the Hills in the distance and see wall-to-wall rooftops," Mr Davies said.

"Real estate agents throughout the coastal plain sell homes at a premium price because of their views of the Hills."

The Swan Valley laws gave the region special status as a grape-growing district and was a valuable asset for residents and visitors, Ms MacTiernan said. "Changes to the Act will ensure lot sizes are generally kept to at least 4ha in the Herne Hill and Middle Swan precincts," she said.

"The new rules will ensure that the valley remains a unique historical viticultural tourism and recreational resource for WA."

Mr Davies said: "Nobody expects all of the Hills to be preserved. There could be exclusion areas.

"The proposed Stoneville and Parkerville urbanisation scheme with some blocks as small as 300sqm would mean 60 houses would fit on the site area of my home.