



## Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations

19 SEP 2018

Mr Neil Laurie  
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Dear Mr Laurie *Neil*,

I refer to Petition 2941–18 tabled on 21 August 2018 and Petition 2985–18 tabled on 22 August 2018 in the Legislative Assembly requesting the fast tracking of the opening of a new secondary school in Baringa.

The Department of Education closely monitors enrolment growth in state schools to ensure that all students have access to quality educational facilities.

School infrastructure demand mapping is conducted through the Queensland Schools Planning Reference Committee in consultation with local government and the Independent and Catholic schooling sectors. This work assesses population trends, proposed residential developments and school capacity to help guide future planning and identify areas that may need new schools in the medium to long-term. In addition, the department relies on enrolment forecasts and population projections developed by the Queensland Government Statistician's Office to inform infrastructure decisions.

As you may be aware, current departmental planning indicates that a new secondary school in Caloundra South is not required until 2021. A new \$4.5 million project is planned for Meridan State College to ensure there is sufficient capacity to accommodate students from the Caloundra South area until the new secondary school opens. This two-storey learning centre will provide seven additional classrooms on completion and is forecast to be completed for the start of the 2019 school year.

I would like to ensure petitioners that the department places a high priority on ensuring students are ready and prepared to make the successful transition into secondary school. The school, assisted by the department, will ensure necessary supports are in place, including accessing resources for a well-structured learning environment that will support students to successfully engage and adapt to their new school.

The department has secured a site and commenced planning to deliver this new secondary school in Caloundra South. Work on the design of the new school is underway and the department is preparing a business case, in consultation with Building Queensland, to detail the need and costs of the proposed new school and to inform the Government's allocation of funding to deliver this facility.

A working group has been established to examine opportunities and partnerships for a potential Community Hub to be delivered, in conjunction with the new secondary school. The working group includes representatives from the department, the developer of Aura-Stockland, Sunshine Coast Regional Council and representatives from Community Hubs and Partnerships in the Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning.

Accelerating the opening of the new high school to 2020 would substantially reduce the time available to consult with key stakeholders, establish partnerships to provide a Community Hub, and design the new school. This would affect the ability of the department to deliver an educational facility that can best serve the local community.

If you require further information or assistance, please contact Mr Kevin Mara, Assistant Director-General, Infrastructure Services, on (07) 3034 4520 or by email at [kevin.mara@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:kevin.mara@qed.qld.gov.au).

Pursuant to Standing Order 32, it would be appreciated if you could table this response to the petitions on the next sitting day.

I would like to thank your petitioners for raising this matter and I trust this information will be of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grace Grace', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**GRACE GRACE MP**  
**Minister for Education and**  
**Minister for Industrial Relations**

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