

CEO's Message

*Sydney Opera House has made great strides forward in our aim to provide extraordinary experiences for visitors and guests onsite, offsite and online. **The dedication and enthusiasm of individuals, teams and organisations saw milestones achieved and foundations set for exciting new experiences for everyone.***



Richard Evans
Chief Executive

Performing Arts

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Sydney Opera House staged 1,677 performances this year to a total audience of 1,241,763.

Our resident companies entertained audiences with an impressive program of music, theatre, opera and dance. We welcomed Maestro Vladimir Ashkenazy as Sydney Symphony Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor, and Opera Australia's late Musical Director Richard Hickox was honoured with a moving tribute concert. Sydney Theatre Company's 2009 Main Stage Season was a resounding success under new Co-Artistic Directors Andrew Upton and Cate Blanchett, while The Australian Ballet invigorated audiences with Graeme Murphy's new interpretation of the *Firebird*.

Sydney Opera House programming attendances increased by 11% to 336,541 this year. Reaching audiences onsite, offsite and online, the inaugural *Luminous* festival celebrated music, light and ideas under the curatorship of the legendary Brian Eno as part of the Vivid Sydney festival. 42,847 people attended *Luminous* performances and exhibitions on our site, of which 62% were first time attendees at Sydney Opera House. Meanwhile 14,000 people in Australia and beyond watched the lighting of the sails live online.

In partnership with Sydney Theatre Company we presented renowned London theatre company Complicite in *A Disappearing Number* at Sydney Theatre, Walsh Bay. The Famous Spiegelent on the Forecourt featured an array of music, comedy and cabaret stars, and we hosted the world premiere of the *Star Trek* movie, a testament to the appeal of Sydney Opera House as an international icon. Sydney Opera House programming will be reaching the global community with the launch of an international online dance competition next year as part of our *Spring Dance* celebration.

Now in its second year, our Public Program stream expanded to present a variety of events both inside and outside the building targeted at all ages. Next year we are opening our doors for the Sydney Opera House Open Day, with free events, tours and entertainment for all the community.

Our Young Audience program grew by 32% this year with 71,129 people attending 300 performances within the House:Ed and Kids at the House programs.

Tourism & Visitor Experience

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While difficult economic times and a global downturn in tourism presented challenges this year, enhancing the visitor experience remained a priority for Sydney Opera House. Our tours remained popular with a 12% increase in Mandarin language tours, 28% increase in Japanese language tours and a 25% growth in our domestic market. Next year we will introduce a French language tour and we will have new campaigns to improve information and opportunities for visitors onsite.

Major improvements to physical access and performance experiences for patrons were achieved and we became affiliated with the NSW Companion Card, improving opportunities for all people to participate in Sydney Opera House experiences.

Building & Environment

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Significant progress on the Accessibility and Western Foyers Project was made this year with installation of our first public lift and new Concert Hall and Opera Theatre escalators. Utzon's vision to unify the Western Foyers was realised as the Foyers were transformed into a stylish new space with streamlined facilities. Completion of the Accessibility and Western Foyers Project will be celebrated next year with an official opening in late 2009.

Our commitment to environmental sustainability gathered strength this year with the appointment of a new Manager, Sustainability and Energy to lead the campaign to reduce our environmental impact. Development of a new Sustainability Policy and Plan next year will continue to guide us toward more environmentally aware operations.

With a new Information Systems Strategic Plan in place, a number of projects improved information and services to customers online. A 'select your own seat' function was launched and a new digital platform displaying live events on our website brings the online community closer to Sydney Opera House than ever before.

People & Culture

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The inaugural year of the Marker Business Excellence Project provided a new opportunity to connect with staff as well as other world class performing arts centres. As a result, a number of initiatives have already been implemented, with work continuing to incorporate results into forward planning.

A workforce enrichment program provided training and coaching to managers and staff. Our ongoing commitment to the highest customer service standards saw a new program of customer service training commence, with further training to be delivered next year.

Our safety record continued to improve this year and a range of new programs and systems were developed. Sydney Opera House's ongoing commitment to safety will ensure improvement initiatives continue next year.

Thank You

I would like to thank our resident companies for their inspirational programming and support in what has been a challenging year for all.

I would like to acknowledge our major partners NAB and Sony and all our partners, corporate sponsors and donors who, through their generosity, allow us to bring more events to the community. I would also like to express my appreciation to HP for 21 years of support until 2009. Finally, thank you to staff and management for their energy and hard work in making this yet another memorable year for Sydney Opera House.