

## **My personal submission in reply to the Draft Showground Station Proposal**

As a member of Castle Hill Players for the past 34 years I am most concerned that in the Draft plan for the Showground there is no mention of the Pavilion Theatre?

**The Castle Hill Players** first formed in 1954. In 1965 they approached the Council asking for a permanent home of their own. They were given the old Taylor Pavilion in the Castle Hill Showground. We were fortunate enough to have an architect and builder in our membership and plans were put forward and approved to transform this into a fully functional Theatre.

Over the last 50 years the Castle Hill Players have spent a tremendous amount of time, energy and their own money and gladly contributed whatever and whenever they could in their effort to adapt, enlarge and upgrade their new home on more than one occasion and in 2008 an enlargement of the Pavilion Theatre foyer was jointly funded by the Castle Hill Players and the Council.

Today the **Pavilion Theatre** is a fully functional 150 seat theatre, providing members and patrons with all the amenities one would expect of a professional Theatre. The Players have been an integral part of the community for the last 62 years giving affordable entertainment to the people in the Hills district. We take pride in maintaining a high standard and the running of our own Theatre. We produce between five and six productions a year, each running for 16 performances, something unheard of in any other Community Theatre and we are highly respected by other groups.

The members then and now have always been made up of people from all walks of life, with one thing in common, their love of the Theatre. We get so much back from our involvement and our time spent there, we don our make-up, put on our costumes, build our sets and design them, work our sound equipment and lights, serve our coffee and derive much pleasure from it all. We also give a lot of pleasure to others otherwise we would not have kept our audiences.

For over 50 year the Castle Hill Players and the Pavilion Theatre have been a great asset to the Hills District. It would be a real tragedy if "improvements" to the Showground were made at the expense of a local cultural organisation such as the Castle Hill Players which is considered one of the finest non professional theatre groups in New South Wales.

### **The Showground**

In the eyes of the community this area is far from underutilised. The Showground contains relatively uncrowded, invaluable, open space which is essential for district residents to be able to use for passive recreation. Residents of all ages, including older people, are able to avail themselves of level ground for passive exercise, quiet space for contemplation and open area to enjoy a sense of space.

Regular markets are held which are well supported by the local community, horse and canine events occur on a regular basis, a wide variety of special interest groups hold events on the showground arena. People walk, jog, conduct yoga, exercise dogs, fly kites, and children ride bikes. The arena provides an excellent site for such events as circuses and concerts, gymkhanas and other equine activities, and major fundraising events such as **The Relay for Life**. Outside of major event times parking is adjacent to your activity.

The Showground has iconic status within the history of the Hills District and continues to be part of the lifestyle identity for which the district is renowned.

Minimising or destroying these traditional lifestyle facilities by the overdevelopment of the Showground precinct will severely damage the appeal, the motivation and the reason why families move to the Hills District.

Maureen Cartledge (Member and Archivist for the Castle Hill Players)

The Pavilion Theatre 2016



Pavilion Theatre As it is today



As it was 1926 to 1965 before the Castle Hill Players took it over