

# CEO's Message



## OUR GOALS

*To be Australia's pre-eminent showcase for performing arts and culture and an international leader in the presentation and development of artists and their work.*

*To engage and inspire all customers to want to return; and to increase their number and diversity.*

*To maintain and enhance the Sydney Opera House as a cultural landmark, performing arts centre and architectural masterpiece.*

*To create a customer focused workplace where people are recognised for their contribution, realise their potential and are inspired to achieve outstanding results.*

*To invest in the performing arts, cultural activities and audience development by maximising business results of the Sydney Opera House and leveraging its assets, resources and brand.*

Having established our five-year strategic plan and critical projects in the previous year, 2003/04 was focused on implementation and delivery of many of those projects, which had an impact on all aspects of the organisation.

**Our success in completing some thirty critical projects** is due to the quality and commitment of our people, the leadership of our Executive Team and increasing clarity of structure. There were some important appointments during the year: Sue Hunt as Director, Performing Arts; Maria Sykes taking on the Director, Customer Service role, in addition to Strategic Projects; and Joe Horacek as Director, People and Culture.

**The site is livelier than ever, with almost 2,400 events this year emphasising greater access for all.** This year we provided some 400 low cost or free programs in our venues, reaching 127,000 largely new audiences. Our new Exhibition Hall, which opened in October with a Max Dupain photographic retrospective of Sydney Opera House, introduced a new dimension of visual arts and design. We greatly expanded our presentations with Sydney Opera House as the sole presenter or co-presenter. An excellent example was *The Lord Of The Rings Symphony* co-presented with Sydney Symphony which brought in an audience of 10,000, some 70% had never been to Sydney Opera House previously.

**I am particularly pleased with the launch of our House:ED initiative**, an education program specifically designed for primary and secondary schools. We now provide events for a broad spectrum of young people. Babies Proms this year extended its reach to Regional NSW; House:ED targets primary and secondary school children, our Young Audiences program caters for older teenagers while our expanding Studio seasons are aimed at the 20-35 age group. This is all in addition to our commitment to vibrant core programming with our major presenting partners in music, drama, opera and dance.

**Increasingly Sydney Opera House is taking on the role of training and mentoring through our status as a registered training organisation** for the entertainment industry training and management package and, later this year, for security. We are also offering these qualifications to an increasing number of external organisations. The number and range of internal training has increased to encompass areas such as financial planning, creating quality business

cases, performance management and all aspects of risk management. This is resulting in a more professional and more confident organisation, which is reflected in our strong financial results for the year.

**All this was achieved against a backdrop of heightened security awareness.** During the year we successfully implemented a major security overhaul, including infrastructure upgrades (external bollards, new cameras, control room) and created a new full-time security force trained to the highest industry levels.

**Much groundwork has been laid during the year in the critical area of building enhancements and renewal.** At the time of going to press the new Jørn Utzon designed Reception Hall, now renamed the Utzon Room, was successfully opened on time and on budget. Construction work on the dramatic new Utzon designed Western Loggia is also underway. A major internal rebuilding proposal for the Opera Theatre to be created by Jørn Utzon has been endorsed by the Sydney Opera House Trust. Additionally, proposals to greatly improve the ambience and accessibility of the public entrances and foyers have been drawn up. The vision is simple, but profound: to 'complete' the Sydney Opera House using Utzon's principles and designs so that the interiors better match the wonder and universal qualities of the exterior. There is never a dull day at Sydney Opera House, and we are entering one of the most exciting periods of its evolution and development.

**Our achievements to date reflect the ability of us all to work together, anticipate the future and adapt to changes in our business environment.** I acknowledge the immense support of the NSW Government for our ambitions, for our ongoing operations and for important initiatives, such as the security upgrade program. I thank the Executive Team for their support and leadership and the Trust for their encouragement and guidance. My sincere appreciation and thanks also go to all staff for their ongoing hard work, dedication and achievements.

Norman Gillespie  
Chief Executive