



KINGSTON PARKING PLAN QUESTIONED

USA Kingborough members staged a protest about the new parking arrangements at the Kingston Learning Centre by demonstrating the difficulty some of their more vulnerable and elderly members will have crossing the busy Hutchins Street.

From front page

USA Kingborough member Keith Thompson said "it takes something out of the ordinary to get a hundred or so elderly people out to protest on a cold, rainy day."

"The protest action was held where members would have to cross Hutchins Street if they followed the library's alternative plan for them."

USA Kingborough President Maureen Robbison suggested that this involves crossing a very busy road with traffic, and could not believe that anyone could think it was a safer option."

The protesters, many loaded down with art supplies from their lessons at the Kingston Learning Centre, others requiring walking sticks and walkers, crossed the road and made their way to Kingston Library, where they found

the doors had been locked on them.

"The library locked the doors, to keep us - the public - out of this public place," Maureen said.

"Luckily one of our members was already inside and opened the doors for us."

"We just silently walked through the library and out again," Maureen said she was very touched by the level of support.

"Even the drivers travelling along Hutchins Street were fantastic," she said.

"We got lots of thumbs up and they were so patient."

On the same day as the protest independent member for Nelson Meg Webb asked Minister for Education Jo Palmer for clarification.

"It does not make sense to close adjacent car parks due to safety concerns, which then forces elderly participants

to have to risk the gauntlet of a busy road to get from the only other nearby available parking," Ms Webb said.

Minister Palmer responded in parliament that she is "deeply mindful of the impact this closure has had on island community groups and recognised the disruption the closure caused."

"It is important to remember it happened because there was a safety incident," she said.

"I understand Libraries Tasmania has worked with affected client groups and the vast majority have been able to be accommodated in the two main buildings that are accessible via the reopened car park."

"I am also advised Libraries Tasmania held a community forum at Kingston Library in early October and it will continue to provide the community with regular updates."

A Department for Education, Children and Young People spokesperson confirmed with the Kingborough Chronicle that 18 parking spaces are available in the Kingston Learning Centre car park for people with mobility issues or who need to drop off equipment.

"The grassed area adjacent to the Kingston Learning Centre car park has been closed because it is poorly drained and slippery after rain, creating a safety hazard," they said.

"Following community consultation, Stage 1 works are underway to improve safety and pedestrian access, including new fencing, a pathway with handrail and a slightly widened driveway."

"Block D remains closed while planning continues. A completion date will be confirmed once planning is finalised."



Members made signs expressing their feelings.



The protesters were initially locked out of entering Kingston Library.