



## MEDIA RELEASE

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*Authorised by Hilltops Council Mayor Brian Ingram.*

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### **COLLABORATION IS KEY TO LIBRARY PLANS**

Hilltops Councillors have resolved to consult further with the community on plans for the highly anticipated Cultural, Community and Education Precinct in Young, to ensure the facility is purpose-built and meets the needs and expectations of the region.

It follows extensive community and stakeholder engagement regarding the location of the new precinct, which Mayor Brian Ingram explained, has seen Carrington Park emerge as a site that offers significant planning and funding advantages.

“Obviously there’s been a lot of robust debate in the community in recent times about the location of the precinct; various sites were considered and the merits and draw-backs of each location have been weighed by the community and by Councillors,” Mayor Ingram said.

“One major factor that has certainly tipped the scales in favour of the Carrington Park location is its proximity to the Young High School, and the possibility of joining forces with School Infrastructure NSW - NSW Department of Education, to plan, fund and deliver a state-of-the-art school and community library within the precinct, that benefits students and indeed, the wider Hilltops community,” he said.

Mayor Ingram said Council, together with School Infrastructure NSW, has been exploring the option of entering a ‘joint-use’ agreement to together develop the library project on a section at the western end of Carrington Park.

In a new approach to planning, School Infrastructure NSW is creating joint-use agreements with local councils to create greater benefits for both schools and the community through developing schools as community hubs. A joint-use Memorandum of Understanding has recently been signed between Hilltops Council and School Infrastructure NSW to progress discussions which could lead to the development of a joint-use agreement for a school and community library.

“If a joint-use project agreement can be approved, Council and School Infrastructure NSW will collaborate – in terms of both planning, funding and ongoing operation – to ensure we create a purpose-built library facility encompassing resources that will be available for the benefit of the school and the broader community,” Mayor Ingram said.

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“A joint-use agreement would enable us to develop an integrated school and community library as a central component of the broader precinct; this precinct will incorporate cultural, community and education elements that I expect will be a blueprint for other regions when it comes to developing public infrastructure,” he said.

Following regular consultation with Young High School Principal Keith Duran, the Director Public School NSW, Southern Tablelands Network, Carolynne Merchant, said the potential of a joint-use integrated school and community library in Young is an exciting prospect.

“This project could benefit the students and families of Young High School through access to facilities the school couldn’t develop alone; a small film and sound editing studio, exhibition space for student projects, and extended hours access are just a few of the possibilities,” Ms Merchant said.

“I have confidence that subject to the outcomes of the feasibility study, and with careful planning and ongoing community engagement, together with Hilltops Council we can overcome any potential concerns and ensure the development of a facility that benefits the whole community,” she said.

In order to further explore the viability of the joint-use library agreement, and to ensure the wider precinct suits the needs of the community – both now and into the future – Mayor Ingram said Council wants to hear from the community about what they want to see included in the precinct, as well as the features of Carrington Park they’d like to see maintained or enhanced should the project go ahead.

“Council will be hosting community meetings and will be conducting an online survey so we can understand your needs and your vision for what the precinct will include and offer users. Once we’ve received this feedback, we’ll be in a position to undertake the next step, with the support of School Infrastructure NSW, towards a joint-use agreement which is to develop preliminary designs and plans for the integrated school and community library,” Mayor Ingram said.

“Council has also resolved to establish a Community Project Steering Committee to help ensure the voice of the community is well and truly represented throughout the project proposal and development phases.

“This is a significant investment in and for our region; it’s a once in a generation chance to innovate and leave a lasting legacy for future generations,” he said.

The first community meeting regarding the Cultural, Community and Education Precinct – including the library – will be held on Wednesday 29 November at the Marie McCormick Centre, 133 Main Street Young from 5.30pm – 7.30pm.

To access the survey visit: [www.hilltops.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hilltops.nsw.gov.au)

Written submissions must be made to Hilltops Council, c/o General Manager, Locked Bag 5, Young NSW 2594 or via email: [mail@hilltops.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@hilltops.nsw.gov.au).

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