

December 5, 2019  
The Editor,  
Young Witness

Dear Sir

During the School Holidays, Schools Infrastructure NSW is preparing to knock down the BB block, the building beside the High School Hall, (formerly Young's Grand Courthouse).

Young knows it cannot rely on School Infrastructure NSW to preserve and value the town's history and assist the town to develop Tourism. The Department of Education demonstrated its lack of interest in Young's History when, over the holidays, it removed all the lovely cabbage tree palms near the Courthouse and plonked an ugly temporary room next to Carrington Park. These trees, which had been assessed as safe, not only gave profile to the town, but were the material historic social connection with the old goal (now the TAFE); the prisoners made hats from the palm leaves.

There are multiple accounts of a tunnel between the Great Courthouse and Gaol, and indeed that before the ends were blocked off, people could take tours through the passage. The Consultants who prepared the Heritage report for the project apparently suggested that as they had no physical evidence, the expense of investigation might not be warranted.

The cost of investigation would be a drop in the ocean of the cost of the overall project.

The cost of *failing* to investigate includes

- A risk to site workers, especially anyone driving excavation equipment
- A risk that we lose an item of high archaeological heritage significance
- A risk that we lose a valuable tourism site
- And a risk that if some evidence is discovered, issues of cash-flow and indeed the arrogance of SINSW will mean a quick fill-in and 'commercial-in-confidence' used again to avoid public accountability

I urge the Council and SINSW fully to investigate the existence of the tunnel before commencing the demolition of Block B.

Yours Faithfully



Joseph Kinsela  
B.A. Hons, Master of Heritage Conservation, University of Sydney.