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Point comes to a head

A BID by Far North conservation groups to have the state government buy a piece of headland overlooking the Coral Sea may come too late as the bushland site enters a process of formal offers.

Taylor Point at Trinity Beach has been likened to Flagstaff Hill at Port Douglas.

The land, which separates Trinity Beach from Kewarra Beach, has been owned by low-key developer Rob Prettejohn for more than 20 years.

It's been the subject of legal wrangling and longrunning community protests against development.

The 18.81ha parcel of land has approval for 18 lots but is being marketed in its entirety by Jay Beattie of Colliers International. Mr Beattie said expressions of interest closed in November and the deadline for formal offers was the end of March.

"Interest has been strong from a range of individuals both within Australia and offshore and they have looked at it for different reasons — as the site for a stand-alone dwelling, for the existing approval (of 18 lots) and for other reasons that would require council approval," Mr Beattie said.

"Any approval would still reflect the zoning that is in place, which is environmental management."

Cairns and Far North Environment Centre has been campaigning to get the state government to buy the land.

While the Department of Environment and Science declared the government would not buy Taylor Point, Barron River MP Craig Crawford indicated it could be possible in six or 12 months.

The DES spokesman said its priority was acquiring land with unrepresented or underrepresented ecosystems, and the Taylor Point ecosystems and wildlife habitats were well represented in existing protected areas. The department gave responsibility to Cairns Regional Council.

"Given Taylor Point's significant local community values such as its scenic amenity, informal recreation and access to the adjacent beaches, it may be more appropriate to explore its potential as an environmental reserve under the management of the Cairns Regional Council," the spokesman said.

The council, which, in May 2019, extended the development application for Taylor Point to June 2025, said in a statement "the purchase of Taylor Point is not under discussion by council".

CAFNEC president Denis Walls said Taylor Point had an unimproved land value of \$6.3m and should be set aside for the long-term benefit of residents of the Far North.

"Indigenous, environmental, recreational and broader community groups are all in favour of the land being used for the long-term benefit of the whole Cairns region rather than as a housing development for the benefit of a few," Mr Walls said.

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