



Hon Desley Boyle MP
Member for Cairns

10/46015
LA/10/2866

14 OCT 2010



**Queensland
Government**

**Minister for Local Government
and Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Partnerships**

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 16 September 2010 concerning petition number 1523-10 regarding the purchase of land by Whitsunday Regional Council for the development of a future sports park.

I note the petition comprises 1046 signatories from local residents who are opposed to the purchase of 95.47 hectares of land at Mount Marlow for the future sports park.

I am advised at Council's ordinary meeting on 8 September 2010, a Community Consultation Report on a future sport and recreation facility, prepared by independent consultants GHD, was considered. The report found that 89.9 per cent of surveyed people considered that a new multi-purpose sport and recreation complex was needed. Council resolved at that meeting to purchase the 95.47 hectare property at Mount Marlow.

Council will need to demonstrate that sufficient planning grounds exist to justify the development for urban related purposes. Given apparent constraints such as good quality agricultural land, providing infrastructure to the site and the distance of the site from existing urban development, Council will also need to demonstrate that there is an overriding community need for this facility and there is no other suitable site.

I understand that Council will require a development approval to facilitate the proposed sports park. Accordingly, the Department of Infrastructure and Planning will assess any future application on its merits, having regard to State interests in relation to good quality agricultural land, infrastructure provision and determining whether there is an overriding community need for the project. As the determination of these matters falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Honourable Stirling Hinchliffe MP, Minister for Infrastructure and Planning, I will forward a copy of Ms Pillifeant's correspondence to his office for consideration and direct response.

While I acknowledge the concerns raised in the petition, in Queensland, Local Governments are autonomous bodies charged with taking independent action on a wide range of matters necessary for ensuring the good rule and government of their areas. As the Minister for Local Government, I have limited powers under the *Local Government Act 2009* (the Act) to direct Council in respect of the matters raised.

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Under the Act, there are community engagement and planning requirements that Council must implement to engage with residents on issues relating to economic development, environmental management, governance and social wellbeing. The development of a future sports park and facilities, including the need to seek the community's validation of the location of the facilities at Mount Marlow, would need to form part of Council's community planning undertakings.

Should you require any further information in relation to this matter, please contact Mr Kym Seebohm, Principal Advisor, Central Regional office of the Department of Infrastructure and Planning on 4967 0893.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Desley Boyle', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
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