



03 August 2023

Ms Nina Taylor MP
Member for Albert Park
Via Email: Nina.Taylor@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Nina

I write to ask that you intervene to seek to resolve a very difficult situation.

As you are aware Council is seeking to purchase the Australia Post site, ideally in partnership with the State, and to convert the site into open space as provided in the State Government's Fishermans Bend Framework and the planning scheme.

The Framework was the outcome of many years of collaboration between Council, the State Government, and stakeholders. Its development involved extensive community engagement and considerable Council financial and staff resources.

Unfortunately, without engaging with Councillors, the State Government is considering locating a school on the site. Council supports the delivery of education facilities in Fishermans Bend. However, in the Framework the Australia Post site is designated for open space and not education purposes. Council does not support the location of the school on a site designated for open space.

The location of the school on a space allocated for open space occurs at a time when there is significant demand for the limited open space in Fishermans Bend. Our sporting grounds are bursting at the seams as we see growth, particularly due to increased participation of girls and woman. As a result of this demand and despite record investments, Council is struggling to maintain quality playing surfaces. This situation is being exacerbated by our growing community and projected population growth. We need to act now.

The State Government's decision to consider locating the school on the site without engaging with Councillors is completely contrary to our partnership and the long standing open and collaborative engagement between Council and the State Government on Fishermans Bend. It is also counterproductive.

We have reached the final stages of our negotiation with Australia Post and have been advised by Australia Post that there is another bidder seeking to purchase the site. We have been asked to put in our best and final offer this week.

After already having stretched ourselves to make an offer without State Government support, I am very concerned that Council may not be able to compete with the alternative bidder and we may lose the opportunity to create much needed open space for our community.

If the State Government is the other bidder - which we suspect, it is for an education facility - I am very concerned that we have the State Government and Council using scarce resources to compete against each other. This would be an absurd outcome – particularly given the Framework identifies this site as public space for delivery between 2020-2025 and that the Council has offered significant funding to achieve this. Instead of competing against each other, we should be working together to acquire this land for open space.

Only a meeting at a senior State Government level can resolve this issue. Unfortunately, Council has repeatedly and unsuccessfully tried to engage with the State Government on a resolution at multiple levels.

I therefore ask that you urgently and personally intervene. We cannot allow this situation to continue.

I am available whenever you need to discuss.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H Cunsolo', written in a cursive style.

Heather Cunsolo

Mayor, City of Port Phillip