FROM THE CEO

Sydney Opera House’s 40th Anniversary in October 2013 marks the beginning of a decade of renewal to ensure the Opera House retains its central position in Australia’s life and identity.

That renewal is not just about the building. It is also about reinvigorating our purpose. We have gone back to first principles and asked the big questions: what are we, what do we do, what are our ambitions and why should they matter to people?

This document is the result: a new mission that draws on our illustrious history to launch us forward as a dynamic and evolving institution, vitally connected to the community and increasingly at its heart.

I look forward to achieving our mission together.

LOUISE HERRON AM

OUR MISSION

The Sydney Opera House embodies beauty, inspiration and the liberating power of art and ideas. It is a masterpiece that belongs to all Australians.

- We will treasure and renew the Opera House for future generations of artists, audiences and visitors.

- Everything we do will engage and inspire people through its excellence, ambition and breadth. We will strengthen our central role in Australia’s life and identity.
CONTEXT

The Opera House is Australia’s most significant building, performing arts centre, cultural precinct and meeting place, inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as a masterpiece of human creative genius. The Opera House has been tremendously successful since it opened in 1973. But it is doing more than ever in a 40-year-old body. We need to ensure that it is equipped for the 21st century and continues to evolve to retain its central role in the life of the country.

The Sydney Opera House Trust operates and maintains the Opera House for the State Government and the people of NSW. Our mission stems from our founding Act, which as well as protecting, maintaining and developing the building as a performing arts centre charges us with:

• Promoting artistic taste and achievement, and
• Encouraging innovation.

Our 40th birthday in October 2013 marks the beginning of a decade of evolution for our building and our business. The point of this plan, guided by our mission, is to ensure that we prepare the Opera House for the next generation of artists, audiences and visitors, while continuing to attract, engage and inspire people.

OUR ESSENTIAL VALUES

Resilience

Excellence

Accountability

Ambition

Courage

Clear-thinking

Safety

Creativity

Focus

Generosity

Community

Influence

Unity

Innovate

Partnership

Community

Effectiveness

Collaboration

We will work together with a shared purpose and vision.

Focus

We will not deviate from our mission and learn from experience.

Creativity

We work with imagination.

Safety

Underlying everything we do is our commitment to work safely.

Collaboration

Community

Creativity

FOCUS

SAFETY
FIVE ELEMENTS

The Opera House supports BoysTown through our Workplace Giving Program and staff donations as part of our Christmas Appeal. This image was painted by children at the BoysTown Refuge who were homeless over Christmas to thank us for the presents we gave them.

It is the symbol for our mission and values, with the sails and the podium representing the five elements of our strategy:

1. Our Customers & Stakeholders
2. The Building
3. Performing Arts
4. Visitor Experiences
5. Our People & Business Agility
CONTEXT

OUR CUSTOMERS & STAKEHOLDERS
Achieving our mission requires greater engagement with key stakeholders, including our customers and resident companies, government, private and corporate supporters, commercial partners, staff and the broader public. Strong, mutually beneficial relationships are crucial if the Opera House is to continue to evolve.

THE BUILDING
As custodians we will do the building justice, honouring the Utzon design principles, its standing as one of the world’s pre-eminent works of architecture and performing arts venues. To do this, we will work to conserve and renew the building, preparing it for future generations of artists, audiences and visitors.

PERFORMING ARTS
The Opera House is charged with the development and promotion of artistic taste and achievement and the encouragement of innovation. The Opera House represents the peak of artistic ambition yet is grounded in a uniquely Australian egalitarianism. As we steam into our fifth decade, we will ensure the Opera House remains a vibrant cultural landmark attracting, engaging and inspiring ever more people.

VISITOR EXPERIENCES
People love coming to the Opera House. It is a special meeting place and an essential part of a visit to Australia. We want visitors and locals to increasingly see it as the heart of Sydney.

DELIVERY

This document outlines the rationale for our focus, what we will do, and the result we are seeking in relation to each of these elements in the short and medium term. Each element is supported by operational plans, including targets against which our performance and achievement of our objectives will be measured. It also takes into account the business risks identified as articulated in the business risk assessment.
1

Our Customers & Stakeholders

Achieving our mission requires greater engagement with key stakeholders, including our customers and resident companies, government, private and corporate supporters, commercial partners, staff and the broader public. Strong, mutually beneficial relationships are crucial if the Opera House is to continue to evolve.

WHY THIS FOCUS?

We need a higher level of support from a broader range of stakeholders. We need to communicate the case for support cogently. Lack of broad stakeholder support for the evolution of the Opera House would lead to venues being closed and present a serious risk to achieving our mission.

WHAT WE WILL DO

1.1 We will develop clear, consistent and compelling messages for Opera House advocacy with government, donors and stakeholders generally.
1.2 We will revitalise the Opera House’s profile by:
   • Developing grassroots support; and
   • Engaging past, present and new donors, particularly through focused programs.
1.3 We will continue to build mutually beneficial relationships with the NSW and Federal Governments.
1.4 We will work with the tremendous asset we have in the Trustees to achieve our mission.
1.5 We will continue to create significant, rewarding corporate partnerships.
1.6 We will ensure that everything we do benefits our community now and into the future, reinforcing our centrality to Australian cultural life and further underpinning our case for renewal.

THE RESULT

Everything we do and say is viewed through the lens of our customers and stakeholders.
Strong government partnerships as joint custodians of our national icon.
A fundraising program that supports the building and programs.
Better economic and social outcomes for Sydney, NSW and Australia.
2

The Building

As custodians we will do the building justice, honouring the Utzon design principles, its standing as one of the world’s pre-eminent works of architecture and performing arts venues. To do this, we will work to conserve and renew the building, preparing it for future generations of artists, audiences and visitors.

WHY THIS FOCUS?

When the Opera House was designed and constructed, building codes, safety standards, accessibility requirements and work practices were significantly less stringent than today.

There is a general lack of space for staff, rehearsals and storage, poor back of house facilities and limited facilities for people with disabilities.

We need to be able to accommodate the multi-dimensional and technologically advanced productions that artists and audiences expect in the 21st century.

Our World Heritage Listing adds greatly to the complexity of the task.

We need to find innovative and respectful solutions that address these issues, so that we continue to be recognised as a great performing arts venue, strengthening our appeal to artists and audiences worldwide.

WHAT WE WILL DO

2.1 We will successfully complete the current Vehicle Access and Pedestrian Safety (VAPS) project.

2.2 We will finalise a comprehensive capital works master-plan for the building and from that develop a ten-year program of building work.

2.3 We will deliver a maintenance program that preserves and protects the building appropriately and in an operationally and cost efficient way.

2.4 We will articulate the vision for allocating and enlivening our spaces.

THE RESULT

A safe, secure, well-maintained and evolving building and site that safeguard our heritage value and ensure our pre-eminence as a leading performing arts centre in the 21st century.

Artists and audiences worldwide are thrilled by our regenerated facilities.
Performing Arts

The Opera House is charged with the development and promotion of artistic taste and achievement and the encouragement of innovation. The Opera House represents the peak of artistic ambition yet is grounded in a uniquely Australian egalitarianism.

As we steam into our fifth decade, we will ensure the Opera House remains a vibrant cultural landmark attracting, engaging and inspiring ever more people.

Why This Focus?

The art we present at the Opera House is what makes it a living cultural centre. That art, complementing the building, must remain central to the Opera House and Australia’s cultural life and identity.

What We Will Do

3.1 We will be the best home we can be to the Resident Companies and an active partner in their success.
3.2 We will present programs that complement the work of our Resident Companies and add to our artistic and financial success. We will:
   - Consider the work of our Resident Companies and the broader ecology of Sydney’s artistic landscape.
   - Present the most exciting contemporary music.
   - Stimulate debate by presenting topical and provocative ideas and talks.
   - Inspire the next generation of audiences by making the Opera House a place where young people are welcomed, entertained and educated.
   - Internationalise the program by bringing the best the world has to offer.
   - Treasure and advance Indigenous arts and culture.
3.3 We will embed digital-content creation at the heart of what we do. Distributing that content will be an increasingly important part of our business, taking Opera House experiences to people wherever they are in the world.
3.4 We will harness the many forms of technology, including social media, which will increase participation and interaction with us.
3.5 We will work to animate the precinct, particularly during the day.
3.6 We will increase the Opera House’s reputation as a centre for education, excellence and innovation in the arts.

The Result

Our Resident Companies are increasingly successful in artistic and business terms, and we work more closely and supportively with them.

A vibrant artistic offering across a broad spectrum of genres and forms, well supported by audiences, that results in optimal use of the venues.

More people engage with the Opera House both onsite and online.

The Opera House is regarded as a leader and innovator in arts education, occupying a critical place in the education of NSW children.
Visitor Experiences

People love coming to the Opera House. It is a special meeting place and an essential part of a visit to Australia. We want visitors and locals to increasingly see it as the heart of Sydney: we will offer a wide range of compelling reasons to come more often, to stay longer and to enjoy the Opera House more. It will be vibrant day and night, inside and outside.

WHY THIS FOCUS?

The experiences we offer should be as excellent, engaging and inspiring as those which occur inside the theatres.

Making the precinct dynamic and attractive to complement the building and the art we offer is essential to increasing the Opera House’s centrality to Australian life.

We want to make better use of the non-theatre spaces by offering extraordinary experiences through tours, education and our food, beverage and retail offerings.

WHAT WE WILL DO

4.1 We will make the site more navigable.
4.2 We will become a food and beverage destination, offering diversity and quality at appropriate price points.
4.3 We will provide inspiring tour experiences that connect our visitors to the beauty and living stories of the Opera House.
4.4 We will offer compelling, top-quality retail products, onsite and online.

THE RESULT

The precinct is animated day and night by integrated visitor experiences that are commercially rewarding for the Opera House, while being respectful of our heritage values and complementing the site.

Everyone who comes here feels there is something for them - a show, an adventure, a drink, a meal, a shop or a tour.

People love coming to the Opera House. They come more often to do more and leave feeling more connected.
5

Our People & Business Agility

We need the best and most appropriate people and systems to deliver our mission. We will focus on long-term growth, underpinned by sound financial management and cost-effective delivery of services and we will actively manage risk and safety.

WHY THIS FOCUS?

Having the right people, systems, processes and values will allow us to maximise our effectiveness and achieve our mission. Trends in the global and local economy are affecting us and will continue to do so over the life of this plan – we must adapt our business to respond to these trends.

WHAT WE WILL DO

5.1 Our commitment to work safely underlies everything we do.
5.2 We will develop, reward and recognise our staff to secure, grow and retain excellent skills and experience across the business.
5.3 We will strive for greater focus, purpose, and excellence in the way we do things, attracting, aligning and empowering skilled people behind an agreed mission, objectives and set of plans.
5.4 We will put systems and processes in place to make us more effective and enable us to meet new requirements.
5.5 We will identify areas of our operation that could be more efficient and less costly.
5.6 We will build a larger, more diverse, income base and identify new revenue streams.

THE RESULT

Safety is embedded in our organisational culture at all levels and is simply the way we do business at the Opera House.
The Opera House is a resilient and sustainable business. We have reserves that meet the needs of our business.
A balance between commercial focus and our role as an arts centre, community asset and national icon. Our financial and social dividends are growing.
Our infrastructure and network of systems have increased organisational efficiency and capability.
Our operations are flexible and innovative, allowing us to embrace change.