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25th February, 2016

COMMENTS ON THE SHOWGROUND STATION PRECINCT PROPOSAL

To Whom It May Concern,

My comments are in regard to the proposed cultural amenities within the Castle Hill Showground Precinct as described in the above proposal.

On page 12, Fig 15, entitled "Existing Community Facilities" there is no mention whatsoever of the Pavilion Theatre (Castle Hill Players Inc.) which has served this community for **50 years** in its present location in the Showground. This theatre is part of the fabric of the community and I am amazed and dumbfounded that it has not been listed as an **existing community asset** in the proposal. Nor has it been included anywhere else in the future planning of the Showground Precinct. This theatre and the Castle Hill Players Inc. and its members have contributed in no small way to the fabric of this community for all of its 50 years and it is important that it is taken into consideration if the true interests of the community are to be taken into account. The facts are as follows:

- a) The Pavilion Theatre in the Showground is the only purpose-built theatre in the Hills District capable of producing high quality stage plays.
- b) It provides wholesome entertainment for a wide demographic, producing six quality stage productions each year and utilising the talents of many unpaid volunteers.
- c) It gives volunteers the opportunity to learn stage craft or technical skills which would otherwise not be available to them in the Hills District. In fact, many actors and technical staff have gone on to attain professional careers within the performing arts industry.
- d) The theatre is run by a highly competent group of volunteers who manage the maintenance of the theatre building, its equipment, its program content and its finances **without relying on NSW Government handouts** for all of its **50 years**.
- e) Over these 50 years, members have given up thousands of hours of their own leisure time to ensure that the Pavilion Theatre's productions were of a high quality and reflected the moral standards of the community.
- f) Apart from the investment of time, the Castle Hill Players and its members have invested substantial amounts of money to purchase and maintain state-of-the-art equipment **without NSW Government assistance**.

Based on the above facts my questions are:

1. Why has the Pavilion Theatre or the Castle Hill Players Inc. not been mentioned in the proposed plan for the Showground Precinct as an **existing community asset**?
2. Why has it not been mentioned in any part of the future planning for the Showground?
3. Has anyone responsible for the planning of the Showground Precinct actually set foot inside the Pavilion Theatre to see what a charming, fully raked and air-conditioned theatre it is inside? The external appearance of the building is deceptive and belies what is within its walls.

4. If it is to be ignored and not specifically catered for, who will provide the very substantial amounts of funding required to bring any new facility up to the theatrical standards that this community has come to expect and **which this community now currently has** in the Pavilion Theatre?
5. Is the NSW Government prepared to invest those substantial amounts of taxpayers' money (over and above the existing infrastructure budget) to provide a community asset of this quality if the Pavilion Theatre is not catered for?
6. Why would any state Government, with any integrity, take away such an asset from the community and replace it with a multi-purpose facility, the design of which would be severely compromised by trying to cater for too many diverse groups and purposes? Is the NSW Government not aware of the disaster that was the Hills Centre? It was designed to cater for diverse groups and purposes and failed to satisfy any of them and, as a result, became chronically under-utilised.
7. Why have the authors of this proposal not considered the financial advantage of retaining the Pavilion Theatre which currently costs the NSW Government nothing to maintain.
8. Does the NSW Government realise that by discarding the theatre they will be affecting up to 15,000 patrons and subscribers, many hundreds of pensioners (for which the Pavilion Theatre is their only free entertainment), up to 300 volunteers and approximately 50 administration, actors and technical volunteers. Not to mention the many students who could potentially be trained in the performing arts over the coming years.
9. If the Castle Hill Players' Pavilion Theatre is to be discarded, has the NSW Government taken into account the financial compensation that the members will no doubt seek to cover the substantial monetary outlay for maintenance, equipment and fittings that they have financed over the years, the loss of revenue from the shows and the substantial current equipment and fittings inventory.

The Hills District has for many years been a safe Liberal seat, however, in this day and age of shifting loyalties it is a courageous Government that takes away a valuable and successful community asset like the Pavilion Theatre and replaces it with another white elephant like the Hills Centre and at enormous cost to the tax payer.

The community deserves to know what this Government and its planning department will do to maintain this existing and effective community resource within the Showground Precinct.

Yours faithfully,

George Cartledge

A member of the Castle Hill Players

A member of the Hills Community Centenary of Anzac Committee