

*"When you build a building like the Sydney Opera House, it is like an oil painting by one of the masters where every time you add a brush stroke, it should enhance the total painting."*

*Jørn Utzon*



Jørn Utzon

# Building our Future

The Sydney Opera House is one of the great buildings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and a living testament to the creative mind of Jørn Utzon. This year, two major initiatives to manage the iconic and artistic future of the Sydney Opera House were announced.

The public launch of Jørn Utzon's Design Principles was the ultimate outcome of four years of re-engagement with the visionary Danish architect. The Principles encompass Utzon's vision for the building, outline his approach to its future and provides a framework for its continued creative renewal. They will be used by Richard Johnson, the Sydney Opera House's Consultant Architect, who is working closely with Utzon and his son Jan, to inform the building works in the Venue Improvement Plan.

Announced concurrently by the Premier Bob Carr, the Venue Improvement Plan is an ambitious undertaking of six major projects which address some of the building challenges of the Sydney Opera House and will deliver improvements in artistic quality, accessibility and customer experience.



## VENUE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

**Opera Theatre** The twin projects of the orchestra pit extension and the refurbishment of the auditorium will enhance the Opera Theatre for artists and audiences. The interior finishes and design will be refurbished and theatre and orchestra pit acoustics and configuration will be improved. Digitisation will afford many opportunities for exposure of the arts to a wider audience and there will be improved access for artists and patrons.

**Forecourt** Performance infrastructure on the Forecourt will realise the Utzon vision of an outdoor auditorium. This sixth venue will provide improved access to the performing arts, with both ticketed and free outdoor events and performances. The Forecourt opening season is planned for November 2002.

**Concert Hall** Full acoustic studies and modelling will create a blueprint for the future. Phase one works will improve acoustics for both orchestra and audience.

**Western Foyers** These will be transformed by a new Utzon design, which will open them into a new colonnade, enlivening the space and developing closer links between the building and the harbour.

**Reception Hall** This space will be transformed by another recent Utzon design, providing an inspiring interior and improved access to the Reception Hall and Box Office for people with disabilities.

## BUILDING WORKS THIS YEAR

Existing precast facade cladding was removed for maintenance work and assessment of the condition of the 40 year old concrete walls. Work was completed on target for both the northern and western frontages and the concrete was determined to be in sound condition, with no major work required for a further 50 years.

Work began on new digital infrastructure to automate sound control and improve quality across all performance venues, beginning with the

installation of a Euphonix sound console in the Opera Theatre. Increased reliability, safety, flexibility and operational efficiency were the outcomes of the design and upgrade of the Concert Hall Theatre Machinery Control System this year. The new system replaces all the old control panels with soft-touch screen interfaces and remote control capabilities. Microphone winches, acoustic clouds, operational and maintenance winches, speaker and lighting axis and all stage platforms can be controlled from the soft-touch control screens. Upgrading of the infrastructure in The Studio this year enables us to attract new audiences with an ever-increasing range of live performances and events. A new load truss was suspended from the ceiling of The Studio, which can carry up to 18 tonnes of equipment. New drapes and projection screens create a more intimate atmosphere and considerably reduce rigging times. Seat numbering, improved

signage and lighting and an upgraded public lift has enhanced audience access to both floor and gallery levels. Work commenced this year to fit out the recording and multi-media suite that was built behind The Studio in 1999. This year's project focused on upgrading acoustic isolation, creating a sound profile for the control room, installing a dedicated electrical supply and a new lighting scheme. A Security Enhancement Plan was developed to ensure the upgrade of Sydney Opera House security and emergency systems. Staff undertook training and implemented improved security infrastructure, documentation and procedures.

## Venue Improvement Plan

### Opera Theatre

- Pit Extension
- Auditorium Refurbishment

### The Forecourt

- Complete Infrastructure as sixth Performance Venue

### Concert Hall

- Acoustic Improvements

### Western Broadwalk

- Colonnade & Foyer Refurbishment

### Reception Hall

- Refurbishment
- Increased disability access to Box Office and Reception Hall

Total Cost : \$69,000,000

Total Funding: NSW Government