

Contribution of Land for Capital Works

Land co-contribution proposal

The ELPS School Association (SA) has asked the P&F to consider a land co-contribution to the school capital works development.

In the May budget, the state government allocated \$4.5 million for capital works at ELPS. The money has been allocated in stages - \$1 million in 2016-17 and the balance in the following year. The budget states that the funds are for the provision of new kindergarten facilities, general learning areas and a multi-purpose facility to cater for increased enrolments. The budget makes no mention of the levelling and landscaping of the Abbott St basketball court, which was listed as an area of need for the school. The school newsletter dated June 2 stated:

- 1) The allocated funds would support the building of six additional classrooms, a multipurpose hall and levelling the basketball court.
- 2) The P&F had been invited to co-contribute land to enable this opportunity to extend onto the Oxford St site.

Once the consultation and decision is made by the P&F, we hope to proceed with plans.

What is a 'co-contribution' and why is it wanted?

The SA uses the term "land co-contribution" but it is more accurately described as a gift, or donation, of P&F land to the Department of Education. The SA, on May 19, passed two resolutions:

- 1) The SA supports the option to develop classrooms on the Oxford St site. Further, to maximise the learning outcomes and optimise DoE grants, the SA requests that the P&F support and facilitate the development process.
- 2) The SA supports the P&F to utilise some or all of the required land in order to achieve the long term learning outcomes of current and future students.

The history of the oval

Parents and the school joined together in the 1930s to buy the then market garden that has become the oval fronting Oxford St. The parents, through fundraising, bought three quarters of the land and the DoE bought one quarter. Those boundaries have remained unchanged from the 1930s to today. Parents also dug the oval and built the pavilion. The pavilion was built in the 1980s through parent fundraising and a state government loan. The P&F repaid the loan, except for a small amount that was forgiven by the state government. The current pavilion replaces an earlier structure that was demolished.

What has the P&F done following the land co-contribution request?

The P&F passed a motion at a meeting in May saying it was willing to talk to the DoE. This meeting was the first major explanation by the DoE to the P&F about DoE thinking. At the June 1 meeting the P & F decided to embark on a process of inviting people to formally join the P&F and then vote on the co-contribution question. That meeting also voted to seek independent legal advice on how that should be done.

Does the school redevelopment depend on a P&F land donation?

No. The DoE has said the redevelopment can go ahead without a land donation and the school has been allocated the \$4.5 million with or without the land. While the DoE has said all options are on the table and there are no firm options yet, several 'concepts' have been circulated to illustrate possibilities. The school has described the option of a development wholly on the Abbott St site as ``non-preferred''. As the DoE already owns a quarter of the oval (where the basketball courts and cricket nets have been built), that portion may be considered for development in conjunction with the Abbott St site. The DoE also clarified that:

a) Development can only occur on land owned by the DoE.

b) There is no additional money to buy P&F land.

c) The DoE did not ask for all the P&F land.

What will the P&F vote on?

It was suggested at the June 1 P&F meeting that the association vote, asking yes or no, if the P&F should donate land. If the vote was yes, then it would have to be decided how much, and which land, would be donated. The DoE has not stated a preference for any particular piece of oval land. Ideally discussions would identify an appropriate land contribution to optimise the funds allocated.

How can you be involved?

The P&F meets on the first Wednesday of most months. There are no meetings in January or February, or during school holidays. These meetings are the primary mechanism for the association to do its work. Most meetings start at 7pm and are held at the school. The next scheduled meeting is on **August 3**. The association has also recently set up a website and email address and opened a post box for added communication.

What are the legal implications of all this?

The P&F executive is now seeking legal advice about how to progress the co-contribution process. It is a complex matter and must stand up to legal scrutiny. The association will release updates as more information becomes available.