



Dear Hilltops residents,

As you're probably aware, Council is looking into developing a very special project; the likes of which hasn't been seen in regional New South Wales.

The proposed Cultural, Community and Education Precinct has the potential to deliver a range of facilities and services to our area, that would not only enhance educational opportunities, it would cultivate our talented artists; provide support facilities for our youth; it would foster our historical and cultural assets and ultimately be a jewel in the crown of our Hilltops Region.

At the heart of this precinct, a new library would provide traditional and innovative resources for the community – both young and old; however, in order for this vision to become a reality, we need to secure highly sought-after funding from the State Government.

At the moment, we're exploring a possible solution that would allow us to open the door to this exciting future. Nothing's set in stone – far from it – but Council is working with the NSW Government – through School Infrastructure NSW (SINSW) – to develop the idea of potentially joining forces (and resources) to build a joint-use library.

This library would be far bigger and better than anything Council could deliver on its own. It would be partially located on Young High School and partially on the southern end of Carrington Park.

There are some in the community who are worried that this may not be the best location, so I thought I'd take this opportunity to try and allay those concerns and to correct some misinformation that has crept into the community discussion.

You may have heard...

The library will destroy the park.

This is simply not true. Neither I nor any other elected Councillor would ever allow that to happen as we value the park as much as everyone else. As you can see from the map, the imprint on the park of the proposed project would be minimal. In fact, if we were to go down the path of building on this site, we have the opportunity to enhance Carrington Park and showcase the things we love about it; the green space, the heritage and the recreational areas used by many in the community.

The preliminary analysis of the proposed location by SINSW prioritised maximising green space. The community will actually gain more green space by opening up the lawn area at the High School for community-use out of school hours on weekends when the park is most popular.



The children's playground and barbecue area at the park will be destroyed.

Again, this is incorrect. Should this project go ahead, the intention is for the current children's playground and barbecue area to be improved, with the new facility to also include a children's indoor/outdoor playground.

It will ruin the heritage of Carrington Park.

As part of the analysis of this site, we've researched the history of Carrington Park and have found it to be a rich and colourful one! Many may be surprised to learn that the western end of the park was once a zoo that housed a range of exotic animals tended-to by a man named Harry Smith, while the eastern end near the front of the Old Courthouse building was the site of Camp Hill, the police camp during the Lambing Flat riots. Should this joint-use facility go ahead, it provides us with an opportunity to bring this unique history to life and to honour and showcase it in a way that locals and visitors can appreciate for generations.

Council hasn't considered other options.

Council has considered a range of other options for the location of a new library, some of which have been suggested by members of the community. However, at this stage these options have not stacked up, either from a financial or a structural point of view. The Council carpark, the former Mill Tavern, APEX Park, the old cold-stores; these are all sites we've thoroughly looked at. We're now at the point where we're doing our due diligence on the Carrington park site, which has so far ticked a lot of the necessary boxes.

Why doesn't Council just build on the current library site?

The current library site is simply not big enough for a modern library that would meet the community's needs now and into the future. We need about three times the floor area of the current library, so given the space limitations of that location, we'd be looking at having to build up and not out, which isn't feasible.

The facility won't be safe for school children and the community to use together.

Joint-use libraries have operated in Australia for many years and should this project go ahead, we'll be looking to replicate the successful designs and protocols used by others to ensure everyone can have appropriate access to, and enjoyment of, the facility. This includes ensuring the joint-use library is open to the community during and outside of school hours.

Accessibility will be an issue and there is no parking at the park as it is.

As part of master planning for the facility, parking and accessibility would be a major consideration. We want to ensure the facility is easily accessible for people walking, riding, driving or catching the bus. We have also been in discussions with Young Community Transport and we hope that a regular timetabled community transport service will be up and running in the near future to support those needing assistance to access the proposed new facility.

This is a done deal.

This is not a done deal. At this stage, we're simply exploring the option of a joint-use library. This option certainly presents us with an exceptional opportunity to channel much needed funding into the Hilltops Region in order to secure a piece of infrastructure that would be the envy of other regions. However, we're still in the early stages as we continue to consider the prospect in front of us; as your elected representatives, this is our job.

For those who've raised concerns about the project, I sincerely hope this information has helped clarify what we're doing; we don't want to destroy Carrington Park, far from it! We want to develop a place where the Hilltops community can come together to learn and thrive, to relax, to cultivate their creativity, to find support, to appreciate our history and



culture, and most of all, to share time with family and friends.

If you have any further questions, we're keen to talk to you. Council staff will be available to take feedback from 5pm-7pm at Young's Hilltops Council office on Thursday 1 March, and 10am-2pm at the Rotunda in Carrington Park on Friday 2 March.

Sincerely,  
Brian Ingram  
Mayor, Hilltops Council.

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