

A strong voice for our future

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MEDIA RELEASE

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GKI development takes another step forward with DP's visit

The future development of Great Keppel (Wop-pa) Island took a major step forward this week when the Deputy Premier Stephen Miles met with key stakeholders on the island.

The Member for Keppel and Assistant Education Minister Brittany Lauga joined Minister Miles on Tuesday touring a number of the key sites that have been the subject of much consideration over many years - since Tower Holding's 2013 project approval.

This included the proposed marina site; the dilapidated former resort; and the airstrip.

"We inspected the Great Keppel Island Hideaway and Great Keppel Holiday Park," said Ms Lauga.

"Critically, we spent time talking to key stakeholders - the traditional owners represented by Bob Muir; the operator of Hideaway Kelly Harris; the CEO of Capricorn Enterprise Mary Carroll; the operator of Freedom Fast Cat Ferries (Max Allen snr); the manager of GKI

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Holiday Village Geoff Mercer; and the operators of Keppel Bay Marina Richard and Libbie Wilson.

“We all know Great Keppel Island is a rough diamond in need of a lot of love, care and polish.

“The love and care needed is investment in key tourism and supporting infrastructure.”

Ms Lauga said the Queensland Government has long had significant funding on the table to facilitate private sector investment on the island.

“This funding remains in place. And should a private investor prove to be capable, the State stands at the ready to support its much-needed investment.”

Potential investor Hancock Prospecting has recently flagged an interest in taking over the tower leases and project approvals.

The Palaszczuk Government then established a high-powered working party to fast-track consideration of the Hancock interest.

“This is to ensure Hancock has every opportunity to get in and breathe a new lease of life into this remarkable island.”

Hancock has spoken that, with the announcement of the 2032 Olympics to be held in Brisbane, the redevelopment of Great Keppel Island “presents as a great time to showcase Queensland as a premium, world class destination”.

In a media statement Hancock wrote: “We wish to maintain and improve its natural beauty and tourist facilities, subject to all government approvals, enabling this to make possible, for Queenslanders and others to enjoy for generations to come.

“Hancock welcomes the focus of the State Government to support and encourage investment in the state of Queensland and we look forward to working with the Queensland Government, and Livingstone Shire Council and all stakeholders, for the appropriate revitalisation of this beautiful island and tourist destination.”

Ms Lauga said it was unfortunate the Federal Government has not contributed funding to assist private sector investment on the island.

“The State understands that Hancock is in discussions with the Federal Government regarding its 2013 approval of the Tower project.

“Senior figures in the State Government are working with Hancock to consider to what extent variations might be required to the lease arrangements to ensure sufficient flexibility exists to breathe a 2022 lease of life into these ageing 2013 leases.

“We trust the same flexibility and willingness to support investment on Great Keppel Island is central to the Federal Government’s work with Hancock.”

Ms Lauga said Hancock will need to deliver a project that is environmentally appropriate and meets the many stakeholder and community expectations.

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“It’s important the Federal Government supports economic development and investment in Great Keppel Island.

“A collaborative approach to this opportunity is required, and the Federal Government needs to join us all on ‘Team Keppel’.”

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