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**Re: Submission to SSD-10300 Coffs Harbour Cultural and Civic Space**

I write in full support for the planned Coffs Harbour Cultural and Civic Space which is the culmination of a comprehensive and exhaustive planning process.

Whilst I was a councillor, 2004-2008, discussions got underway about developing a similar project, within the CBD, focusing on Brelsford Park at the time, but before any decisions could be made about a Cultural and Civic Space, other planning instruments needed to be completed.

In 2004 we were 4 years into a 10-year Special Rate Variation (SRV), agreed to by CBD property and business owners interested in reinstating the CBD as the key retail precinct, providing secondary benefits (Civic & Cultural) when compared with stand-alone retail centres.

The primary purpose of the first CBD SRV was to open up the Harbour Drive mall to traffic once again, thus encouraging increased visitation, vibrant shopping and an inviting City Square with regular markets and entertainment. Towards the end of my term on Council, discussions were underway with key CBD business and property owners about a second SRV that would be targeted toward bringing a heart back to the CBD.

Council applied for a second 10-year Special Rate Variation, again for CBD ratepayers only, for the 2012-2013 financial year, however IPART wanted specific detail and granted a 1-year SRV specifically to produce a comprehensive Masterplan. IPART is the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal which provides advice to protect the interests of citizens and taxpayers.  
<https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/Home/About-IPART>

In July 2012, a CBD Masterplan Committee was established, comprising SRV ratepayers from businesses of various sizes and one community representative to guide the process. A multi-disciplinary team of experts was engaged to work with the community and stakeholders.

Four well-attended community engagement workshops were undertaken along with a variety of other engagement techniques, ranging from independently facilitated workshops involving a combination of individual and large groups, visioning and exploration workshops, meetings and small group work with urban designers. There was a lot of media coverage, a Facebook page and a project website.

The result of that work, the Coffs Harbour City Centre Masterplan 2031, was instrumental in securing the second 10-year SRV, which got underway for the 2013-2014 financial Year. A key objective from page 6 of the Masterplan reads:

*“A collection of lifestyle assets including pools, gyms, parks, walkways, cycleways, playgrounds, library, art gallery and day spas will continue to be developed, enticing inner city residential living as well as increased daily visitation”*

The CBD Masterplan consultation process went on to win the runner-up award from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) in 2013. [https://www.iap2.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/2013\\_Core\\_Values\\_Awards\\_Showcase.pdf](https://www.iap2.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/2013_Core_Values_Awards_Showcase.pdf)

More recently, in 2016, Council set up the Library and Gallery Planning Advisory Group, expressly focusing on a location within the CBD, and concepts regarding what would be included in the complex. Discussions regarding office space were generally accepted as being favourable to contributing to a sustainable complex.

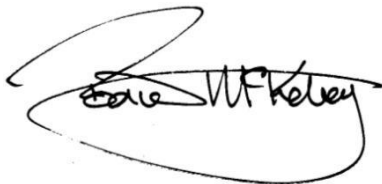
At that time, consideration was given to the relocation of Council, thus vacating key sites with Northerly views over Coffs Creek parklands which could be developed for quality inner city residential living, another major objective of the City Centre Masterplan 2031.

I’ve provided the detail above to put into context how misguided those complaining about a lack of consultation are. Relatively few people have had a long-standing personal view that the art gallery/museum should be on City Hill, which is situated well outside of the CBD, and wrote a petition, which was widely circulated.

Other petition supporters include those who have competing interests outside the City Centre, demonstrated particularly by the contribution from a Park Beach Plaza representative who has no interest in seeing a thriving retail heart in the CBD which would compete with their patronage.

It’s unfortunate that so many in the general public have been swayed by misinformation about the consultation process – which won major recognition in its own right – and wish to delay and stifle the project. Coffs has already waited far too long for this.

Thanks for the opportunity to have my say,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rod W McKelvey', enclosed within a large, loopy, handwritten oval shape.

Rod W McKelvey MAICD