

Comments on the Young High School Library and Joint-Use Community Facility

The application for the above development is itself inadequate, and is compromised by flawed, incomplete and inadequate reports. I have spent some time examining various documents associated with the SSD, at first taking notes, intending simply to draw attention to obvious issues and complete my submission. Two elements have made this approach untenable within the time and word limit available.

- One is the language used: selling benefits claimed to flow from the project. The EIS and its appendices are replete with spiel; one is constantly reading minor phrases pretending to be factual but which are errors. Anyone reading any of these reports should have to hand Young Cultural Infrastructure Masterplan (**CIMP**) to understand, for example, where the centre of the Young CBD sits and where the present community facilities related to culture and education are located. Many of these reports misrepresent, either through sloppy research, a misunderstanding of directions such as North and South, or, one begins to think, *deliberately*, such obvious particulars as: the layout of the town, elements of the proposed precinct, community consultations, and the conclusions and recommendations of the **CIMP**. For those familiar with the built and community infrastructure, the economies, the patterns of behaviour of the inhabitants of the district, indeed, the weather; the discrepancies between erroneous claims and actuality suggest a complete indifference to the Hilltops Community and to professional standards.

- Reports inter-alia:

- conflict with one another as to detail,
- are inaccurate as to the background of the project,
- fail to resolve crucial questions of access,
- misrepresent essential data,
- fail to take critical local conditions into account, and

ohaving based their assessment on misleading or misunderstood information, do not make appropriate recommendations.

Rather than detail every error, indeed rather than bother to address what is, for example a draft report, I have decided to submit a series of observations and notes, so as to draw the attention of the Department to the issues. I also remark that the building design is intrusive, unsympathetic and entirely unsuited to a heritage precinct. I would be prepared to meet with representatives of the Department to examine the application; I would urge a site visit. I consider this application should be refused.

My interest in this project is as a card-carrying user of the Young Library and as a social scientist who has spent her life in the arts, working with people who formed the culture with which this project claims the facility will enable its users to engage. I worked as a secondary school teacher for six years, I am a professional writer. I have worked nationally and internationally with professional visual artists, various community groups and as a consultant to global companies; run a commercial gallery in Melbourne, and a publicly funded Opera Company in Sydney. I was a director of a building company that specialised in heritage renovation. I now live just outside the border of the Hilltops Council and travel at least weekly to Young. While living in Young from 2011 to 2014, I joined the newly formed Council 355 Arts & Culture Advisory Committee, drafted the tender for the Cultural Infrastructure Masterplan, and successfully applied for two grants. The first was for an artist in residence: she worked in the disability sector, with the local amateur art group, and made a film with High school students. This grant also provided professional-standard film equipment; the other documented the work of a group of women who built public and social infrastructure after WWII. It, too, brought sophisticated professional film-making equipment to the town.

As I expressed in my initial response, the limited time allowed for submission to this SSD is further evidence of the indifference of the project's protagonists to the residents of the district who use the library. While, for example, the Heritage Council comments need only relate to the Heritage Impact Statement and reports regarding the landscape, members of the wider community want to look at the Traffic, Social Impact, Heritage and other reports. Assuming those who also have other professional and volunteer work need only 28 days, especially 28 days *with minimal notice, in hard copy only during business hours in*

one place in one town in the LGA, undermines not only the assertions of Community consultation and engagement, but also the sincerity of anyone proposing the idea that this project is intended to ‘connect’ people across the LGA. I was very grateful for A3 copies of plans supplied to me in Sydney; I know that the question of access explained meant that some local objectors gave up in despair.

In order to convey the inadequacy *even of the introduction* to the EIS, I provide some historical background.

History of this project.

In 2014 the then Young Council adopted the **CIMP** mentioned above. It was prepared after extensive consultation with the users, managers and owners of facilities across the town, and which included the consultants sitting in the Community Library to meet and hear from library users and staff. The thorough engagement undertaken for that report contrasts with the inadequacy of the impulsive and rushed development of this proposal.

The Young CIMP:

- identifies priorities of the users, managers and owners of the facilities,
- identifies the community cultural precinct of the town, and
- identifies priorities for cultural community infrastructure development.
- It locates an *existing community and cultural precinct*.

The CIMP notes that the views of the library users, together with accessibility issues and the logic of the town’s geography require the *community library* be located in this *existing community and cultural precinct*, near the centre of the CBD.

In May 2016, the Young Council was amalgamated with those of Harden and Boorowa. The Administrator and the newly appointed General Manager Mr Anthony McMahon worked to ensure continuity and retain corporate memory. Grant monies from the amalgamation fund were set aside to build a new community library. In mid 2017 The Council began negotiations to acquire ownership of a (State Govt.) site which abutted a site managed for 30 years by a community group, which had not been informed or consulted, and some chaos emerged as the election period for a new council began.

In June 2017, the then local MP Katrina Hodgkinson announced an upgrade for the High School Library: the Headmaster Mr Keith Duran (husband of Stephanie Cooke, who by this time had replaced Ms Hodgkinson as the Local State MP) told me in July or August that he had \$85,000 to upgrade his library. It is a matter of interest as to how this amount blew out to at least 15 million.

In August 2017, the GM established an ad-hoc Committee to discuss the library and site issues. The Committee consisted of Joseph Kinsela M. Her. Cons., a historian and heritage expert who grew up in Young, and who had been on the Young 355 Arts & Culture Committee and the Administrator's Tourism Advisory Panel and had prepared a recommendation to upgrade the cultural precinct developed from the CIMP, (which recommendation was used to obtain funding) Lee Furness, the then Deputy General Manager; Keith Duran, the High School Headmaster, the General Manager himself, and Dr Julia Atkin, an education consultant from Harden, who had not been on any Young Council Committee. At this meeting Dr Atkin suggested the Community Library be built in historic Carrington Park. Mr Kinsela explained this precinct was of importance and in constant use by the community, of crucial heritage significance; and not a suitable site. The Committee did not meet again with Mr Kinsela.

Despite this professional advice, and without any community consultation as to the site or the desirability or impact of a 'joint' development, Dr Atkin approached SINSW to suggest a joint-project *in the park*. This appears to ignore the conventions of administration in a democracy during an election, as application was made to the Cultural Fund during this time. Mr McMahon, who was not himself committed to the joint proposal; told me that during the Council election period he used the phrase 'education and cultural precinct' to attract funding; that any grant had from this application would be independent of the 'joint-use' concept; and that the site was not fixed. The unfortunate co-incidence of Dr Atkin's approach to SINSW and the fluid period of the election (followed by Mr McMahon's resignation) has resulted in SINSW controlling the design and siting of the project. Once the project was on foot, enquiries about the approach and the design were met with the response that the project was 'commercial-in-confidence'.

Dr Atkin's initiative rapidly led to the involvement of Hayball Architects, with which firm, their website states, she has worked on a number of projects. The process by which Hayball were invited to prepare preliminary designs and reports and is now designing the proposed 'facility' is not apparent. Chris McInerney, the regionally-based architect who had prepared the CIMP and who has worked with regional arts and culture and educational institutions was not invited to tender for the project; Gran Associates, which firm recently designed excellent sympathetic renovations to the TAFE, adjacent to the School, does not appear to have been invited to tender. The timing of SINSW's intervention appears to have meant that the new Councillors (the majority of whom were not from the Young district) had the impression that the previous Young Council and locals had endorsed the notion of a 'joint facility' and its location.

Community Opposition disregarded.

Many locals were shocked to find that the proposed site was in the Park. A petition against the site attracted 2,273 signatories, (one signatory made a note that they supported the proposal). The petition was left around Young, not any other Hilltops towns or villages. It was signed by 32% of the population of people over 19 in the Young area (pop. 7435 according to the abs). This number would represent a substantial proportion, 18%, of those over voting age in the entire Hilltops district (pop. 12776 according to the abs) many of whom do not visit Young at all. The supermarkets and other places which allow raffles, fundraising and petitions have very strict rules about spruiking: in a small country town, everyone appreciates and abides by such a rule. This document is not here uploaded; Council employees and local business who have signed are now afraid for their jobs and business with Council, but it can be supplied to the Department and signatories verified. The Mayor, who is a shearing contractor, refused to allow this petition to be presented to Council and forwarded to SINSW, saying that people had been bullied into signing. The Mayor provided no evidence for his assertions. Council staff have been silenced as have members of the school staff who have concerns about the facility.

The 2000+ objectors who signed the petition were opposed to siting their library in the park. It is not apparent whether they wanted the park preserved or that their motive was to retain the library in the town, or both. No enquiries have been made. The consultation for the process will be discussed below; but it can be said that throughout the development process comments and concerns were brushed

aside. Despite her claiming at one point that other sites than the park were under consideration, no evidence of such consideration is apparent. After months of urging and objection by members of the Steering Committee, (during which funds were spent by SINSW on design for an on-park facility) a note from the 'Steering Committee' liaison officer informed members that GML Heritage had been appointed to prepare a study of the park. The inadequacy of this report will be the subject of separate comment, but for example the Consultation List in this report claims there were consultations with the Historical Society and the Lambing Flat Museum. The Society runs the museum, there are not two entities. The Committee of this organisation advises that no consultations took place. Mr Kinsela was told he could not meet with GML to share his expertise, information and concerns but could send questions through the Council liaison officer, a person without any relevant expertise. He offered to consult, not to enquire. His advice on their *draft* report was ignored. This refusal has pungently highlighted the ridiculous claims of community engagement and the disinterest of the project protagonists in local community opinion and expertise. It has now been acknowledged that his professional advice as to the presence of a passage between the gaol and courthouse buildings was correct. It is very galling to ratepayers and taxpayers to see money lavished on six design options before a Heritage report was finally commissioned, and now to know that the entire scheme will have to be redesigned.

This EIS claims that six sites were considered, four in or including Carrington park; This assertion itself is misleading, as the GML report had, by the time this application was made, stymied the in-park building proposals, which until June 2019 had been 'live'.

The agreement as to the management of this facility has not been published for comment. Essentially the community library will be controlled by School authorities. This is not welcomed by those who recall that the TAFE funded a school library joint upgrade: the School ultimately subsumed that facility and TAFE students were banned from the High School grounds.

Need to retain Heritage values of the site.

I emphasise that I am commenting on the relocation within this facility of the Community Library identified by the CIMP. I have no comment on the needs

of the High School. However, as the School is on an important Heritage site and abuts a community park, itself an historic place, it is crucial that any buildings on that site do not adversely affect the heritage values and amenity of the site. I make this point because troubling evidence of SINSW's indifference to heritage and aesthetics has been apparent for some time. One would expect a department constructing educational establishments would avoid destroying heritage and would not allow intrusive buildings or signage to impact on crucial sites: one would expect such institutions to lead by example to teach history and heritage significance.

The reverse is true of SINSW in Young. Brilliantly coloured signs have been placed, which intrude on every view of the building. An appalling temporary structure was placed beside the Old Courthouse, which houses the School Assembly Hall. Shockingly, after all the trees in NSW schools had been assessed as safe, a suite of Cabbage -Tree palms at the eastern fence line were chopped down as soon as this project was mooted. The High School in the Old Courthouse abuts the TAFE in the old Gaol. When the Gaol was in use, the prisoners were employed in making hats from the fronds of the Cabbage tree palms. A milliner gave instruction and supervised this activity. The palms were history alive...The palms formed part of the skyline of the Southern aspect of the town from the CBD and across the valley. Their sudden removal, without advertisement or consultation was astonishing; the extravagance of the gesture even more unbelievable: these palms are valuable. There were six, each at least 30 metres high. If their removal was necessary they should have been sold.

There are questions which bear on the processes of the project.

1 Was there a tender for the initial design and consultation for this project?

Was there a selected tender process? Were regional architects invited to tender? Were the architects of the TAFE refurbishment invited to tender? Why was the architect who wrote the CIMP not invited to consult or tender?

2 Costs of above \$31 million dollars have been mentioned, but the SSD has a quantity surveyor's calculation of 21+ million. How is the Hilltops Council 6.5 million dollar contribution calculated?

3 If it is calculated on a time of use per area used, have the extended opening hours been calculated to achieve this figure?

The EIS states 'The existing school hours of operation will remain unchanged. The existing hours are 8am - 3:30pm, with extra- curricular activities generally until 5pm.' This means that 'shared' areas will be available from 5.-9.00pm during the week. In winter months, this means community 'art' activities will not be conducted in natural light, except at weekends. Few professional artists would tolerate this. As the dominant industries in the district are grazing, (sheep and cattle) pig, and poultry production, agriculture, horticulture and viticulture, people rise early and go to bed early. What evidence has been adduced to suggest that, in a town where cafés close at 4.00pm and pub kitchens by 8.30, the facility will require staff until 9.00pm?

4 It has been claimed that the funds allocated to the Library from the grant that accompanied amalgamation had to be spent within a set period. Is this why the project was split into two, one (which although crucial to the project) did not require assent by the Dept. of Planning, the other requiring that assent? If this application is refused, are any community funds spent so far returnable?

The EIS

Young High School Library and Joint-Use Community Facility.

The title of this inadequate application reveals the intention of its protagonists, and is of itself a warning to members of the Young Library and the Hilltops Community. What began as a new Library for Young, then became a Community Library Facility, then Hilltops Library and Community Facility, then Library and Community Facility and Young High School Upgrade, has become 'Young High School Library and Joint-Use Community Facility' and which has a variety of titles in the attached reports. Ignoring the detail of Young's Community Infrastructure Masterplan, which notes a *number of facilities already in the CBD* and the need for a *new town Library*, the EIS asserts that the 'joint use' facility responds to that CIMP.

By acknowledging that the Community Bus will be needed to bring people to the site, the EID shows its understanding that the library should be situated in the CBD and acknowledges that the proposed site renders a new Community Library inaccessible except by vehicle for much of the year for everyone, and, in the few local clement months, even for those who are very fit. It thereby increases pollution. It duplicates facilities, fails to provide many that were advertised during the period during which it was marketed, proposes a café in competition with local commercial businesses and aggressively reshapes the park precinct. The design of the structure is unsympathetic to nearby Heritage items.

Here I want to address the notion that haunts this proposal: that the hard copy book is somehow becoming redundant, that library clients are old and when they die off the books they once used will no longer need a home. Of course, libraries have become centres of information technology, and access to such technology is a boon for people of all ages; Libraries offer speakers and performances. Young's Community Library in its neglected premises offers talks and concerts. Community Libraries across Australia provide such

services. But the evidence that people of all ages still read books is apparent in the growth of little book exchanges across suburbs and towns; and in a rural area where there are few cinemas and no professional theatres, books are valued.

Vague unsubstantiated assertions

As a social scientist, I was astonished by the lack of engagement with the library users and the wider community during the planning and design of what began as a community library and has become a School Library and Joint-use facility. I was surprised at the strong objections to the proposal expressed by a range of locals, who subsequently formed a group to protect the park and town's heritage. To understand the detail of the project I looked forward to the publication of these plans and the reports.

The EIS includes sweeping statements that read as marketing. Few are substantiated, and, as demonstrated later, at least one is in direct conflict with the actuality of the project, should it go ahead.

- The facility will be 'shared.'** Claims are made that the project will 'connect' people.

- The notion of 'Shared' was not explored before, without public consultation, SINSW took over the community library relocation. It is apparent that 'shared' means that community members will be excluded from 9-5 from facilities their money has been used to build. Young business owners and employees in town are opposed to the site because they can now ensure their children, including other than High School students, are safely doing their homework or otherwise safely just up the street and can easily pop and be collected after the parent finishes work. What will occur after school hours in the 'facility? Who is responsible for the students? Will they leave as schoolchildren at 5.00pm and immediately return as community members?

- Community members are sequestered from school students during the day, as we'd all need *Working with Children checks* to be around them; but the question arises: Why are students safe from predators until 5.00pm and not later?

- Note: I use 5.00 pm here, drawing attention to the discrepancies between these two statements in the EIS:

3.11: Out of school hours use:

The existing school hours of operation will remain unchanged. The existing hours are 8am - 3:30pm, *with extra- curricular activities generally until 5pm.*

and at

5.3: Operation

There are no changes proposed to the school hours of operation, which will remain as 8am to 3:30pm Monday – Friday.

Will every student in the art room have removed paint, brushes, clay, paper etc. and vacated the area by 5.00 PM, or can they then morph into community individuals, and begin to learn through living by working beside community members?

•Community Cohesion

•The community it is claimed will be made more cohesive by this project is the *entire Hilltops Region*. This includes, e.g.; the village of Rye Park. From Rye Park, it takes 20 minutes to travel to Yass, and 35 to Boorowa, and *over an hour to* Young or to Canberra. There is a branch of the Hilltops Library in Boorowa: no mention of an upgrade to its IT facilities, if that is what communication means; indeed, no investigation appears to have been done by the consultants as to whether the Boorowa or Yass library, or Young, or all, are frequented by Rye Park residents. There is to be a very small exhibition space in the Young facility. A good exhibition Space exists in Young. Rye Park residents can access the National Gallery of Australia, not to say the National Library, many municipal libraries, and many other community facilities, in the time it would take them to travel to Young.

There appears to have been no enquiry as to whether the village of Bribaree, 40 minutes from Young, Koorawatha, 40 minutes, Rugby, 50 minutes Jugiong an hour, Murringo, 15 minutes, Wombat, 15 minutes, Kingsvale, 15 minutes, or Monteagle, 15 minutes, or any other of the dwindling communities across the 7000 square kilometres that is Hilltops have any public access to IT systems so that residents can ‘connect’ with the facility.

•Connection

•As the ‘connection’ marketed in this document thus appears not to be activated by technological means, the assumption must be that the effect of the ‘facility’

will be centripetal; drawing eager community members to enjoy this fruit of their rates and taxes in Young. But no research is offered to substantiate this or any other of the notions, such as that it would offer more or different 'lifelong learning' than would be available in a conveniently situated community library in the town, if not in the well-equipped TAFE next door to the High School. There is no evidence that there will be any effort to expand the community transport bus route to bring people TO the town. There is a branch of the Young library in Harden and one in Boorowa: it might be assumed that any people from the villages near those two towns would use those libraries and the many meeting rooms provided in those towns.

The focus of the building, the project, and the 'community consultation' has been on the school and the school community, avoiding discussion based on, and to the detriment of, community interests. As the EIS notes the school has a dwindling population (note the excellent Hennessy High School across the park) one would have thought a re-furbish of some of its rooms might have improved its facilities.

Community Consultation

•The community consultation involved in the process was remarkably inadequate, privileging official education bodies, school students (including primary school children) and High School teachers and parents above the Community Library users. Meetings were held with groups in the community, but these considered only issues raised by the site in the park or school, and not the suitability of that site. Promises were made and hopes raised at meetings with particular local groups: as detailed below the site has disappointed or been rejected by local associations, and the final design was modified as the protagonists discovered an early Learning Centre next door in the TAFE. The Project Reference Group consisted of the SINSW Project Director, School Project Director, School Principal, Asset Management Unit, Architect, Education Consultant, Project Manager, Hilltops Council and other teacher and parent representatives from the school. No TAFE representative, although the TAFE is beside the new building. Although a community representative is indicated on the Project Reference Group, none is mentioned in the EIS, and none was identified to the Steering Committee or the community at large as available to be contacted for input. The Hilltops Community Librarian, who manages the three libraries across the region, was not a member of this group, but the Council

liaison officer, who has no expertise in libraries or heritage, was. It is not known whether the Mayor, or the ex-administrator (ex-Mayor of Boorowa and now an MP) are or have been library members in Young. The Group, claims the EIS, was chosen 'appropriately to correspond with the project team and community...' It certainly did not.

- The on-line survey was an egregious example of push-polling: it offered no option to comment on any site or express a preference for separate or con-joined facilities.

- While primary schools in villages across the LGA were visited and the children invited to make suggestions as to what might be included in the facility, the libraries were not visited by the protagonist or, save to gather a statistic, any other consultants.

- Community members who attended meetings at which the project was presented reported that their concerns as to the 'joint' aspect of the facility and the site beside or in the School premises were ignored, that they were dealing with an SINSW 'juggernaut' and expected enthusiastically to receive superficial 'updates'.

- A mobile library and some investment into village community facilities such as halls where the librarian could bring books, speakers, performers, hold discussion groups etc., from a new Library in the Young CBD would be less expensive than the 31 million dollars proposed, and might actually connect people across the region.

- The Hilltops library has a data base with contact details of every member; no letter or email contact was made with the library users to invite comment, seek suggestions, or raise issues.**

**The EIS and its appendices are replete with falsifications,
misrepresentations, and/or misunderstandings.**

Following is an example which raises serious questions.

At 2.1 the CIMP identifies key arts and cultural nodes, and proposes a Cultural Infrastructure strategy... revitalising and expanding *the existing cluster of cultural institutions* and attractions through the development of an Arts and cultural precinct *linking the cultural venues around Burrangong Creek, its reserves, bridges and parks and the CBD*. It notes: the Creek is located centrally between the main arts and cultural institutions, which can be identified as ***nodes on an Arts and Culture trail in the CBD of Young***, with a diverse range of activities that attract people to the precinct.

It advises development: around Burrangong Creek: Create public spaces with high quality amenity to establish continuous Creek Reserve access. Maximise the interface with the Creek, Arboretum Park and Cultural facilities and the walkways between, and: Expand opportunities for people to participate in and enjoy, arts and cultural activities, entertainment, outdoor eating, promenading, commuter amenity and passive recreation along the Creek, Park and surrounds. It adds...*Existing arts and cultural facilities are within the CBD...***the CBD location provides more opportunity for local community to utilise cultural facilities**

Appendix C, **the Design Analysis Report** etc.: states, at:

12.01 Response to ESEPP / GANSW design principles Context, built form and landscape:

Young High School / Carrington Park site was chosen by Hilltops Council (*it was proposed by SINSW as if already selected by Young Council*) for the proposed joint use library as it aligns with the Hilltops (*Young*) Council Cultural and Infrastructure Master Plan (2014). This plan defines a cultural precinct **south of the creek near Young High School**.

This is an egregious misrepresentation of the Young CIMP.

- The precinct described in the CIMP is **North** of the Creek and nowhere near the High School. The High School is across the creek, up a steep hill on the side of the Valley, overlooking the CBD.

- If Hayball Architects, who developed this document, consider the **CIMP** describes a precinct *South* of the creek near the High School, their competence is in question.

- If they are deliberately misrepresenting the **CIMP** their integrity is in question.

Abstract Concepts. Various abstract slogans are used to justify the project. All these abstractions cannot be addressed in the time available to me, but I comment on the following. The **EIS** claims that 'long term positive social impacts' will include: Meeting demand for 'high quality, fit for purpose, flexible community facilities *close to the Young city centre*'.

- The CIMP suggested improvements to existing facilities to bring them to professional standards, and the Young Council had begun this process. Positive social impacts would be more likely to result from a better equipped library in a properly maintained building where people could drop in before shopping or after lunch.

- The town is replete with community facilities identified in the **CIMP** close to the Young City Centre.
- The proposed facility is REMOVED from the City Centre.

Alterations to Plans due to failure to consult

The Joint Facility's early marketing promised much. Initial lists of inclusions attracted the attention of people unfamiliar with reality in the Town and probably accounted for some enthusiasm for the project.

This list is of notions now *not included*:

-Early Childhood and Conference Facilities

-are supplied in the TAFE and elsewhere in the town and are no longer apparent in the plans. The inadequacy of the consultation process is revealed here; apparently the protagonists did not discover the TAFE facilities until late in their design process.

-Meeting Spaces for the Multicultural Society, Community Clubs. I

understand the Multicultural Society does not want to pay for a room; and as indicated below, there are meeting rooms a-plenty in town with or near food and drink.

-The Community Hub This organisation has no plans to move.

-A Community Kitchen Plenty in town, protagonist eventually discovered this.

-A Gallery. As indicated below, there will not be anything to be described as a professional gallery.

-Video Conferencing. Not apparent on the plan; no need has been demonstrated; community groups tend to use Skype, available TAFE and elsewhere.

Now apparent in the plans are:

- ⌘ **Meeting rooms**, some bookable, some quite small
- ⌘ *Among Meeting Rooms now available in Young are:*
- ⌘ Southern Cross Arts Centre. 2 gallery spaces/meeting rooms, one theatre,
- ⌘ CWA rooms. Lovell St. 1 Hall 1 meeting room. Kitchen. Parking.
- ⌘ Young Baptist Church. Hall, at least one room. Kitchen. Parking
- ⌘ Presbyterian Church Hall. Kitchen. Parking.
- ⌘ Uniting Church 2 meeting rooms and a Hall. Kitchen. Parking.
- ⌘ St. Johns Church 4 meeting rooms and Hall. Kitchen. Parking

- ⌘ Australian Hotel. Criterion Hotel. Great Eastern Hotel. Commercial Hotel, Empire Hotel all offer rooms where, free of charge, people can hold meetings. I am Chair of a group which has held meetings in the Commercial.
- ⌘ Young Town Hall: 3 small Rooms, 1 large meeting room, the Council Chamber available for meetings, 2 large meeting rooms with media. Kitchen. Parking.
- ⌘ Services & Citizens Club. 3 meeting rooms
- ⌘ Young Showgrounds. Boorowa Rd. 3 halls. Kitchen. Ample parking.
- ⌘ Tennis Club, Golf Club, Bowling Club, Alfred Oval, Cranfield Oval, Cullen Oval, Hall Bros Oval, all have rooms, kitchens and ample parking.

•Visual Art Studios and display areas.

The local art society appears permanently to be mourning a gallery space and workshop that was sold off some years ago by Council. The group was promised a gallery like a regional gallery and workshop area in exchange for a letter of support; they have recently had explained to them that there will be no professional-standard gallery.

There is already a Gallery in Young.

- Studio I in the Southern Cross Arts Centre is an excellent gallery space, open to the community; the artist in residence used it as a studio before exhibiting her work there; she also conducted drawing classes in the space. However, access is up flights of stairs. A lift could readily be installed at the rear of that facility at a cost of about \$400,000;
- Studio I can be re-dedicated if necessary once the present library is repurposed as a gallery/Vis. Arts workshop.

The **visual** 'arts' facilities proposed at the High School appear to be two 'joint' studio spaces and small pottery room (in which presumably the kiln will occupy space) **available only outside school hours, upstairs** to which material and equipment must be carried (and of course removed after use) a risibly small storage area, a hanging space the size of a large domestic room, and a 'circulation' gallery **only available after hours**. The assumption here is that making art is a part-time amateur process rather than one which involves returning to an easel or an object to continue work. This will not improve the level of cultural engagement in the Young visual arts community.

- The **CIMP** points out that the present community library building would make a very good visual arts building if refurbished. I have run a commercial gallery and worked with Australian artists exhibiting nationally and internationally. It is my opinion that the present Community Library would offer a workshop and exhibiting space and would be far more likely to encourage a higher standard of culture, and indeed to attract professional standard exhibitions, than the limited space offered in this facility. Professional artists want daylight in which to make and show work; and expect to invite the public to buy.
- **Multi Media Resources** available after hours in the proposed facility, and bookable.
 - Multi Media Resources** are *Available in the TAFE*, next door to the school; *apparently an issue prevents school students using this TAFE facility, but it is available for the use of the public.*
 - TAFE** facilities are *bookable during school hours by the public*
- *A Dark Room is also available.*
 - The very active Young Camera Club has not used a dark room for 10 years. *Photography is digital these days.*
- Recording facilities.** The practicalities of this for after-hours use are risible. The Young Film Society, formed in 2011, met enthusiastically for some months. I wrote a grant for that group: we bought an Apple computer with the most up-to-date editing software, three High Definition movie cameras, lights, sound and other equipment. I wrote a second grant that provided more equipment. Within eighteen months every member of the film group including those on benefits had their own cameras on which they could edit their own films. (At least one commercial movie has been made on an iPhone). Editing software is cheap and easy to learn and use, but the point about film editing is that it requires long uninterrupted periods: that is why people now use their own computers so they can sit for long hours, securely save their work on their own device.
- **A coffee bar is on the plans; 7.8 sq. m.**
 - It is unclear what this means...a café is mentioned in the EIS. It is against Hilltops Council policy to establish operations that compete with commercial businesses. As cafés in town and behind the museum opposite regularly fail, it would be a particularly

unfortunate gesture to draw patronage from the latest café at that location.

- No explanations are provided as to the operations of this element. Is the plan to lease it? Will it be open throughout the hours the facility is open? What will it cost? Is this why the teachers are said to be enthusiastic?

Provision of high quality, specialist teaching and learning spaces, Wellbeing Hub and Wiradjuri Learning Centre to improve access to high quality educational opportunities at this site.

- While expensive private schools with lavish facilities no doubt produce excellent results, schools with very few facilities but good teachers produce good results. However, results are not produced by osmosis. An individual in an educational building is not educated by virtue of the location. No detail is provided to suggest how members of the public will benefit from the educational opportunities supplied by the building. Every proposed detail: spaces, meeting rooms, multi-media resources, a bank of computers, (but not a dark room) could be expected in a Community Library in the town.
- Of course, attention should be paid to Wiradjuri representatives if they want a space at the School, and to invite community members to visit: but one does wonder why such a centre would not be near the Land Council centre in town.
- The Wellbeing Hub is for school students. In an early meeting of the 'Steering Committee' the headmaster was asked why students could not go up to the hospital a block away, for consultations of the kind proposed in the Wellbeing Hub. His answer was "they don't make it." It is assumed he meant they were sent unsupervised, which seems remarkable. It has not been explained why having to visit a 'Wellbeing Hub' on school premises, so that other students are aware that the student has a problem, is advantageous to the student needing help.

Carrington Park

Improved local amenity through increased activation of Carrington Park and potential realisation of the area as a community and cultural precinct within Young city centre. This is an example of the sales pitch for the project misleading the reader; it is difficult to imagine the attempt at deception is accidental

‘Improved local amenity through increased activation’... ‘potential realisation of the area as a community and cultural precinct’ These vague concepts illustrate the inadequacy of this document; its fatuous language indicates a failure of due diligence: the writer has no idea of how the park is used and how it is valued.

‘within Young city centre’ The EIS itself, and the Traffic Assessment, and the Social Impact statement ALL comment on the distance from the Young (it's a town, not a city) centre. This statement must deliberately be designed to draw the reader's attention away from the inappropriate siting of the project.

‘Increased activation’ indeed. The park provides as much local amenity as any park anywhere. The description of this charming place:

The park has a slight fall towards the north and comprises grass, some footpaths and scattered trees throughout. There is a band rotunda in the eastern portion of the park (Figure 12) and a playground, a 19-space community car park and a public amenities block on the western side.’

undervalues the precinct. The question is, how deliberate is the underestimation? A condescending and dismissive evaluation invites the proposed re-shaping of the park; one is persuaded to consider the destruction of the Waterwise Garden, the insertion of the ‘Walk’ which will remove the delicious grass on which even in this drought visitors can laze, the tree removal without consultation, new lighting, new signage. The subtle denigration of the place underpins and encourages the narrative that the community facilities in this town have little worth, and that the SINSW proposal will enhance an unsatisfactory town, and activate not only its physical, but its social fabric.

A Sydney-based assessor of this plan who is unfamiliar with Young should imagine Hyde Park described as comprising *‘grass, some footpaths and scattered trees throughout, with a memorial and bus shelter at one end and a fountain at the other* and that the task is to assess a new facility in Hyde Park. As Hyde Park is opposite the Sydney Museum, St Mary's Cathedral, St James' Church and the Great Synagogue and near multiple cafes, it should be imagined that the request is to assess plans for an attention-grabbing building, all glass and white, right beside the cenotaph, obscuring the fountain, having a new path and fencing, a memorial room, restaurant, museum, and a multi-denominational worship space. For the comparative meaning of the Carrington Park's location, it would also be helpful to

imagine Hyde Park being located at the top of William St in King's Cross, and being described as 'within the city centre' and easy walking distance of every amenity.

Carrington Park should be described as 'an aesthetically pleasing space loved and used by the local community, with a central avenue unusually of indigenous species, and grand trees, formal rose gardens, gentle gravel paths, deep swathes of grass, numerous memorials indicating its centrality to social relations in the town, shady places, and vistas embracing lovely 19th century buildings. It is used for picnics, for walks, for meetings of friends and groups, for casual cricket matches. On any visit one may see someone reading, a family barbequing, men in visi-vests having lunch, visitors reading the signs and enjoying the vistas, groups and individuals doing exercises, walking a dog, someone simply lying on the grass. The park has areas that invite quiet contemplation, gentle games, group activities, formal organisation of memorial services, and wedding parties.



**FROM VIEW '2' SEE BELOW. CARRINGTON PARK
CRICKETERS AT TABLE, BAILS AT RHS**

In an unexpected reference to mediaeval maps, but lacking the puffing cheeks of a cherub, the drawing labelled SITE ANALYSIS shows the 'morning wind' and the 'afternoon wind'. Perhaps the tranquil siting of the Hayball offices offers consistent gentle and entirely predictable breezes, but in Young the wind direction and indeed its speed and temperature vary. This drawing and the above phrase suggest that the firm does not understand the concept of *park*: the drawing, at **2** notes a formal grassed area as '*underused, with no community facilities to activate the space*'



'UNACTIVATED SPACE' IN PARK. WITHIN 15 SECONDS WALK OF A TABLE, AMENITIES BLOCK, CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND, SEAT TO OBSERVE PLAYGROUND, AND SHOWING PEOPLE ATTEMPTING TO ACTIVATE THE SPACE.



Dr Judith Pugh
VIEW FROM 2 NORTH LAMPSTAND PATH



VIEW FROM 2 EAST TO ROTUNDA



VIEW FROM 2 SOUTH TO PORTICO

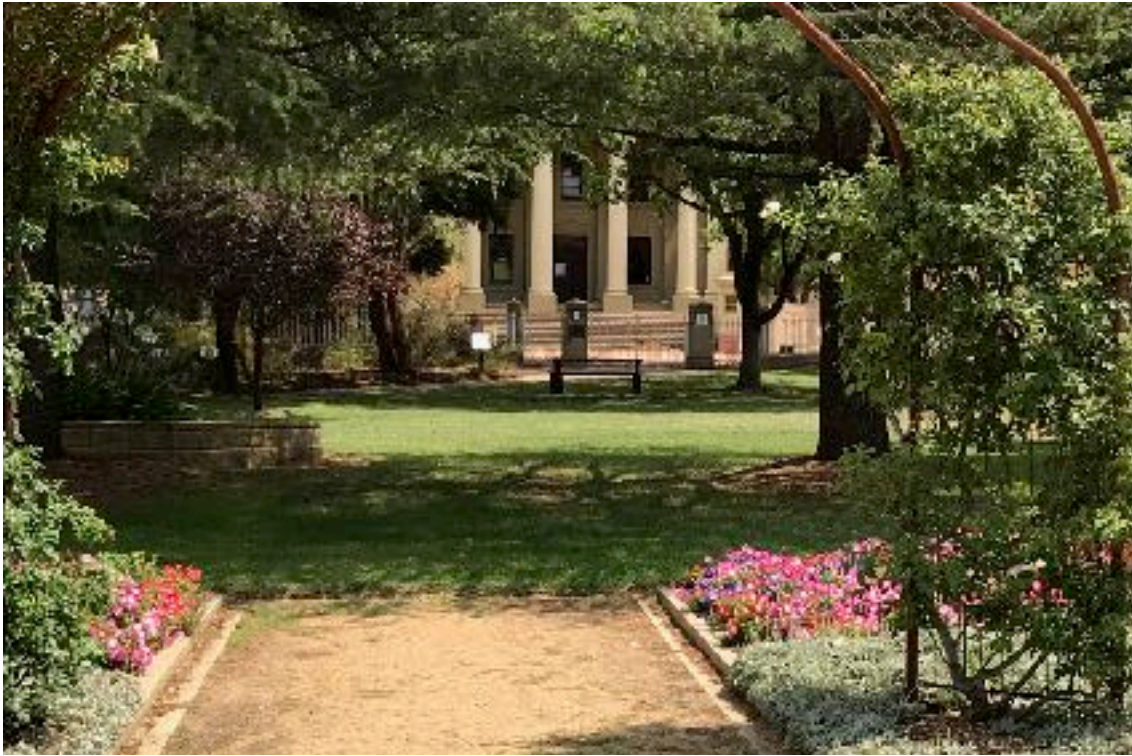


**VIEW FROM 2 LOOKING NORTH WEST
PICNIC TABLE**



5 SECONDS FROM 2 PLAYGROUND LHS BARBECUE AREA RHS

Within a **30 seconds walk** from the area indicated by the figure **2** there are:
the bandstand, many memorials, at least 10 benches and seats, three sets of play equipment, (one a swing for disabled people in wheelchairs) a large covered barbeque area, picnic tables and chairs, open space for casual games, glades of trees, open sunny lawn areas frequently used for sunbathing, avenues of trees, flowers, vistas, and, perhaps a minute distant...the Waterwise Garden from which to learn, and lovely architecture to admire.



15 SECONDS FROM 2 ROSE ARBOUR, PORTICO VIEW, LHS GARDEN WITH WIDE SEAT SURROUND, PICNIC TABLE



WATERWISE GARDEN, CONTEMPLATIVE SPACE



WATERWISE GARDEN. NOTE PROXIMITY TO PALISADE FENCE, THREAT OF “WALK” CONCEPT

This is a heritage area. Park design developed in the 18th century. The park conforms to various aesthetic elements which should not be disturbed: lovely vistas, formal avenues of trees, colourful flower beds. *Activate* reveals not only a failure to consult, a failure to appreciate the visible amenity of the park, a failure to observe and investigate the ways in which the

community uses the park, but also an apparent unfamiliarity with the very concept of *park*.

Access Issues

On first reading the EIS, I went to Carrington Park, and realised that installing the 'pedestrian link' suitable for cyclists and mobility scooters across the Park would not only scar the landscape, but require removal of a considerable portion of the Waterwise Garden installed at the South-Eastern end of the park, probably 30 years ago. The access walk proposed will destroy two of the three constituent sections, and render the concept meaningless.

Photographs of the garden are above. Notions spruiked throughout the EIS *'learning through landscape'* and *'Re-connecting learning with life and enabling learning anywhere, anytime with anyone'* are revealed to be meaningless rhetoric, and the reports to be inadequate, as they have not suitably investigated the sites on which the project will impact.

Design

It is claimed that the shape of the building reflects Wiradjuri Culture. Those who have seen Koichi Takada's Crown apartments at Green Square could be forgiven for thinking that this design is a horizontal version of that noisy glassy shape. The proposed design might be suitable for a greenfield site, but an attention-grabbing erection should not be allowed between two 19th century elegant and monumental edifices as the Gaol entrance and the Barnet Courthouse. If the 'facility' is shaped in its proposed form with its current design details these will no longer speak to each other or form a consistent element on the South side of the Park, itself 19th century in form. If curves are required, there are more discreet and sympathetic ways to integrate a new building with curves: a combination of formality and applied geometrical shapes such as oriel windows or curved porticos, below a pediment echoing the roof of the old courthouse itself, as has been elegantly expressed by the TAFE architects could be introduced.

Sustainability

•Given the inaccuracies and misrepresentations throughout this document I suggest claims of the project's environmental sustainability should be rigorously and independently assessed. As the consultants have, by suggesting visitors will walk from the CBD to access the facility, demonstrated that they do not understand the extremes of weather in the district, and appear to think winds

blow one way in the morning and the opposite in the evening, one cannot have confidence in their up-to-date ecological understanding. The extensive glazed area of the building faces North-Northeast. Young has savage summers (and winters). Hayball's design will subject these walls to blazing sun from early 40+ degree summer mornings. On the South, the glazed area will lose heat in the winter.

Inadequacies of the Heritage Report

The GML report itself is inadequate; it is not possible to measure whether this is due to a desire to emphasise the connection to the Wiradjuri people. Certainly, of all the appendices I've read, the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage report, also prepared by GML, is the longest, at 425 pages. It is surprising that in the crucial point of colonial history both the Chinese and the connection to the State opposing their ill-treatment by arresting the anti-Chinese rioters and attempting to try them has been overlooked in this report.

I am aware that Joseph Kinsela, on behalf of YCARA, has submitted a critique of that report, I endorse his views but would point out that this report, like others, is inaccurate and incomplete: for instance, it describes the aboriginal reconciliation tree as a white box, but it is a yellow box, and indeed identified as such by the arborist's report; it fails to understand the 19th century planting of Kurrajong trees as unusual; most formal avenues in the 19th century were of exotics. It undervalues the elms in the park. As northern hemisphere elms were killed by Dutch Elm disease, elms are almost extinct outside Australia, and hence have heritage importance per se. Describing the bandstand (or rotunda) it fails to note that this structure has been inappropriately altered: inter-alia, sixty-pound railway lines have been vertically attached to some of the supports, the wooden floor removed and concreted substituted. One would expect to find such accretions mentioned.

This report here again reflects the inadequacy of the community engagement of this proposal. Quoting the nomination of the precinct to the State Heritage Register, which notes that Lord Carrington planted a tree in 1889 it states:

There are two old elm trees in the park and a number of smaller ones. One of the larger trees is at the western end of the park on the southern side of the central walk. The second is near the memorial to the White Family. This second tree is growing on the alignment of Currawong Street West, so could only have been planted after 1922, when that part of the road was first closed.

The Young Council, formed in 1882, enthusiastically set about planting shade trees throughout the town in the mid-1880s, normally these trees were planted (and remain across the town) in the road alignment not where a pavement might be made. The huge elm, like other large trees in town, were probably planted at that time.

The road was gazetted an unnecessary road in **1910, not 1922**.

As the GML report asserts that the road in question was a 'made,' road it should be noted that none but the main roads in the town were macadamised until the 1950s. Most astonishingly, the GML report crucially omits to note the Waterwise Garden, a distinctive area of the park having high local importance: not only as evidence of the engagement over time of the local community with the park (of which indeed the many memorial plaques are also evidence) but that this garden is evidence of 20th century interest in environmental issues, and that this Council took a proactive 'learning through landscape' approach to such concerns. Attached is the assessment of the park by Taylor-Brammer prepared for the Heritage Council, a brief assessment but having gravitas.

The EIS states at **3.9 Landscaping and public domain**

A Landscape Design Strategy has been provided in the Design Report at **Appendix C**. The Landscape Strategy is based on the following principles:

- Create a legible and accessible site:
- Learning through landscape
- Create a sense of community and
- Create a sustainable and adaptive landscape.

These assertions suggest the current site is not legible, provides no sense of community, offers nothing from which to learn and is neither sustainable nor adaptive. They simply supply rhetoric for the plans to reshape the park, remove the Waterwise Garden, and introduce a new walk, lighting and signage.

Mr Kinsela noted to GML the connections of the park to Young's innovative introduction of three-phase power for domestic, commercial as well municipal use; this was not apparently understood, and one of their footnotes refers to an ABC program about Tamworth, which, while introducing municipal lighting before Young, did so only to a short section of Street, and only used direct current and arc lights, which proved unsatisfactory. The GML report suggests that a 'Cottage' was built at the western Caple St end of the park. One would

have expected a heritage consultant to look for windows even in the humblest cottage: this building was the original sub-station for power to the South of the town.

There is a note that External lighting details will be developed in the later design stages: such details should have been considering the design of Young's 19th C light poles.



SUNDAY 26TH JANUARY RIPON CORNER LOOKING NTH DOWN CAMPBELL ST

Appendix F Traffic Impact Assessment

The failure of the Project Managers and report writers adequately to consult with the community is again demonstrated here. Had the writer engaged with locals the traffic issues in the precinct arising from the presence of a large worshipping Catholic Community in Young might have been made clear.

The community section of the facility is planned to be available to the community during school hours, and the shared sections after school hours and at the weekend.

- Sunday mornings are a time when the facility will be open. It is frequently difficult to find parking when visiting the park on Sunday morning. There are two regular Mass times at St Mary's Church: at 6.00pm on Saturday parking places are frequently even harder to find.

- There are on average two funerals per week at St Mary's. These occasions can bring an average 400 mourners but if the person is well known or the death a



SUNDAY CAMPBELL ST CAR RIPON LOOKING SOUTH UP THE HILL: FEW SPACES, UTE IS ILLEGALLY PARKED



SUNDAY CHURCHGOERS CARS IN MUSEUM CAR PARK: MUSEUM NOT OPEN



SUNDAY RIPON CAMPBELL ST LOOKING WEST, CENTRE AND ROADSIDE PARKING

tragedy and the Church is full, 700 people will arrive. On these occasions parking



SUNDAY RIPON ST LOOKING EAST CENTRE AND ROADSIDE PARKING

is impossible. Weddings of course also bring many people to the church; events



SAT 1ST FEBRUARY RIPON ST LOOKING EAST

and weddings and other ceremonies *in the park* mean local parking spaces are occupied.



SATURDAY 1ST FEB CAMPBELL ST LOOKING SOUTH: TWO CARS ON RIGHT ILLEGALLY PARKED



SATURDAY 1ST FEB CAMPBELL ST LOOKING NORTH

Area around the Church during the 6.00pm Mass on 1st February, and Sunday 26th January, show how Church events restrict casual parking. The long weekend



SAT 1ST FEB RIPON ST LOOKING EAST OVERFLOW IN MUSEUM CARPARK

is a weekend when many Young residents have not returned from holiday.
(January is not only the school holiday period, it is a time when ordinarily, in this

fertile area, cherries have been picked, lambing and calving are over, harvest is over, there are few farming jobs, so people in the district are away.)

•The Report fails to contemplate the logic of its own assumptions.

•The report assumes that direct connection between the town CBD and the library is essential; it recommends that the connection to the CBD be upgraded; that is, “a shared pedestrian/bicycle link be established along Campbell Street.” The cost of this ‘link’ is not calculated, nor that it will have to include a *bridge across a creek*. There is no mention of the cost or proposed funding sources. This recommendation underlies the understanding of anyone who has had practical experience with community libraries: that *people use libraries (and indeed other community facilities) where they shop and attend medical appointments and work and socialise*. It is crucial for a town with no public transport

The Report does not consider local behaviours.

•There is no mention of the *origin* of the present or contemplated increased traffic to this precinct: it appears that no analysis of the database of the library users has been undertaken. The Hilltops LGA includes villages which once served nearby pastoral properties and provided local sociality. From the 1970s, structural and technological change meant banks, bush hospitals, churches, general stores, butchers, cafés, libraries, closed. Technological change has made much farm labouring work redundant. The villages of this fertile area are becoming depositories of people on low incomes, disabled or aged pensioners, who have relocated because they cannot afford to live in cities and towns, and whose limited means ensure they plan visits to local towns very carefully. In the 1960s seven trains ran from Young every weekday and Saturday (with fewer on Sunday) to local towns and villages. The Sydney-Melbourne XPT is now the only train that stops in Hilltops, it does not connect any towns or villages. The only public transport is by School Bus during term time. This depends, of course, on availability of seats; time spent in town is governed by the bus schedule. From my village just outside Hilltops the Young bus leaves at 7.30 am and returns at 3.15 pm. Of course, villagers and those living on surrounding properties arrange their shopping to coincide with an event or a meeting or an appointment. If they have no meeting or gathering to attend, they will drive into town, shop, have a coffee a drink or a meal alone or with friends, and select/drop off a library book.

The Report fails to account for Campbell St’s steep slope, and local weather.

•The description of Campbell Street fails to note the steep hill on which the Park and school are located. The assumption that people will meet this challenge by walking or cycling up this steep hill fails to acknowledge the extremes of weather in the region; this slope challenges even very fit people, and defeats anyone with any disability, or incapacitated by injury or age or ill-health. From November to March, temperatures are regularly over 30 degrees, often in the very high 30s, and often over 40 in January/February. In the winter, severe frosts and flooding rains occur from July to September. The periods of these extremes are extending. Weather patterns determine much activity in the district, and are one of the many reasons the **CIMP** recommended the library be located in the CBD.

The Report does not indicate *how* the community bus service will provide access.

•The bus would need to expand its route and probably require more buses, and train more volunteer drivers. The report notes that the bus, which now leaves the Independent Units/Aged Care facility two blocks above the Park four times per day Monday-Tuesday and Thursday-Friday and twice on Wednesday, and stops at the current Library, will stop at the new Facility. At present Library users have time to shop and meet friends attend appointments and visit the library. The report does not contemplate how these users will accommodate their shopping trip with getting off the bus to choose or return a book or ‘connect’ across the LGA, which abstract concept adorns the EIS. There are no suggestions or evidence as to how many trips the bus will make and at what times, or the length of time between drop off/pick-ups and the frequency of these after school hours when the ‘shared’ sections of the ‘facility’ are available to the community.

•The Traffic Assessment does not account for the environmental impact of multiple extra car trips by people accessing the library.

•As there is no public transport in the town, and Young in a valley, people from the town’s outskirts also bring their cars to the CBD.

Without attending to the historic park layout or mentioning aesthetics, the Assessment recommends additional Park paths, and accepts the questionable Currawong Walk

The Traffic Assessment refers to access thus: *The proposed community pedestrian access to the new Library and Community Facility will be via a new walk (Currawong Walk) that functions as a pedestrian link across Carrington Park.*

At least this report acknowledges that “Currawong Walk” is *new*. This section of the park was once part of a road known as ‘Currawong Street West”, which began at what is now Campbell Street, below the palisade fence, crossed Caple Street and continued for several blocks. Like most early roads it began as a dirt track. In 1910 the section across the top of the park was declared an ‘unnecessary road’. In 1939, *80 years ago*, it was incorporated into the park. In common with all roads in Young it was 99,’ a chain and a half in the old money, approximately 30 metres wide. Thus, at the time it was incorporated, it added 50% to the park. ‘Restoration’ even of a section of this track, would reduce the grassy areas considerably.

But the access question goes far beyond this issue.

Access to the building itself UNRESOLVED.

At the meeting at which these reports were first displayed, I asked the then General Manager, who in April 2018 succeeded the *acting* General Manager, how people who had struggled up the hill would get into the facility. She told me this *had not yet been resolved*. I have been unable to follow this up with her as she resigned the following day. Apparently the ‘walk’ is to be at the expense of the Council, but the Mayor said at the meeting at which these reports became available that **there was no budget item for the walk**.

As the **Social Impact Assessment** is a desktop draft report, I would appreciate the opportunity to comment on the completed report.

As I have noted the inadequate community consultation throughout the EIS and appendices, I have not completed a detailed assessment of

Appendix Y Consultation Report. A glance indicates it is inaccurate and inadequate as:

Consultations with library users or the broad community as to

- ⌘ The suitability of the site, or alternate sites
- ⌘ The ‘joint facility’ proposal did not take place.

Listed consultations include under Libraries:

⌘ Hilltops Council Library Service Young Library Boorowa Library Harden Library. The traffic consultant enquired as to visitation, there is no evidence any consultant engaged with library staff, and none engaged with Library users in the Libraries, or used the database to make enquiries.

Heritage:

ÐYoung Historical Society, Lambing Flat Museum. These are one body, and while reproduced photographs indicate that someone visited the Museum, no-one consulted with the Historical Society