

I am in favour of the project and the location. I don't think the cost is the actual issue. The current uproar seems to have developed because of the fervent wishes of some in the community to have an art gallery on City Hill. I know that the City Hill land was earmarked for community use, but that covers quite a broad range of interests, not just an art gallery as so many people seem to be fixated on.

If that is going to be the argument, then I would like to say that children and the elderly (which now includes me) can't walk or cycle up City Hill to visit the library. I think it's a good idea to house the museum and gallery in the same place so that they can all feed each other. People who may stop by to pick up a book will be encouraged to learn something about our history at the museum or see what the art world is up to.

I have been a library user for many years in many cities, and they have all been "in town". That was in the days when we went to libraries only to read or borrow books and use the research materials that couldn't be removed. I could walk there by myself when I was a girl. I used to ride my bike to our local museum regularly. These are places that need to be accessible for kids.

Today, libraries are information centres with books as a focal point, but the facilities for residents and visitors include internet access and digital media. Coffs has many young backpackers and tourists, whom I see often at the library, using the free wi-fi to check their mail, make bookings, do their banking, and communicate with home. They also use the library to find out more about the region and where things are.

Libraries have a lot of free pamphlets and brochures full of local information. Librarians are known as the original Search Ninjas! They are also the central place where community services leave information leaflets and where event organisers advertise coming attractions and local festivals. CENTRAL is the operative word.

With a museum and gallery, there will be even more more to enjoy. I have no objection to council offices in a civic centre. The original council building and Rigby House are well situated for someone to establish offices or residential premises, as they sit opposite creek areas that won't be built out. If I have to visit council, why not enjoy the new building and other "attractions"?

As for parking, the big parking building is immediately behind the proposed Civic Centre. Perfect.

Because of my husband, Rod's, involvement with Council over many years, I'm well aware of the many strategic plans (on which almost nobody comments) and the CBD Masterplan process. While I deplore the arbitrary changing of the CBD committee's terms of reference mid-stream, I still applaud the overall attempt to create an active hub "in town".

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

(Mrs) Pat McKelvey

Ararawarra