

Briefing Note

The Honourable Grace Grace MP
Minister for Education and
Minister for Industrial Relations

Action required: For Approval

Action required by: 26 August 2019

Urgent: To approve the temporary closure of Ubobo State School for the remainder of the school year.

SUBJECT: TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF UBOBO STATE SCHOOL

Summary of key objectives

- To inform the Minister that Ubobo State School (SS) currently has no students.
- To seek the Minister's approval for the temporary closure of the school, given the school has no current enrolments.
- To inform the Minister that a further briefing will be provided on the future of Ubobo SS enrolments by the end of 2019.

Key issues

1. The February Census 2019 recorded that Ubobo SS had two students, both of whom were enrolled in the Prep year.
2. In 2019, Ubobo SS offered a Kindergarten program for the first time with two students enrolled at the February Census 2019.
3. One Prep and one Kindergarten student from the same family left the school, although advice has not been received from the family regarding which new school they are attending. The Principal is working with the Principal Advisor, Student Protection, to locate the students and facilitate their enrolment in a school in the Gladstone area.
4. The second Prep student left the school in late February 2019, to attend Gladstone South SS and the second Kindergarten student left to attend Builyan SS in the week of 10 June 2019, so he could spend the remainder of the term with his peers.
5. On the first day of Term 3, 2019 the Principal advised that the school has no enrolments and further sustainable enrolments are not likely in the foreseeable future.
6. Ubobo SS is in close proximity to two other state schools: Nagoorin SS, 6.2 km north and Builyan SS, 18 km south.
7. Both Nagoorin SS and Builyun SS have capacity to accommodate any future Ubobo SS enrolments that may arise.
8. Queenslanders expect that the Queensland Government judiciously manages state finances and provides effective and efficient services to communities across the state.
9. Based on current data, it does not appear likely that there will be sustained demand for schooling services at Ubobo.
10. If Ubobo SS is temporarily closed, the Department of Education (DoE) will continue to monitor enrolment trends in the Boyne Valley area and will consider the potential future use of the site for educational purposes.
11. If the temporary closure is approved, the Regional Director, Central Queensland Region, will hold a community meeting to advise the community of the temporary closure.

Media Implications

12. Negative media attention is possible if the school is kept open without enrolments.
13. On 4 July 2019, articles were published in the *Gladstone Observer* relating to the local Boyne Valley Community Discovery Centre offering four \$1000 scholarships for primary school students to attend the school. One article stated that DoE did not endorse the scholarship initiative. DoE does not support the artificial attraction of what are likely to be out-of-catchment students to the school through financial inducement. It is not appropriate that such financial incentives are offered to enrol in a state school.

Financial Implications

14. It is not cost effective for DoE to maintain an open school with no enrolments.

Background

15. Ubobo SS is situated 75 km south west of Gladstone and 38 km south west of Miriam Vale. The school's catchment is located within the Gladstone Regional Council and the area is represented by the State Member for Callide and the Federal Member for Flynn.
16. Enrolments have been declining in recent years as follows:

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
16	11	13	7	2

17. The school currently has entitlement to a 1.0 full time equivalent (FTE) principal; a teacher allocation of 0.27 FTE; a teacher aide allocation of prep/primary 0.82 FTE; an AO3 Business Manager (BM) allocation of 0.33 FTE; and cleaner allocation of 0.34 FTE. The school also receives annual grants for schools operations and
18. If the school is temporarily closed, the school staff will be redeployed within the system. The school is in close proximity to Nagoorin SS and Builyan SS, as well as other Gladstone area schools.
19. The substantive BM and teacher aide will need to be relocated, which presents a challenge as there are no substantive vacancies currently in schools nearby. They, along with the cleaner, may need to be placed as over entitlements at another location until positions are found.



Recommendation

That the Minister:

- **note** Ubobo State School has no current students enrolled;
- **approve** the temporary closure of the school;
- **note** that, if approved, the CQ Regional Director will inform the community of the temporary closure;
- **note** that the school will be held as a mothballed departmental asset with staff and resources appropriately deployed to other schools.

NOTED

**APPROVED/NOT APPROVED
ENDORSED/NOTED**

SHARON DURHAM
Chief of Staff
Office of the Hon Grace Grace MP
Minister for Education and
Minister for Industrial Relations

GRACE GRACE MP
Minister for Education and
Minister for Industrial Relations

17109119

17109119

Minister's comments

Endorsed by: Kim Fredericks Regional Director Central Queensland Region Tel: 4932 4051 Mob: 5-47(3)61 - CTR Date: 19/06/2019	Endorsed by: Duncan McKeellar Executive Director HR Services Tel: 3055 2963 Mob: 5-47(3)61 - CTR Date: 28/06/2019	Endorsed by: Dion Coghlan Assistant Director- General Human Resources Tel: 3513 6576 Mob: 5-47(3)61 - CTR Date: 01/07/2019	Endorsed by: Kevin Mara Assistant Director- General Infrastructure Services Tel: 3034 4520 Mob: 5-47(3)61 - CTR Date: 16/07/2019	Endorsed by: ODDG obo A/Deputy Director- General Corporate Services Tel: 3034 4771 Date: 13/07/2019	Endorsed by: Jeff Hunt A/Director-General Tel: 3034 4752 Date: 18/19
---	---	---	--	---	--

Released under the RTI Act by DoE

Briefing Note

The Honourable Grace MP
Minister for Education and
Minister for Industrial Relations

Action required: For Approval

Action required by: 14 August 2019

Routine: Ministerial approval is required for the closure of Ravenswood State School on its current site, and establishment on a new site.

SUBJECT: MINISTERIAL ESTABLISHMENT OF RAVENSWOOD STATE SCHOOL

Summary of key objectives

- To seek the Minister's approval to close Ravenswood State School (SS) on its current site on School Street, Ravenswood, on 16 December 2019, in accordance with section 17(b) of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (the Act).
- To seek the Minister's approval to establish the new Ravenswood SS site on Elphinstone Street, Ravenswood, to open in 2020, in accordance with section 13 of the Act.
- To request the Minister to sign the Instrument of Establishment (**Attachment 1**).

Key issues

1. To facilitate the expansion of local gold mining activities. Ravenswood SS will be relocated for the start of the 2020 school year.
2. Resolute Mining Limited (Resolute) owns Carpentaria Gold Pty Ltd (Carpentaria), a gold producer that has a gold mine in Ravenswood. Resolute is funding the relocation of the school.
3. The new school is currently under construction, with practical completion forecast for November 2019.
4. Schooling will continue on the existing school site until the end of the 2019 school year, and relocation to the new site on Elphinstone Street will occur in time for the start of the 2020 school year.
5. To facilitate the relocation of Ravenswood SS, the Minister must approve the closure of the school from the end of the 2019 school year (16 December 2019) on its current site, and establishment of the school under section 13 of the Act on the new site.
6. A signed Instrument of Establishment (**Attachment 1**) is required as evidence of the lawful establishment of a State School.

Media implications and opportunities

7. On 15 June 2016, Carpentaria conducted community consultation regarding the proposed mine expansion and school impacts. There were no concerns expressed regarding the relocation of the school, other than community requests to ensure that the relocation of the school and heritage buildings are appropriately managed.
8. On 11 March 2019, Minister Grace announced the relocation of Ravenswood SS.
9. There may be further media opportunities on completion of the new Ravenswood SS site and relocation of students.

Financial implications

10. A funding agreement between Resolute and the Department of Education (DoE) has been signed. Resolute is funding the relocation of Ravenswood SS at a cost of \$9,238,543 (including GST) and has funded the acquisition of the new school site on Elphinstone Street, Ravenswood.

Legal implications

11. Part 3 of the Act sets out the general process for closing a state school.
12. Closure of a school, for the purposes of part 3 of the Act, does not include the permanent closure of a school where the Minister is reasonably satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist that justify the closure (section 17(b) of the Act).
13. Carpentaria discovered a large gold seam under the two lots where the present Ravenswood SS is located. Carpentaria was granted mining licenses, known as tenements, under the *Mineral Resources Act 1989* (MRA).
14. Due to the reserves in the existing mining areas nearing exhaustion, Resolute identified the need for the Ravenswood Expansion Project (REP), which would allow mining operations to continue for a further 13 years. This expansion includes the two lots where the present Ravenswood SS is located. Under the MRA, Carpentaria was granted mining licenses.
15. On 1 December 2016, the REP was declared a prescribed project by the former Minister for State Development. On 27 November 2018, the status of the REP as a prescribed project was extended.
16. Prescribed projects are those which have a significance, particularly economically and socially, to Queensland or a region, and enable the Coordinator-General to ensure timely decision-making by state and local government authorities.
17. Given the declaration of the prescribed project and the grant of the mining leases under the MRA, the continuing operation of a school on the site is not possible. It is DoE's view that this amounts to an exceptional circumstance satisfying the exception to the definition of the term closure in section 17(b) of the Act.
18. Due to these exceptional circumstances, the Minister can permanently close Ravenswood SS in its present location, without compliance with the notice and consultation obligations in section 18 and 19 of the Act.
19. As the Minister will be permanently closing Ravenswood SS in its present location on School Street, Ravenswood, the Minister will need to lawfully establish the replacement school.
20. Section 13 of the Act provides that the Minister may establish schools at which the state provides primary, secondary and special education.
21. An Instrument of Establishment is provided for the Minister's signature (**Attachment 1**), as evidence of the Minister's establishment of the new Ravenswood SS. This Instrument will be retained as a vital departmental record.
22. The establishment of a new Ravenswood SS will create a brief period where there are two schools established with the same name at different locations.
23. There is no practical or legal impediment to having more than one school established with the same name. This situation will be resolved on closure of the current Ravenswood SS site on 16 December 2019.

Background

24. Construction has commenced on the new Ravenswood SS site on Elphinstone Street, Ravenswood.
25. Heritage buildings on the current school site will be relocated to the new site and refurbished during 2019.

26. The design for the new school has been developed in consultation with the school, broader community, regional and central office personnel to ensure the best educational outcomes and value for money are achieved.

Recommendation

That the Minister:

- **approve** the closure of Ravenswood State School on its current site in School Road, Ravenswood, from 16 December 2019;
- **approve** the establishment of Ravenswood State School to open in 2020 on Elphinstone Street, Ravenswood, in accordance with section 13 of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*; and
- **sign** the Instrument of Establishment (**Attachment 1**).

NOTED

APPROVED/NOT APPROVED
ENDORSED/NOTED



SHARON DURHAM
Chief of Staff
Office of the Hon Grace Grace MP
Minister for Education and
Minister for Industrial Relations



GRACE GRACE MP
Minister for Education and
Minister for Industrial Relations

17/09/19

Minister's comments

17/09/19

Endorsed by:
Dave Baxter
Executive Director
Infrastructure Planning & Delivery
Tel: 3034 4836
Mob: 347300 - CTR
Date: 26/06/2019

Endorsed by:
Kevin Mara
Assistant Director-General
Infrastructure Services
Tel: 3034 4520
Mob: 347300 - CTR
Date: 09/07/2019

Endorsed by:
Jeff Hunt
Deputy Director-General
Corporate Services
Tel: 3034 4771
Mob: 347300 - CTR
Date: 05/08/2019

Endorsed by:
Tony Cook
Director-General
Tel: 3034 4752
Date: 8/8/2019

**Minister for Education and Minister for
Industrial Relations**

**Establishment of
Ravenswood State School**

Education (General Provisions) Act 2006

Section 13, Education (General Provisions) Act 2006

INSTRUMENT OF ESTABLISHMENT

I, the Honourable Grace Grace MP, Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations, pursuant to s.13 of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*, HEREBY establish Ravenswood State School at:

- *Elphinstone Street, Ravenswood (Lot 1 on SP295425) in the State of Queensland;*

at which the State of Queensland will provide:

- *primary education.*



Grace Grace MP
Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations

Signed at Brisbane this 17th day of September, 2019.