

JULY 2024

Red Hill Special School campus amalgamation Community engagement report

Contents

Background	1
Campus amalgamation	1
The conversation	2
Community consultation	2
Who provided feedback	2
How people engaged	2
What we heard	3
Refurbishment plans	3
School drop-off/pick-up and transport movements	3
Pedestrian access and student safety	4
Next steps	5



Concept artwork; subject to change





Concept artwork; subject to change

Background

Red Hill Special School is a co-educational state school facility for children with disabilities that can include severe intellectual and physical impairments and complex educational needs.

The school has been operating from 74 Waterworks Road, Red Hill, since 1986. A Prep to Year 12 school, it also provides an Early Childhood Development Program for children aged 3 to 5 years.

In December 2019, the Department of Education (the department) acquired the former Ithaca TAFE campus from the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training for the expansion of Red Hill Special School.

The department undertook some modification work, including installing a disability access ramp from the car park and reconfiguring the former TAFE learning spaces into classrooms and facilities for use by Red Hill Special School. The site was established as the senior campus.

Campus amalgamation

In late 2023, the department decided the Red Hill Special School's Waterworks Road campus and Ithaca campus would be amalgamated on one site at the Ithaca campus site (formerly Ithaca TAFE), Fulcher Road, Red Hill.

The amalgamation will benefit students, their families and carers, and teaching staff by:

- creating fit-for-purpose learning spaces and outdoor play areas, designed and built specifically for students with disabilities and/or high needs
- providing an improved drop-off/pick-up area for students and parking for parents, carers and teachers
- eliminating the need for some families to take siblings to two different sites
- creating operational efficiencies across teaching and specialist staff, as well as administration and facilities management.

The conversation

Community consultation

The department engaged with the community over a six-week period, from Monday, 15 April 2024 to Sunday, 26 May 2024.

Parents and carers of Red Hill Special School students, school staff and the local community were invited to have their say on the proposed major building refurbishments, and changes this may have on local traffic, pedestrian, cycle and bus access, and student safety initiatives.

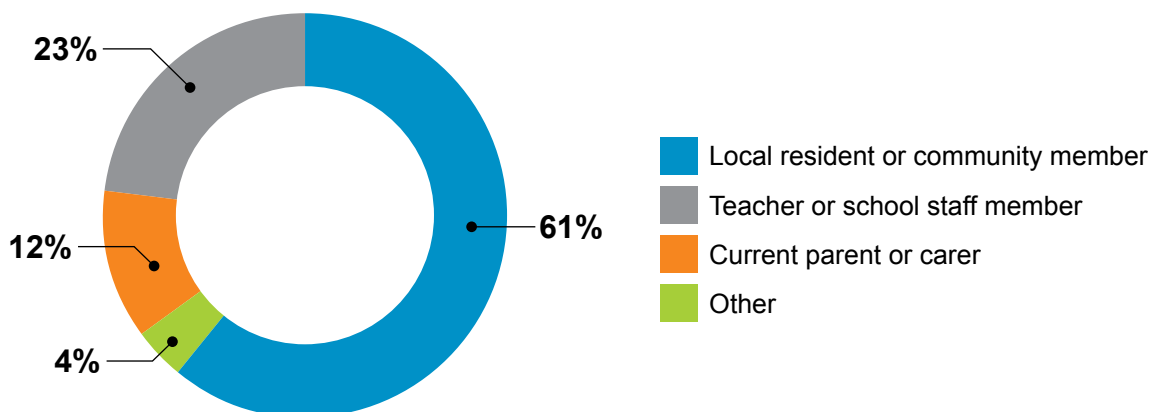
Community consultation included:

- an online survey
- a Red Hill Special School Facebook post
- a Red Hill Special School newsletter article
- Red Hill community targeted social media awareness advertising
- information flyers distributed to the Red Hill community (4059 postcode)
- information flyers provided to parents and carers of Red Hill Special School students
- two face-to-face engagement sessions, held at the Ithaca campus site on
 - Thursday, 16 May 2024 at 3:30 pm–5:30 pm
 - Saturday, 18 May 2024 at 10 am–12 pm.

Who provided feedback

The majority of community engagement feedback received from the online survey and face-to-face engagement sessions came from Red Hill Special School neighbours and community members, as illustrated on Figure 1.

Figure 1. Respondents' relationship to Red Hill Special School



How people engaged

102 pieces of feedback were received:

- 1 email written submission
- 63 online surveys completed
- 38 recorded conversations at face-to-face engagement sessions.

What we heard

Refurbishment plans

The majority of the feedback received supported the repurposing of Block E — the former Ithaca TAFE lecture theatre building — into a purpose-built, three-level education space.

Various ideas around the proposed renovation, design and plans were put forward. The feedback indicated the community was supportive of the refurbishment and the use of the space.

Feedback questioned whether the refurbishment of Block E for children is enough. Suggestions were made that the department should consider repurposing, or even demolishing, Block A and Block C and making better use of the space either with purpose-built buildings or play space.

Residents whose homes border the school site requested screening for privacy reasons be incorporated into the design.

School drop-off/pick-up and transport movements

Parents, teachers and some local residents, were supportive of the new drop-off/pick-up area, which would allow children to be dropped off at the building entrance. Some feedback was received about a need to have suitable space for storage of school vehicles (vans) when not in use, and adequate separation between maxi-taxi vans and car parking, for the safety of students, parents and teachers.

Some local residents raised concerns about:

- the speed of vehicles along Dean Street, with requests for it be lowered and/or traffic calming and speed bumps installed
- changes resulting in traffic banking up along Dean Street, as turning right onto Arthur Terrace during peak school hours is considered extremely difficult.



Pedestrian access and student safety

School oval

The different audience groups (parents/carers/teachers and local residents/community members) are completely divided in their views around fencing the school oval for student use.

The need to fence the oval for students was raised by teachers, parents and carers during the face-to-face engagement sessions, with concerns including:

- student safety risks with the adjacent creek, nearby roads and children’s intellectual and physical disabilities
- maintenance required by teachers to check the oval for dog faeces and needles prior to student use
- concerns around previously experienced dog-off-leash incidents with students reoccurring
- student access issues as the oval is located a “fair distance” from classrooms with the current and proposed campus design.

Some local residents requested an accessible path be provided around the outside of the oval to allow access to the creek and footbridge across Ithaca Creek. One resident suggested a path around the oval could be a safety issue due to limited line-of-sight.

Other residents expressed their desire to see the school oval remain as accessible parkland for the community. Feedback was also received requesting a community pathway from Dean Street, through the school grounds or along Ithaca Creek, to Fulcher Road.

Fencing the oval was concerning for some residents as they believe it will exacerbate localised flooding in flood events.

A couple of residents suggested that a property located at the end of Dean Street, which has recently been acquired by Brisbane City Council, be removed and become new community greenspace. It was suggested a portion of this land could be gifted to the school to increase the size of the school oval and make the space more useable.

Footbridge

A footbridge crosses Ithaca Creek from close to the school oval to 33 Nathan Avenue, Ashgrove. The footbridge, which is on Department of Education land, has been deemed by an engineer to be structurally unsound and has been blocked for use to ensure community safety. The footbridge is not used by the Red Hill Special School and is outside the boundary of the school.

Throughout the community engagement period there was a great deal of confusion among the local community and school community about the future of the footbridge.

While the department has made no decision about the future of the footbridge, many people informed the department that they had been told it would be rebuilt with funding from the State Government and/or Brisbane City Council.

Little to no feedback was received by parents and teachers about the footbridge, only that they welcomed the fencing of the school oval for children’s safety due to the creek proximity.

Local residents and community members told the department they want the footbridge to be rebuilt as it provides access to local schools, shops and transport networks on Waterworks Road — particularly for elderly people and school children (not Red Hill Special School children). A few residents suggested that with the rebuild, the location of the bridge could be moved closer to Jason Street as this may ensure an easier access route.

Next steps

All feedback received throughout the six-week consultation period has been collated and summarised to help inform the department's Red Hill Special School amalgamation plans and building refurbishment designs.

The department will consider the information, ideas and options raised by the community, parents and carers, and teachers, alongside expert technical advice. The department will consult with other government agencies and Brisbane City Council.

The volume of feedback received throughout the six-week consultation points to the strong community interest in the use of school assets by the wider local community. The department acknowledges this, while noting its guiding principle of providing safe, fit-for-purpose facilities to support the delivery of quality education for students.

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



Concept artwork; subject to change