



The Honourable Mark Ryan MP
Minister for Police and Corrective Services and
Minister for Fire and Emergency Services

File No: QFS/15877
Ref No: 02886-2022 & C24676

1 William Street Brisbane
PO Box 15195 City East
Queensland 4002 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3035 8300
Facsimile +61 7 3221 0794
ABN 65 959 415 158

Email police@ministerial.qld.gov.au
FireandEmergencyServices@ministerial.qld.gov.au

8 DEC 2022

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
TableOffice@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to your letter of 10 November 2022 about Petition No. 3823-22 received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 8 November 2022.

The Palaszczuk Government will always invest in the frontline to keep the community safe. That's why we committed \$7 million towards the construction of a new state-of-the-art Airlie Beach replacement permanent and auxiliary fire and rescue station.

I am advised that the existing Airlie Beach Fire and Rescue Auxiliary Station was constructed in 1975 and in the near future will be unable to adequately meet the necessary level of emergency services within the acceptable response time due to demand and growth in the Whitsunday local government area. The existing facility is also vulnerable to inundation by storm surge.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) has advised that the location of the replacement facility has been critically assessed in relation to the relevant isochrone mapping sourced from QFES' data analysis tool. Critical analysis of this data informs QFES as to the most suitable placement to ensure appropriate servicing capability to the community. The replacement facility will include contemporary emergency services facilities to the Airlie Beach and Cannonvale community and represents a value-based investment by the Queensland Government.

I am advised by QFES that during the Infrastructure Designation pre-engagement phase, a number of residents communicated concerns on the proposed design in relation to light, noise and visual mass amenity. QFES is committed to working with the community to ensure the best outcome is reached, not only for community safety but for nearby residents and following this feedback, did substantial redesign work to address the concerns raised.

QFES has informed me that these changes include modification of the fencing material to be used to solid material, reduction in lighting pole heights and installation of lighting firing shields to minimise light diffusion and glare, and a reorientation of the ancillary structures (sheds, training tower, training pad) away from neighbouring properties.

In relation to noise and lights of responding vehicles, I am advised by QFES that it is important to note that both are only activated once en route where clear and safe carriage is difficult or at risk. While the existing Airlie Beach Fire and Rescue Auxiliary Station responded to 342 incidents during 2021-22, it would be unlikely that either lights or sirens would be activated in

the residential streets unless traffic congestion necessitated it. Further, I am advised that it is not expected that the relocation of the station will cause any discernible change in the current movement pattern of responding fire appliances travelling along Shute Harbour Road, under current demand conditions.

To continue to address community feedback, I am advised that QFES met with the principal petitioner on 11 November to discuss matters raised around the proposed site, in further detail.

Additionally, I am advised that a meeting was then held on 12 November 2022 with Whitsunday Regional Council Mayor Julie Hall, Councillor Jan Clifford, Councillor Michelle Wright and a member of staff from the office of the Member for Whitsunday, Amanda Camm MP.

Immediately following this meeting, an Open Day was held at the current Airlie Beach Station regarding the replacement facility, which provided the community with an opportunity to view artist impressions of the replacement station and examples of recently built fire stations located within residential communities.

QFES advises that approximately 100 people from the local community attended the Open Day, with an overwhelming majority of those in attendance supportive of the project.

Attendees were also encouraged to participate in the public consultation Infrastructure Designation phase which closed on 21 November 2022.

I am advised that all submissions received will be considered and assessed by QFES in the same thorough way as those received during the pre-engagement phase. QFES remains committed to delivering the best possible replacement fire and emergency services facility that meets the needs of the Airlie Beach and Cannonvale community.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Ryan', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

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Minister for Fire and Emergency Services**