

6 • WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2006

News

Urban sprawl plan 'twaddle': MacTiernan

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Developers who are holding back land releases in a bid to sustain prices and a flood of investment by interstate buyers have been the key drivers behind Perth's expensive land market, according to Planning and Infrastructure Minister Alannah MacTiernan.

Ms MacTiernan described a push by the Institute of Public Affairs to ease planning restrictions to free up more land on Perth's fringes as "twaddle".

She said the Government needed to control more land to be able to flood the market when prices spiralled. She revealed a plan to release about 100 lots of affordable land for purchase by first homebuyers only early next year.

In a submission to a housing affordability task force set up by the State Opposition, the Institute of Public Affairs has put a case for embracing urban sprawl, saying planning policies are the key factor behind inflating land prices.

"We are clearly having a problem with affordability and I do not want to suggest in any way that we don't," Ms MacTier-

Ms MacTiernan said proper planning and developments with high levels of amenities and environmental benefits were crucial to attracting workers to WA and the housing strategy had moved on from a debate about urban sprawl.

"The idea that we can just carve up these lots and not pay any attention to the environmental quality and not pay any attention to the availability of transport and the availability of roads is just crazy stuff," she said.

Conservation Council of WA director Chris Tallentire described the push for embracing urban sprawl as impractical, warning Perth residents did not want to sacrifice their lifestyles through socio-economic costs such as more commuting.

Master Builders Association director Michael McLean said Perth needed to accept more basic developments with essential infrastructure and services.

"We would support a laissez faire approach as long as there is reasonable infrastructure to accommodate those additional lots," Mr McLean said.

Housing Industry Association executive director John Dastlik said the group had been pushing for the release of land