

30/04/2013

I am writing in regard to the North West Rail link Corridor Strategy.

Bella Vista Draft Structure Plan

I have concerns over this station as in peak hour traffic, cars are lined up for kms along Old Windsor Rd to get into Celebration Drive. While this may decrease due to people catching the train, there will be more traffic trying to catch the train. Both Old Windsor Road and Celebration Drive need to be widened to cope with the traffic and allow people time to catch the train.

The other concern is the car parking that is available to the Bus T-way. There appears to not be enough room in the car park for people to park to catch the bus currently. This car park can't be turned over to housing as is needed. The buses are still needed to go to Parramatta.

Showground Draft Structure Plan

As the documentation shows, the area was originally planned at the Hills Centre station as this was seen as a significant building within the original plan. The footer on the document still shows this.

The plan states "The redevelopment of major land holdings adjacent to the station provides an opportunity to deliver a vibrant hub for the local area, which could include a mixture of apartments, retail, restaurants, and potentially cultural facilities such as galleries and theatres and boutique office space within a pedestrian-oriented environment.

The showground will remain a regional recreational asset and benefit from increased activity generated by the new residents, workers and visitors to the station."

There is already a perfectly good vibrant hub existing in the Hills Centre and adjacent office space. The Hills Centre was built from a bicentennial grant by the government in 1988, the council offices slightly before this. This is a significant part of the Hills Shire heritage. It has a time capsule placed by the council

to be opened in 2088. This is a significant building that was built to last 100 years. It is not a flimsy out-dated building.

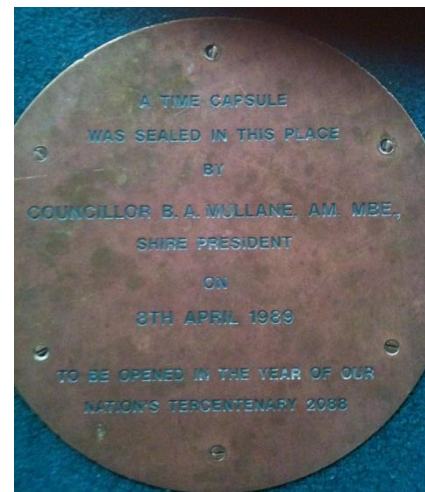


Figure 1 Time Capsule

In 22 Feb 2012 Dominic Perrottet said in a speech in parliament honouring the Mayor at the time

Bernie Mullane, "Under his leadership, The Hills Shire Council buildings were created along with the Hills Centre, **which has become a valuable resource to our community**, playing host to numerous events from citizenship ceremonies to school presentation evenings."¹ The Hills Centre serves more than just citizenship ceremonies and school presentations. It is currently host to over 120,000 people a year. Nearly every, if not all schools in the Hills area and a large part of Western Sydney schools use the Hills Centre in some way.

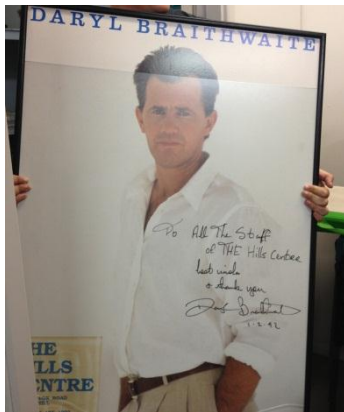


Figure 3 Darryl Braithwaite

In its early years, the Hills Centre was host to numerous events and plays including Orchestras, dance companies, performers such as

Darryl Braithwaite, Sounds of the Supremes and numerous other plays and dance performances. Recently it has hosted Justice Crew Guy Sebastian, cultural Indian and Srilankan events and Empower Church have recorded two EP's as well as numerous other dance and drama groups. It is currently covering costs and clientele has doubled in the last three years. There is a kitchen that can cater for hundreds of people. With a continuation in growth in clientele, this could once again be what it was designed to be. Empower church had planned to recarpet and refurbish the centre before their contract was terminated.



Figure 2 The Hills Centre, what a lovely place to perform

The Hills Centre has features that are little known to the general public. The seating folds back to provide an open space that is suitable for dinner parties and functions. There is a lift in the floor of the building so cars can drive up and load items easily.

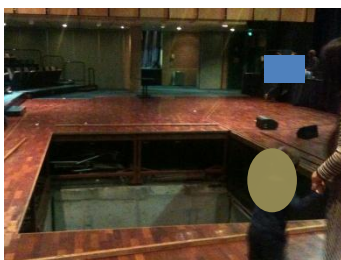


Figure 4 Heaving Duty lift inside the Hills Centre auditorium

The station will only be a positive thing for the Hills Centre and council offices. **The government could save tens of millions of dollars by not purchasing and demolishing these buildings** and moving the station back to the Southern side of the Hills Centre, or behind the Hills Centre. In February 2012, in relation to the station Southern option, Show Committee President, Mr Gooch said "it could be a win-win situation where the government would rebuild the facilities to the community and patrons' benefit: they could eventually catch the train to the showground."²

In March 2012 Premier O'Farrell, in relation to the Southern option for the Showground Station said "This is a win-win for the community in the North West,".³

If the station were to move behind the Hills Centre, this would provide a service to both the showground and the Hills Centre and Offices. There are plenty of people around the showground

most nights and with the Hills Centre kitchen running as a restaurant, it could become a hub for theatre goers and the place to come for a coffee after a night out on the town. I believe it could be even safer than if the station was placed on Carrington Rd.

Both these options would also stop the protective species of trees on the roadside of the Hills Centre from being demolished.

The council buildings are also a significant architectural feature of the Hills area, particularly around the Hills Centre. There is a great potential for multiple uses and employment from a training college, to accommodation for students, or motel accommodation and commercial businesses, particularly related to the Hills Centre. The CWA ladies do such a magnificent job in such a small kitchen at the showground, it would be nice to provide an alfresco community kitchen that could be used by CWA for various events for the showground, the Hills Centre and future uses of the council chambers. The training college could provide facilities for dance groups to practice as well as providing training in performing arts and the national skills shortages in Food trades and Hospitality occupations⁴.

The show committee are in favour of keeping the Hills Centre and the showground. By leaving both intact it would provide a cultural precinct that is what the community as a whole wants. This will also create employment for the greater Hills area. Already there have been jobs lost due to the closing of the Hills Centre. We want to create more jobs, not lose jobs.

There needs to be more community consultation about demolishing the Hills Centre and the council chambers. There was only one month consultation time in November for discussion on the E12 and NO discussion on the demolition of the Hills Centre, this was not enough time.⁵

Around the Showground Station and the Hills Centre, there is potential for community outdoor art, and if there was an exhibition centre/ artist gallery somewhere between the station and the Hills Centre, it could serve both the showground and the Hills Centre. This could have exhibition space for conventions that are held in the Hills Centre or “classy” rotating art exhibitions. It could also serve other purposes. It may even be able to replace some of the buildings on the showground to make more room for the station construction.

¹Tribute to Bernie Mullane, MBE, OAM

<http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Prod/parlment/hansart.nsf/V3Key/LA20120222036?open&refNavID=HA81>

² Source: <http://www.hillsnews.com.au/news/local/news/general/north-west-rail-links-hills-centre-station-under-review/2445440.aspx>

³ Southern Option for Hills Station – Media Release <http://northwestrail.com.au/document/show/48>

⁴ Occupational skill shortages information <http://deewr.gov.au/occupational-skill-shortages-information-0#food-trades-and-hospitality-occupations>

⁵ Environmental Impact Statement 2