Our Artistic Strategy 2018-2021 and beyond is clear. Performing Arts at the Opera House has a commitment to excellence in everything we do and a mandate for creativity, engagement and entertainment. We want audiences to be challenged, delighted, intrigued, thrilled, informed and entertained. Most of all, we want their Opera House experience to take them out of the ordinary and into the extraordinary.

Our artistic purpose can be distilled into three words: To Be Unmissable.

This means offering audiences life-changing experiences that fulfil the Opera House’s vision: to be bold and inspiring in everything we do, living up to the promise inherent in our matchless building.

We operate in a rapidly changing cultural and social landscape. Audiences are more diverse and demanding than ever before, see technology as natural and indispensable, are knowledgeable and curious, and value individual experience and personal engagement. They are not passive recipients but active participants.

The opportunities are exciting and challenges significant. They require us to examine and bring freshness to our approach, and our artistic programming will be all the more stimulating for it. At the same time, we need to keep our eye on sustainability and financial success in a highly competitive, more fragmented arts environment. We must also continue to nurture our longstanding and vitally important relationships with Resident Companies and commercial hirers. In addition, the realities of Building Renewal, particularly in relation to the planned 2020 – 2021 Concert Hall closure, must be incorporated into our thinking.

We have developed a detailed set of goals and objectives to address the range of interlocking issues we face, across areas such as programming and experience culture, audiences and community changes, heritage and infrastructure, and collaboration with our partners.

Consistent with our values of creativity, excellence, collaboration, accountability and safety that daily guide our actions, we aim to set the gold standard for performing arts practice and achievement in Sydney and beyond.

Kate Dundas,
Executive Director, Performing Arts
The Sydney Opera House embodies the cultural aspirations of our nation. Since its opening in 1973 it has held a unique position in Australian society. It is a timeless, World Heritage-listed architectural icon brought to life daily by artists from home and abroad who bring the widest possible range of performance to our audiences.

The local Gadigal people knew the land on which the Opera House stands as Tubowgule, a reference to the creative energy liberated here, where salt and fresh water combine. For thousands of years it was a gathering place for storytelling, ceremony and celebration. It now supports a modern wonder which in turn honours our First Nations people through celebration and artistic works.

As a major performing arts centre that embraces traditional forms as well as leading edge contemporary performance and ideas, we have an important part to play in the development and growth of the arts.

The Opera House, which is one of the world’s busiest arts centres, has a responsibility to engage genuinely and meaningfully with the entire community.

We make a pledge to embrace the performing arts in all their diversity, from traditional forms to leading-edge contemporary performance and ideas.

These aspirations are reflected in the two arms of the organisation’s Mission:
• To treasure and renew the Opera House for future generations of audiences, artists and visitors; &
• To inspire and strengthen the community, through everything that we do.

In fulfilling that Mission we must balance our obligations as a presenting organisation, performance home to our Resident Companies and venue for commercial hirers. Our goal is to ensure sustainable investment in creativity, strengthened artistic offering and programming across a broad spectrum.

Our vision is simple:
• To be as bold and inspiring as the Opera House itself.
What We Deliver

1,800 performances a year across all presenters

780 performances a year by our Resident Companies

700 performances a year by Sydney Opera House Presents

1.5 million attendances to performances annually

400,000 attendances at Sydney Opera House Presents productions annually

130,000 people attend performances for young audiences annually

8,000 students participate in our digital creative learning program every year
The Sydney Opera House is home to seven flagship Australian performing arts companies which bring art to life every day beneath the famous shells. We are proud to partner with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Bangarra Dance Theatre, Bell Shakespeare, Opera Australia, Sydney Theatre Company, The Australian Ballet and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

Resident Companies

@ Australian Chamber Orchestra, Mountain. Photo by Maria Boyadgis.
@ Bangarra Dance Theatre, Bennelong. Photo by Vishal Pandey.
@ Bell Shakespeare, Richard III. Photo by Prudence Upton.
@ Opera Australia, King Roger. Photo by Jeff Busby.
@ Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Principal Cello Catherine Hewgill in rehearsal with the SSO. Photo by Keith Saunders.
@ The Australian Ballet, Ms Ako Kondo and Mr Ty King-Wall, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. Photo by Lynette Wills.
@ Sydney Theatre Company, A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Photo by Brett Boardman.
Sydney Opera House Presents

Founded to complement the work of the Resident Companies, the Opera House's own presenting arm, Sydney Opera House Presents (SOHP), has for more than 15 years brought audiences a uniquely diverse program spanning Contemporary Music & Performances, Talks & Ideas, Children, Families & Creative Learning, First Nations cultures and Classical Music.

Hundreds of thousands of people attend hundreds of SOHP performances each year, with millions more experiencing what the Opera House has to offer through our Grammy Award-winning Broadcast Studio. Our festivals showcase the diversity of our programming, including celebrating the world's most interesting contemporary music through Vivid LIVE, First Nations cultures through Dance Rites and emerging social and cultural issues through All About Women and Antidote.
# Our Values

How we work matters to us.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our Values</th>
<th>We will:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creativity</strong></td>
<td>Pursue creative solutions in our work and encourage new ideas to emerge across the organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Be bold and innovative</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Excellence</strong></td>
<td>Challenge ourselves to be the best we can, valuing and embracing excellence and sustainability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Make it the best</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong></td>
<td>Work with genuine engagement and be inclusive in our approach and actions</td>
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<tr>
<td>One team</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Accountability</strong></td>
<td>Prioritise quality and professionalism and play fairly at all times</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus and own it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safety</strong></td>
<td>Ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of ourselves and others at all times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our greatest responsibility</td>
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Performing Arts at the Opera House has a commitment to excellence in everything we do and a mandate for creativity, engagement and entertainment. We want audiences to be challenged, delighted, intrigued, thrilled, informed and entertained. Most of all we want their Opera House experience to take them out of the ordinary and into the extraordinary.
Our strategy and priorities emerge from the cultural and broader social landscape in which we operate. The direction, success and longevity of our artistic strategy and program over the next three years will be affected by a range of key factors in our external and internal environments.
The profile of our actual and potential audience is shifting rapidly as the make-up of the Australian community changes. As our city’s population and visitors continue to increase in number and diversity, there will be a growing demand for art that is not only accessible to all but reflects that diversity in all its forms.

According to the 2016 Census, more than 28% of Australia’s population was born overseas. Over the past 10 years migration to Australia from India and China has doubled and rapid growth in the tourism sector is fuelled by China. Chinese tourism is set to more than triple to 3.3 million visitors annually by 2026. The Opera House attracted 2.9 million international tourists in 2017.

The influence of generational change will also be dramatic, as the rise of Generation Y (or Millennials) continues. This is the most ethnically and racially diverse generation in Australian history and is on track to be the most formally educated. Those from Gen Y are predicted to earn an estimated two out of every three dollars by 2030.

Understanding the evolving perceptions and expectations of the Opera House, locally, nationally and internationally, is crucial. This will help ensure that we continue to engage and connect with the community through the breadth and depth of our offer.
Australians want to engage with the arts and do so in large numbers. The Australia Council’s 2017 National Arts Participation Survey found that:

- More than 14 million Australians aged 15 years and over attended arts events or festivals in person in 2016 (72%);
- 98% of Australians engage with the arts and more people recognise the positive impacts of the arts;
- Both online and live arts experiences are important to Australians;
- The arts have an increasingly powerful role to play in promoting social cohesion;
- Seven million Australians experienced First Nations arts in 2016 – double the 2009 number;
- Music is the most popular art form, with younger Australians (aged 15-24) creating and experiencing the arts at the highest rates; and
- One in four Australians give time or money to the arts, reflecting their value in our lives.

Audiences are turning towards experiences over products as a way to enrich their lives and find identity in a rapidly changing society. They want us to take into consideration the whole customer journey, their safety and security, and their expectation that we reflect society’s pace of change. To thrive in an increasingly competitive marketplace, arts organisations must develop strategies that engage, grow and monetise their most valuable customers, well beyond a simple transaction.

The challenges in renewing a World Heritage-listed building for future generations are manifold. The Opera House’s Decade of Renewal will upgrade our venues, replace theatre technology and machinery, open more of the building to the public and allow more people to gather, experience and engage with all the Opera House has to offer. Renewal will also allow us to better meet the needs and expectations of artists and audiences with new opportunities for programming and activations within the refurbished venues and areas.

Experience is everything
The uptake of consumer technology and a concurrent thirst for free quality content poses legal and financial challenges. Large organisations are also being challenged to connect with communities differently. The continued rise of the sharing economy and scepticism towards big business, government and institutions are changing audience expectations. As a result, many organisations are emphasising community engagement to grow audiences, share knowledge and increase long-term market relevance.

Funding models for arts organisations differ significantly across the globe as the proportion of government subsidies decreases, especially for smaller companies. This trend has led to increased reliance on private funding such as philanthropy and sponsorship as a source of income, and a more competitive market for it. Private funding will necessarily continue to be a key growth area for funding arts product and is dependent on the cultivation and maintenance of key relationships.

The rise of ticket resale sites and an increase in scalping are contributing to financial uncertainty for venues and affecting the underlying market dynamics. While legislation is being developed in NSW to address these issues, scalping is likely to be a challenge for venues and presenters into the foreseeable future.

Sydney’s cultural landscape is evolving in step with the city’s development in infrastructure and population growth and make-up. Sydneysiders have a healthy mix of performing arts venues, resulting in a highly competitive market. A clear understanding of the Opera House’s market position will support effective strategic decision-making over the next three to five years.

Although the Opera House is often the first choice for artists because of its international renown, we cannot be complacent. We must work hard to ensure artists choose to work with us over other existing and newly established venues in Sydney.
For generations, performing arts organisations and tourist destinations have devised their business models primarily for operation in and around the physical world. The rapid expansion of consumer technology and social applications, however, has altered audience behaviours and expectations forever. Our challenge is to expand digital capability and increase audience outreach as part of a new integrated business model which doesn’t simply add cost without revenue growth.

Technology and digitisation have been fundamental in driving accessible art and culture nationally and internationally. Platforms like Netflix have accelerated a revolution already under way – capitalising on the way people engage with entertainment in the digital world. Mobile devices, the spread of Wi-Fi, decreasing data prices, the emergence of social platforms and availability of short-form content has meant individuals can be entertained anywhere at any time. Just as digital technology has disrupted “appointment” television viewing, so has it disrupted the notion of “place”.

Customers expect to be able to access, plan for and engage in any outing or experience in a similar “on demand” manner. The worlds of virtual and augmented reality are also creating new opportunities and threats to organisations and their brands.

The rise in digitally tailored technology is not reserved for audiences. In business, advances in digital technology are leading to reductions in high labour components and costs, safety culture enhancement, and sustainability and environmental considerations. This environment changes how performing arts products are developed and delivered. It also demands a clear focus on how technology may be used to maximise efficiency and remain competitive.
Goals & Objectives

1. Balance challenging artistic experiences with financial success
   - Pursue and champion new and challenging experiences together with the traditional art forms presented at the Opera House.
   - Present programs that connect people with the art, the building and the precinct, and which live up to the promise of the Opera House itself.
   - Program and present the work and stories of artists from diverse backgrounds and different lived experiences, with a special emphasis on First Nations artists.
   - Focus our programming effort during Concert Hall renewal towards works which activate the site and draw audiences.
   - Be the benchmark for quality and sustainable event management and production, delivering memorable experiences during and after their renewal.

2. Deepen our engagement with a broader audience
   - Create a diverse and accessible artistic program that embraces diversity and inclusivity, reflecting evolving audience behaviours as well as community needs and expectations.
   - Play our part in making the broader Opera House experience the very best it can be for everyone.
   - Work hard to appeal and remain relevant to the next generation of audiences.
   - Inspire and nurture creative learning and lifelong engagement with the arts.
   - Use digital technology and content to share Opera House performances and events with the world and to bring the world’s art to Opera House audiences.

3. Work with the past to build the future
   - Work at the intersection of art, production and technology, making best use of our infrastructure to enhance all our operations and delivery.
   - Contribute our technical expertise to the planning and renewal of the Concert Hall, securing its place as a world-class performance venue for artists and audiences well into the future.
   - Find new ways to work innovatively and effectively in a World Heritage building that honours its past while securing its future as a vibrant, contemporary performing arts centre.

4. Value and respect our partners’ contributions
   - Share our artistic programming and intentions with Resident Companies to ensure a strong and coherent audience offering across the Opera House throughout the year.
   - Ensure that our Resident Companies, commercial hirers and SOHP enjoy the same quality of experience at the Opera House.
   - Establish and uphold strong relationships with our collaborators and supporters to expand and sustain support for the Opera House’s artistic offering.
   - Take our role as a cultural leader seriously, maintaining excellence in arts practice and supporting the growth of arts workers, including our staff, artists and the broader community of arts practitioners.
Keep in touch
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