

## A REPORT ON WHAT WE HEARD

## WHO ENGAGED

Feedback was received from a varied range of stakeholders. Over the course of the three-week consultation the department engagement team heard from:

- Current parents
- Former parents
- Current students
- Former students
- Council representatives
- Current teachers/staff
- Former teachers/staff
- Neighbours/community members

214

PIECES OF FEEDBACK

were received throughout  
the consultation

14

email/  
written

SUBMISSIONS



173

online surveys

COMPLETED

27

recorded  
conversations at

FACE-TO-FACE SESSIONS

## The future of the administration building (Block A) at Veresdale Scrub State School

### COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

#### CONTEXT

The original Veresdale Scrub State School building – now used as the school administration facility – has been identified as being in a poor structural condition and not compliant with Building Code of Australia standards. An independent structural inspection advised the Department of Education (department) that action needs to be taken to ensure the school has access to a safe and usable administration area well into the future.

Since its opening in April 1889, the original building (Block A) has undergone considerable changes. These include the enclosure of its verandas, the demolition of a veranda wall, an extension and the loss of most original doors and windows.

The Veresdale Scrub State School administration building is not listed on the Queensland Heritage Register. A previous assessment of the building (as part of a state-wide heritage study undertaken by the Department of Environment and Science) determined that it is unlikely the building satisfies the criteria for entry into the heritage register based on changes made over the years.

#### THE CONVERSATION

Community consultation on the future of the Veresdale Scrub State School administration building was undertaken between 22 July and 14 August 2022.

The purpose of the consultation was to seek feedback on local preferences for the future of the building. The department initiated the consultation as a meaningful and genuine process to understand community concerns around the matter.

Over the three-week consultation period, the project team met with the community to present two options for the future of Block A. Option One was to restore the existing administration building by rectifying the structural issues. Option Two was to remove the current building and replace it with a new, fit-for-purpose administration facility.

The community was asked to state their preferred option, with the opportunity to provide supporting feedback and suggestions via a number of communication channels.



Queensland  
Government



## KEY INSIGHTS

With community members asked to state their preference from two options for the future of Block A, and with the opportunity to provide supporting feedback and suggestions, the department's analysis of the feedback received saw several key themes emerge.

Within each key theme were several considerations and acknowledgements, as noted below.

### Age and history

- It is thought that the significant age of the building should be taken into consideration
- It is noted that multiple generations of local families have attended school in the original building
- There is concern that removing the building will see a loss of important history for the district
- There is concern that the heritage assessment is "wrong"

### Aesthetic

- It is considered that the building aesthetic is fitting for the country character of the school
- There is a feeling that the building is "pretty" and its demolition would be a loss to the community
- It is noted that the building has heritage character which is valued locally and beyond

### Relevance

- It is considered that the building is the school's identity, appearing on the logo and uniform
- It is considered that the original building is "iconic" and an important part of the Veresdale Scrub district

### Health and safety

- There is concern that the student sick bay is located in the staff kitchen, next to the fridge
- There is a concern that structural problems may compromise the future safety of the building
- It is noted that the front door does not operate properly

### Size

- It is considered that the administration/office space does not allow for the current traffic of students, parents and staff
- It is noted that the staff lunchroom isn't large enough to accommodate existing staff
- It is considered that the current building does not provide adequate storage and meeting/planning space

### Function

- It is considered the building is not built for the needs of a modern-day school
- It is noted that the current building doesn't provide functional space for discrete conversations between staff and parents
- It is noted that the student population has grown significantly since the "early days"
- It is noted teachers and students have "outgrown" the space



## WHAT WE HEARD

The consultation presented the community with two options for the future of the building. Members of the community were asked to state their preferred option from the two options provided.

Across all stakeholder groups, the following preferences were noted by the engagement team:



When asked to state a preferred option for the future of Block A, community members were also given the opportunity to provide supporting feedback and suggestions.

Analysis of this feedback reveals there is some shared ground between the two options.

Many stakeholders who preferenced Option Two did so while acknowledging the historical significance of the building. Similarly, some of those who preferenced Option One were not opposed to the construction of a new, purpose-built administration facility, providing the original building was retained.

To this end, it is acknowledged that a merging of the two options exists for some stakeholders (retaining the original building for a separate purpose).

Comments about and suggestions for an alternative option, in no particular order, included:

*I do believe this building should be retained and restored. I believe that instead of it being used as the admin building, it would be perfect as a before and after school care building.*

*It is the heart of the school and community, the building should be kept and if the school needs a new admin building then build one and use the building for something else.*

*If an opportunity existed to relocate Block A on-site, or an alternate site for the new building, enabling retainment of the building for the previous generations then I think this would be the ideal.*

*Restore it for another use and build the new administration building where the present carpark is situated.*

*Keep it. Repurpose it and give the staff a new admin block. Use the old one for a music room, before and after school care, consultation room for the guidance officer etc.*

*The most obvious solution would have been to build the new admin building where the car park has been recently constructed and leave the old building as it exists.*

*My husband and I would be happy to arrange for the removal of the building instead of a demolition... to have it preserved on our property that is close by to the school.*

## NEXT STEPS

All feedback received throughout the three-week consultation period has been collated and summarised to help inform a decision for the future of Block A.

The department will now consider the information, ideas and options raised by the community, alongside expert technical advice.

The volume of feedback received throughout the three-week consultation points to the strong community interest in the future of Block A. The department acknowledges this, while noting its guiding principle of providing safe, fit-for-purpose facilities to support the delivery of quality education across Queensland.

The community will be kept up-to-date as the project progresses.