

Northern Correctional Facility

Project Update

On 9 September 2021, the Tasmanian Government announced the closure of the Ashley Youth Detention Centre (AYDC) within the next three years. As many in the community have stated, the closure of AYDC presented the Government with an opportunity to consider the development of this important infrastructure project at this location. Preliminary investigations of the AYDC site undertaken by the Department of Justice indicated that the site appears to be well suited as a location for a modern, fit for purpose correctional facility in northern Tasmania, with a custodial facility already a permitted use within the current zoning of the site under the Tasmanian Planning Scheme for the Meander Valley.

The Tasmanian Government made a clear commitment to engage with the local Meander Valley community on the future use of the AYDC site before making any decision. The primary purpose of this consultation was to provide an opportunity for the Meander Valley and wider Tasmanian community to express their views on the potential use of the AYDC site for the Northern Correctional Facility (NCF), and to provide an overview of those views to the Government to help inform a decision on the future use of the site.

The Government, through the Department of Justice Project Team (the Project Team), worked hard to engage as many members of the Meander Valley community as possible during their consultation processes. This included a bulk mail out to over 6,000 delivery points through Australia Post, direct contact with near neighbours of the site (namely those owning property within a 2km radius from the site), nine print media advertisements in local newspapers, direct marketing from the Department of Justice with 140 emails forwarded to subscribers, and materials advertising the community consultation provided to local businesses and government offices.

The community consultation included shop front/drop-in sessions held at several locations over a five week period, which commenced in early February 2022 and included day, evening and weekend sessions to maximise the opportunity for members of the local community to attend a session to have their say. A total of **143** people attended these drop-in sessions across Deloraine, Westbury and Elizabeth Town. In addition to these face-to-face meetings, a total of **125** written submissions were received, and these included feedback forms provided at the drop-in sessions, e-submissions and postal submissions.

We thank all community members who provided valuable feedback and participated in the drop-in sessions over the course of this extensive consultation process. Overall, feedback provided at the drop-in sessions and through the written submissions reflect a diverse range of views. The consultation process has provided a comprehensive overview of community attitudes within the Meander Valley to the possible use of the AYDC site for the NCF. It is also clear that, for a proposal of this nature, there is an encouraging level of community support for the AYDC site with informative suggestions to be considered as the possible site for the NCF.

Following the feedback received from the Meander Valley community consultation process, and given what is currently understood about the AYDC site in terms of its potential suitability for the NCF, the Tasmanian Government has confirmed that the AYDC site is now the only site being considered for the NCF and they will halt the work being conducted at the Crown Land site at Birrale Road.

Therefore, the Project Team will now commence full project planning, including due diligence investigations. This will include extensive investigations into the service infrastructure needs at the AYDC site including access to water, sewage and telecommunications. It will also encompass the potential traffic impact of the NCF's operations and how these traffic impacts could be effectively managed. As part of the further site due diligence, the Project Team will continue to engage with local landholders and the local community.

A key part of the Government's Corrections and Rehabilitation infrastructure plan is a commitment to build a NCF. The NCF will be a modern correctional facility that will not only provide secure and safe accommodation and facilities for the offender population it houses and staff working there, but one with a strong focus on providing rehabilitation and reintegration opportunities for offenders.

For more information on the project, visit
www.justice.tas.gov.au/ncf