

CEO'S MESSAGE



Customer Service

We strive to make Sydney Opera House an exciting place to visit and hope our customers experience and enjoy the changes we have made in order to better deliver on our promise of *Live Performance Every Day*. We will continue in the next year to build throughout the organisation the culture that supports our brand values.

We undertook a range of activities to measure visitor and stakeholder satisfaction, achieving an overall customer satisfaction rating of 81% from our online survey. Following consultation with our Strategic Presenting Partners, together we agreed upon the priorities for changes in the services we provide to them (refer page 56) for more information. Further, we sought the views of staff to help strengthen our organisational performance, strengthen staff engagement with its changing culture, their job satisfaction and their opinion of the recognition received for a job well done.

In September 2007, we launch a new 'Host Team' to provide a welcoming and informative 'front door' to visitors. The team will be based at Stage Door and the Box Office Foyer. They will also rove the site and support special events.

Performing Arts

Attendances at Sydney Opera House grew by 7% this year, with a total of 1,212,270 people attending 1,595 performances. There was truly something for everyone, offered at a variety of price points, with some events free of charge. Once again, a number of sell-out successes resulted from the inspiring programs of our major presenting partners: Sydney Symphony, Opera Australia, Sydney Theatre Company and The Australian Ballet (refer page 10 for more information) and our own creative and varied programs.

Sydney Opera House presented 703 performances attracting 313,727 people, an increase of 68% on last year. The opportunity to present work in the Opera Theatre, our greater use of the Concert Hall and the presentation of programs that have engaged the broader community all contributed to this pleasing result. There were many performance highlights which are outlined on pages 10 to 21. Among them were the *Vienna Philharmonic*, *Circus Oz* and *Honour Bound*.

Our commitment to providing quality performance experiences for young people continued, with a 16.5% increase in attendance to 73,625 this year.

Next year we will formalise our Public Programs stream, developing an explicit vision which will include a range of free community events and provide the public with opportunities to develop a more varied involvement with, and understanding of the arts and contemporary culture. We will also continue with a second program, *Adventures 07*, of festival highlights sourced from around the world.

Tourism and Visitor Experience

As mentioned in the Chairman's Message, the implementation of the second year of the ten-year program to enhance our visitor experience increased participation in tours by 21%. We also launched a premium *High Tea at Sydney Opera House* this year, which was a sell-out success. Backstage Tours attracted 1,630 people, an increase of 64% on last year, and our Asian Language Tours attracted 77,198 people in their first full year of operation.

A dramatic new look to the Lower Concourse shop highlighted the completion of a two-year renovation project to improve the offer and margins of our branded retail outlets.

A number of projects in the Access Strategic Plan 2005/8 gained momentum. Designs were completed on a new public lift, with capacity for four wheelchairs; a customer Access Guide was published in a range of accessible formats and a two-day exhibition of works of art by artists with a disability under 25 years of age was held in the Utzon Room. Next year our website will be improved providing enhanced access features for customers.

Building Program

Sydney Opera House was awarded World Heritage status on 28 June 2007, the youngest cultural site in the world to be listed. A new project to transform the Western Foyers commenced, led by Master Architect Jørn Utzon and Customs House became the venue for new staff accommodation. A new holistic Lighting Master Plan was developed and our Place of Public Entertainment licence was renewed to June 2008. Works were put in progress to maintain our commitment to waste and energy reduction and sustainability.

Information Systems has continued to build on the foundations laid in 2005/6, increasing the stability and capability of our systems and seeking solutions to maximise business advantage.

People and Culture

I am pleased to report that our health and safety record has improved. This has been a key focus for the organisation. There was a substantial reduction in lost time due to injuries (down to 4.21 hours lost per thousand from 9.25 in 2005/6) and the number of Workers Compensation cases halved to 27.

A new staff 'Welcome Program' was launched in 2007 and is provided on a monthly basis. As a full orientation process for all new staff, it covers essential information about working at Sydney Opera House and is contributing to building a culture of *Live Performance Every Day*. Next year's focus will be on living the brand values.

Thank You

I would like to thank Norman Gillespie and the Executive Team for the operational results that they have achieved. In my short time as Interim CEO, I have been impressed with the level of commitment of the staff and their ability to stage world-class events whilst implementing a broad range of corporate initiatives. I thank them for their ongoing dedication and professional approach. I would like to thank our Strategic Presenting Partners for the depth and breadth of programs they offer and for the ethos of collaboration that makes all our work easier. Thanks also to our major sponsors HP, Lexus, Country Energy, National Australia Bank, FOXTEL and LG and our donors, all who make it possible to expand experiences for so many people. Finally, I wish to sincerely thank the Trust, the Executive Team and staff for their welcome and support through the current period of change in leadership.

Sue Natrass AO

Interim Chief Executive