

Question on Notice

No. 821

Asked on 15 June 2023

MR L MILLAR ASKED MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister consider allowing the dis-used student accommodation at the Emerald Agricultural College to be used as accommodation for much-needed seasonal horticultural workers?

ANSWER:

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries is in the process of scoping the development of the former Emerald Agricultural College into the Central Queensland Smart Cropping Centre (CQSCC).

The CQSCC development does not include the campus area within the former Emerald Agricultural College. The student accommodation is not compliant for use and requires significant investment to bring it up to a habitable condition that meets relevant standards.

The Central Highlands Regional Council (CHRC) has previously indicated an in-principle interest to acquire a portion of the former Emerald Agricultural College, subject to a comprehensive due diligence process. That area is adjacent and parallel to the Capricorn Highway and includes the campus area.

The CHRC is currently undertaking that due diligence including the development of a Master Plan and Site Vision. This process will inform the CHRC on the viability of the precinct and lead to a decision to acquire the area or not. The CHRC has indicated they will make a decision in December 2023 at their General Council meeting.

In the interim, pending that decision from the CHRC, any development or leasing of infrastructure on the campus area is on hold.