

Far North Queensland Health and Innovation Precinct project

June 2021

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Purpose of this report

This report supports amendments to the State Development and Public Works Organisation Regulation 2020 to facilitate the construction of the Far North Queensland Health and Innovation Precinct. The amending regulation is provided for under ss. 99, 100, 108 and 109 and s.173 of the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*.



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David Stolz

Assistant Coordinator-General

25 June 2021

1.0 Background

In January 2019, the Prime Minister announced a \$60 million Commonwealth government contribution to James Cook University (JCU) for the purpose of building a 'tropical enterprise centre' in close proximity to the Cairns Hospital.

In 2019, Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service (CHHHS) engaged Deloitte to undertake a scoping paper for the Far North Queensland Health and Innovation Precinct.

On 1 October 2020, the State Government in the Far North Queensland Regional Recovery Action Plan committed \$67.9 million to kickstart the transformation of Cairns Hospital into a university hospital for the city, including \$15 million to acquire land for a research, education and innovation precinct, fully integrated with the hospital and \$1.5 million for a preliminary business case to start planning.

On 4 June 2021, a Queensland Government media release announced that agreement had been reached between the Palaszczuk Government and JCU to secure the land that would deliver a University Hospital in Cairns, including a brand-new Health and Innovation Precinct. The site is the block bordered by Digger, Charles, Sheridan and Grove Streets, which is conveniently located near the hospital.

The Far North Queensland Health and Innovation Precinct provided further details on the plans for the combined Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service – Research, Education and Innovation Centre and the JCU Cairns Tropical Enterprise Centre.

The precinct vision is to deliver an interdisciplinary technology-focussed, state of the art precinct for education, training, research, and innovation in Far North Queensland (FNQ) that connects Cairns into the Asia Pacific.

CHHHS is progressing towards becoming a university hospital by 2022. The Cairns University Hospital will bring together clinical services with research and education and is an exciting opportunity to put Cairns at the forefront of health service research, translating research into practice and educating the workforce of the future.

Developing a university hospital and an enhanced education, training and research sector is also critical to regional growth and is consistent with State Government and local council strategic directions.

2.0 The Project

2.1 Responsible entity

The Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service will arrange for the delivery of the project in coordination with Queensland Health and JCU.

2.2 Project description

CHHHS is progressing towards the Cairns Hospital becoming a university hospital by 2022. The Cairns University Hospital will bring together clinical services with research and education and is an opportunity to put Cairns at the forefront of health service research, translating research into practice and educating the workforce of the future combined with JCU's vision to build a future for tropical communities across the world through applying digital technologies to key problems in FNQ health, agriculture, creative industries, retail and tourism industries.

The precinct vision is to deliver an interdisciplinary technology-focussed, state of the art precinct for education, training, research, and innovation in FNQ that connects Cairns into the Asia Pacific.

The Far North Queensland Health and Innovation Precinct project will comprise several multi storey buildings located around green space that will house the Cairns Health & Innovation Centre, and the Cairns Tropical Enterprise Centre, incorporating the JCU Clinical School with room for later expansion. These facilities will be linked to the existing multi-storey carpark and Cancer Care Centre and Cairns Hospital via covered walkways.

Draft master planning initiatives propose several phases of development, with phase 1 to include:

- Develop multi-storey Cairns Health & Innovation Centre facility to the corner of Charles and Digger Streets with connecting bridge into existing multi-storey carpark to create covered connection into hospital.
- Develop multi-storey Cairns Tropical Enterprise Centre building to Sheridan Street to maximise engagement to external enterprise, or site 2 to maximise connectivity to Cairns Health & Innovation Centre.

2.2.1 Location

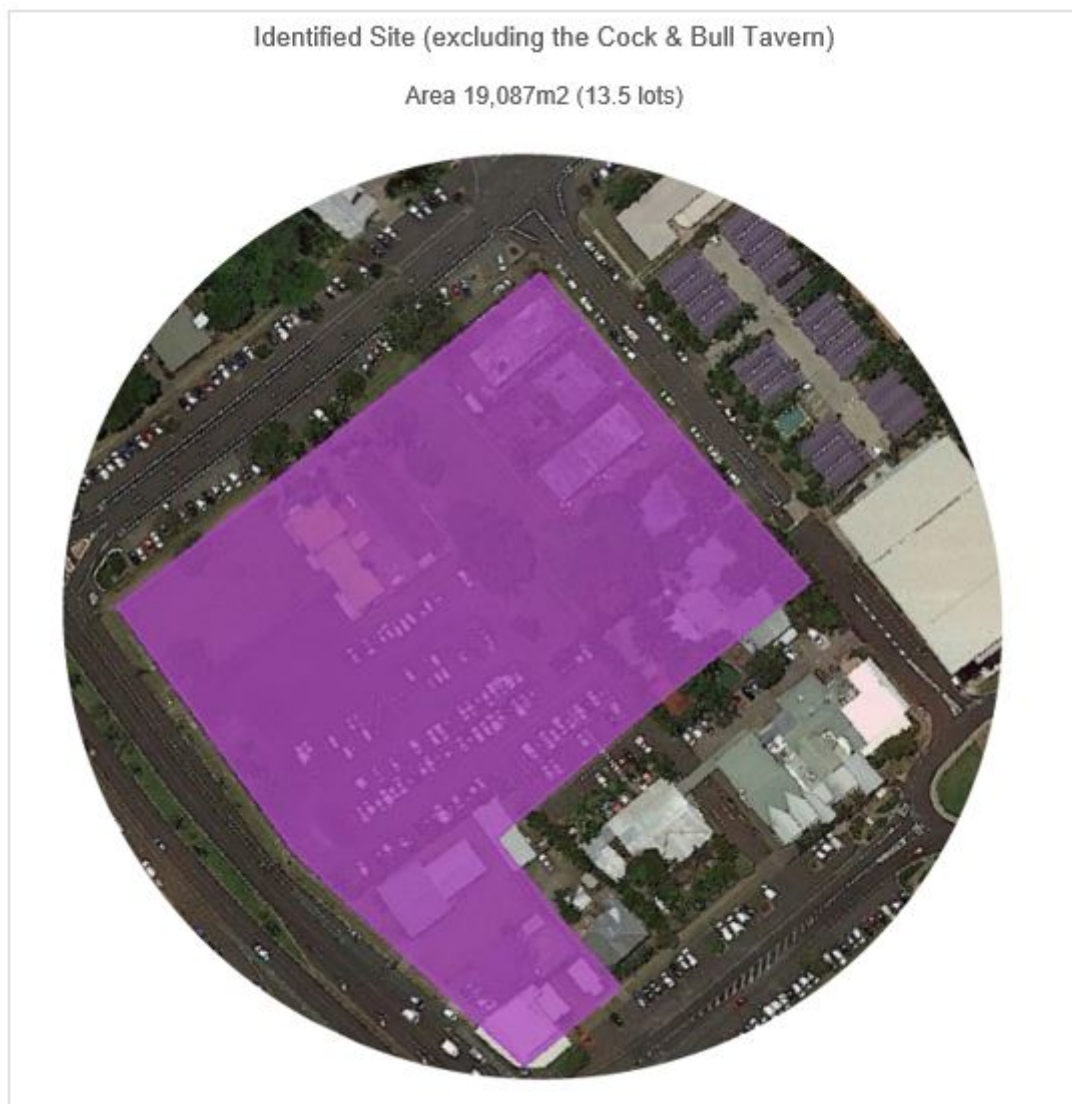
The current Cairns Hospital site is constrained, land locked and vertically restricted which means additional space must be sought offsite. To realise the benefits of co-location, the proposed precinct needs to be located within walking distance so it can be easily accessible by CHHHS staff and students.

JCU is also seeking to elevate their prominence in the Cairns city centre and would prefer street signage facing the major road into Cairns city centre (such as Sheridan Street).

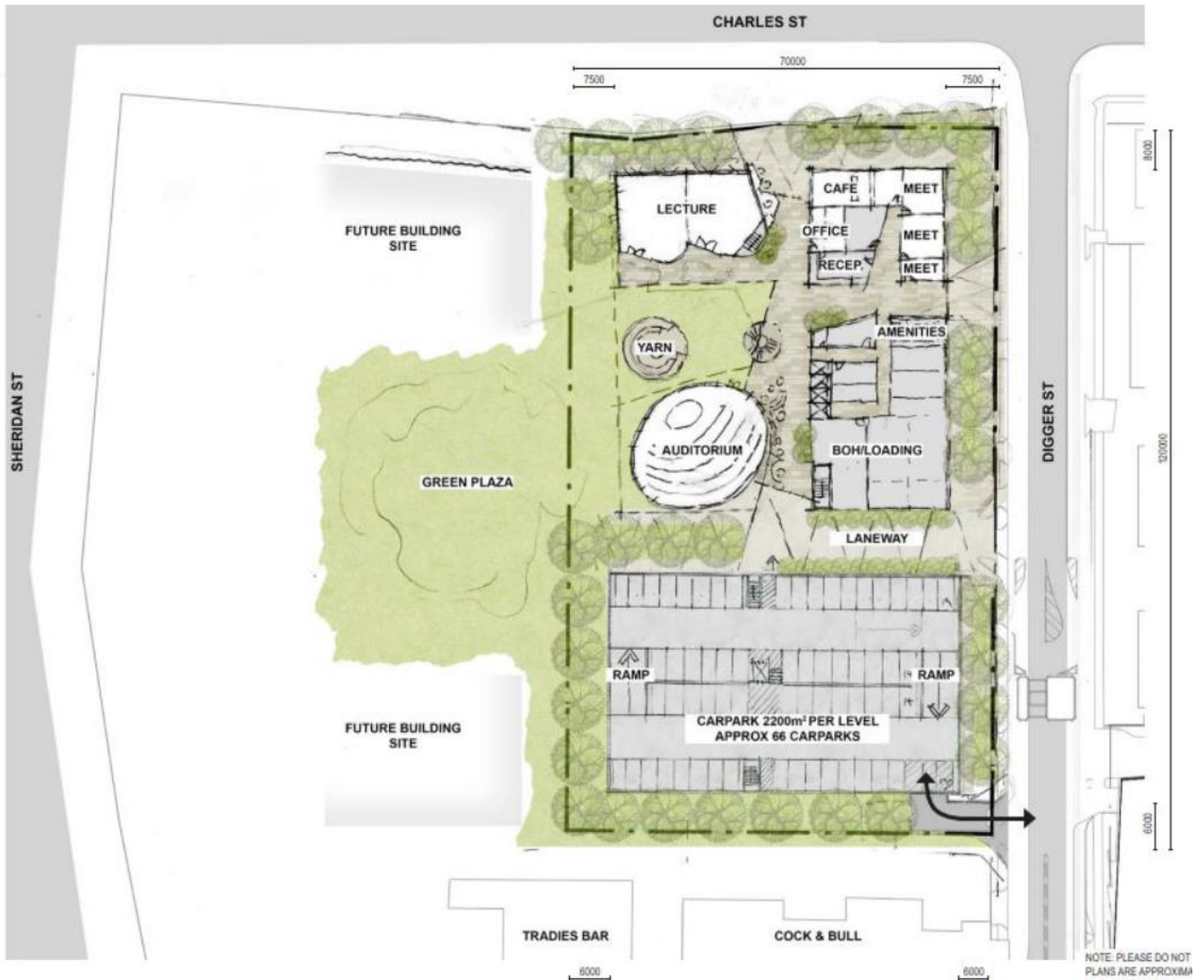
The key metrics in selecting the preferred site are:

- The Cairns Health & Innovation Centre being within a maximum 330 metre walking distance of Cairns Hospital allowing for easy accessibility by CHHHS staff and students;
- Close proximity to Cairns city centre and important infrastructure like the Cairns Airport;
- Accessible from the main JCU campus at Smithfield; and
- Site large enough for the minimum 15,000 metre square area required for the precinct.

The identified site has been secured by JCU and is identified in JCU's master planning document. The area is shown in purple in the plan below.



The below plan identifies CHHHS current concept design for the 15,000 square metre integrated building and carpark within the identified site.



2.2.2 Land Requirements

The proposed precinct meets the key metrics for the site. Negotiations with the largest landholder have been undertaken by JCU along with other property owners located within the precinct. JCU has advised that it has secured land in the precinct and the Department of Health is negotiating to acquire part of the site from JCU.

2.3 Coordinator-General

The Coordinator-General has functions and powers to facilitate large-scale and complex projects, while ensuring their environmental and social impacts are properly managed.

While CHHHS and JCU's preference is to meet their land requirements through negotiation and agreement with landholders and interest holders, the Coordinator-General may provide assistance to deliver the project through the use of the available powers under the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*.

The Coordinator-General may also provide assistance with other aspects of the project in accordance with its powers under the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*.

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