

Council the last to know

Almost 12 months after an election promise to halt a high rise development at Airlie Beach lagoon, the State Government has finally informed Council of its position.

In September last year, retiring Minister for Natural Resources and Mines Henry Palaszczuk issued an 11th hour promise to the community of the Whitsundays stating if re-elected, the Beattie Government would not grant a lease on the Airlie Beach foreshore for any high-rise development over a park and recreation reserve adjoining the Airlie Beach Lagoon.

Since then Council has been asking the State Government to clarify that promise – was it just the FKP Eumundi development in that proposed form, or was the State Government issuing a blanket ban on development on that site altogether?

Council wrote letters to the Premier seeking clarification and waited...and waited for a response.

Last month the State Government was busy issuing press releases again, with Minister for Natural Resources and Water Craig Wallace reiterating the State Government would “not allow a proposed high-rise development on a vital piece of park and recreation reserve beside Airlie Beach”.

FKP Eumundi was aware of the Minister's stance prior to the announcement and quietly walked away from any plans for a development at the lagoon site, but still Council awaited a letter.

And this week it arrived, with Council CEO Tony Hayward announcing the local government body had received formal clarification from the State Government on the issue of a development application for an Outrigger Resort at the Airlie Creek car park.

Conceding the letter was a long-time coming, Mr Hayward said Council was “relieved” it could finally

move forward on the issue.

“While press releases have been issued by the Government on the issue, and formal correspondence sent to members of the community, the Council has been awaiting a formal letter from the Government on this issue since prior to the state election in September 2006,” Mr Hayward said.

“At the time the media statement was made by the Government, the Council was unsure if this meant the Government would not allow any development at all on the site, or something of a smaller scale,” he said.

“It also meant that the Council could not confidently determine a decision on the development application, because of the uncertainty such a press release provided to both the applicant, and to the Council.

“Council is now in receipt of a letter from the Minister for Natural Resources and Waters, the Honourable Craig Wallace, stating that the Government has resolved that it will not proceed with any development on the reserve,” he continued.

“While there has not been a formal Council meeting since receiving the letter from the Minister, I am sure the Councillors will be relieved to finally receive clarification.

“In November 2006, the Council chose to let the decision making period on the application lapse, until it could clarify with the Government what their press release meant for that site,”

Council will now take advice from its lawyers on the appropriate course of action following the Minister's advice.

“Once that process has been finalised, Council will be able to consider what, if any, upgrades may be undertaken to that parcel of land,” Mr Hayward said.

Low act disgusts Proserpine police

Police have described the actions of a woman who stole money from the Lifeline charity shop in Proserpine as “disgusting” and urged anyone with information to contact police.

Officer in Charge of Proserpine Police, Sergeant Stewart Day said

last Thursday a woman entered the Lifeline shop in Main Street with her two children, asking if one could use the store's toilet.

The store's takings were then stolen along with money from a staff member's hand bag.

Sgt Day said the woman police

would like to speak to in connection with the theft is described as around 160cm tall, heavy set, with brown hair and aged in her late 20s.

She was wearing a red top and denim skirt or cut off shorts and she had two young children with her, aged under five.

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