



Minister for Employment and Small Business
Minister for Training and Skills Development

1 William Street Brisbane Q 4000
GPO Box 15483 City East Q 4002
Telephone +61 7 3719 7500
Email employment@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Your Ref: A532206

19 MAR 2020

Mr Neil Laurie
Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Email: tableoffice@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 19 February 2020 regarding Petition No. 3265-20 received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 15 January 2020, regarding the former Ridgeway TAFE campus, located at 72 Ridgeway Avenue, Southport.

The site was vacated in 2012 following the consolidation of TAFE Queensland training delivery in the Gold Coast region, with courses redirected to the Southport and Ashmore TAFE campuses.

In 2014, the former Government declared the Ridgeway site as surplus to training needs and the site was subsequently advertised on the market for sale. The sale process was withdrawn due to the response of the local community that opposed the sale. The former Government ceased the sale process due to the negative response by the local community, which was driven largely by the Southport Park Ridgeway Neighbourhood Group (SPRNG).

Since 2014, SPRNG has remained in contact with the Queensland Government to advocate for the gifting of the site to the Gold Coast City Council (Council) for community green space. The community's request for daytime access through the site was declined by the current asset owner, the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT), for workplace health and safety reasons.

State-wide community information sessions occurred in support of each of the 14 regional infrastructure plans, with the Gold Coast session being conducted on 21 November 2019. Representatives of SPRNG were in attendance. At the session, SPRNG indicated its support for the decision having been made and also that it wanted any site transfer to occur before the 2020 State Government election. Since then, DESBT has remained in contact with SPRNG which is actively seeking to support the Queensland Government's decision and seeking Government support for a transfer to the Council.

DESBT has continued to liaise with a variety of interested third parties regarding potential options for the site, including the Council. Senior representatives of Council and DESBT met during 2019. Council expressed a potential interest in part of the site that adjoins Benowa Road for connection to existing parkland in the area, however only if donated.

Several expressions of interest in the site have been received from potential education providers by the Queensland Government. To date, these have not resulted in viable offers being received.

The site is in an area zoned as "innovation" within the Council's town plan. The Queensland Government is currently considering options for the site that are consistent with Council's town

plan, that achieve value for the state, and that reflect community sentiment regarding access and recreational space.

The Queensland Government is committed to determining the best possible option for the future of this important site and recognises the wishes of the local community regarding access between Benowa Road and Ridgeway Avenue and the importance of green space and parkland. The Department is also planning to undertake improvements to allow a greater level of community access to the site.

I would like to thank the petitioners for raising this matter with me, and I trust this information has been of assistance.

Yours sincerely



SHANNON FENTIMAN MP
Minister for Employment and Small Business
Minister for Training and Skills Development