



Hon John-Paul Langbroek MP  
Minister for Education, Training and Employment

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Mr Neil Laurie  
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Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to Petition 2212-14 tabled in the Legislative Assembly of Queensland on 11 February 2014 regarding the gifting of the Ridgeway campus, Gold Coast Institute of TAFE, to the City of the Gold Coast.

I am aware of the strong community support for this site to be utilised for additional parkland and public facilities and the considerable work that has been undertaken by members of the Southport community in promoting and supporting these options. Having given due consideration to the full range of values, including both future community utility of the site and the interests of vocational education and training on the Gold Coast, I have decided to uphold the original decision to dispose of the property. I understand this is not the result for which you had hoped and can only offer you the following observations as those underpinning my decision.

As you are no doubt well aware, a sizeable portion of the land is set aside for its environmental values and potential public use. The portion in question is subject to Department of Natural Resources and Mines conditions attached to a 2010 Material Change of Use decision which restrains clearing and the establishment of infrastructure.

As I also understand from public submissions, the Gold Coast City Council (GCCC) has a preference for the site to be used as parkland, an area for exercise and to serve as a conduit for pedestrians and cyclists. I would then expect this preference, together with the conditions of the Material Change of Use decision concerning the site, will inform any rezoning and conditions placed on future development by GCCC, including the provision of space for public use.

The Department of Education, Training and Employment is committed to providing a safe, secure and supportive learning environment for its students and the community. Departmental facilities are valuable community resources which should be utilised to their full potential. The primary function of a school is a place of learning which has absolute priority of use during school hours for educational purposes. At other times, schools have an obligation to be proactive in promoting the use of school facilities within the community.

In light of the impending disposal of the Ridgeway TAFE Campus, my Department would like to promote to those community groups the opportunity to access both indoor facilities or sports fields at either nearby Keebra Park State High School or Ashmore State School.

It is departmental policy that all community use of state school facilities be formalised through written agreement between the principal of the school and the user. Therefore, I encourage community groups of the Southport Park and Ridgeway neighbourhoods to discuss their needs directly with Keebra Park State High School Principal Ms Catherine Pflingst on telephone 5509 2555 or Ashmore State School Principal Ms Margaret James on telephone 5656 1333.

Proceeds from the disposal of this property are destined to be reinvested in training on the Gold Coast. The provision of attractive, modern, fit-for-purpose facilities that meet the needs of students, their trainers and the expectations of their future employers, at times requires a sum of funds that can only be achieved by the consolidation of assets. Some time ago, GCIT put forward to me a proactive plan, which I approved, for rejuvenating their facilities and course offerings that included the disposal of the Ridgeway campus.

To date GCIT plans have seen a training facility established in Coomera at a cost of \$30 million that was opened April 2011 and commencement of a \$7.3 million redevelopment of the GCIT Southport campus, expected to be completed in late 2014.

Prior to the disposal of government land on the open market, priority is given to other government agencies and local government for its purchase and continued public use. As you may be aware, GCCC were unable to come to terms with GCIT following extensive negotiations in relation to a potential land swap involving the Ridgeway campus.


The Government would however still support consideration of an offer from GCCC for the purchase of the site, based on its current commercial value, and I would encourage you to contact GCCC in relation to your desire for the property to be purchased for community use.

Building Asset Services, a Business Unit within the Department of Housing and Public Works have been engaged to manage the disposal process. Interested parties that require any further information regarding the disposal process can contact Mr Neville Maroske, Chief Property Manager, Building and Asset Services by email at [neville.maroske@hpw.qld.gov.au](mailto:neville.maroske@hpw.qld.gov.au) or telephone 3898 0583.

Again, I acknowledge this is not the outcome being sought by members of the Southport community but trust this information clarifies the Queensland Government's commitment to realising the value of its training assets in order to assist all Queenslanders in gaining access to quality training to enhance their skills and boost the State's economy.

I would like to thank petitioners for raising this matter with me and for their commitment to promoting the interests of the local Gold Coast community.

Yours sincerely



**JOHN-PAUL LANGBROEK MP**  
**Minister for Education, Training and Employment**