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# Greening the House

## Ambitious new targets build on sustainability achievements

**Sydney – Monday, 1 August 2016:** The green-certified Sydney Opera House today announced ambitious new sustainability targets that extend the savings, efficiencies and environmental legacy of a building that has become the symbol of modern Australia.

The Opera House's new Environmental Sustainability Plan (ESP), released today, commits the World Heritage-listed building to achieving an 80 per cent recycling rate for construction works as part of its Decade of Renewal, a program of works that will upgrade the Opera House for future generations of artists, performers, audiences and visitors and open it as never before. The ESP also targets a 15 per cent energy saving and a 7 per cent greenhouse-gas reduction by 2019.

The Opera House received a 4 Star Green Star-Performance rating from the Green Building Council of Australia in 2015 – a rare achievement for a heritage building. By its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023, the Opera House is aiming to achieve a 5 Star Green Star rating.

Since launching its first sustainability plan in 2010, the Opera House has:

- Saved \$1 million in electricity costs through improved energy efficiency;
- Ensured that four of the past five Vivid LIVE festivals have been certified carbon neutral;
- Increased waste recycling from 20 per cent to 65 per cent;
- Introduced food recycling for charities; and
- Received two prestigious Green Globe Awards for the Concert Hall lights and Social Sustainability Initiatives.

The Opera House's architect, Jørn Utzon, incorporated sustainable design elements such as a seawater-cooling system into the building, which first opened in 1973. The new Environmental Sustainability Plan 2017 – 2019 continues to build on that legacy.

**Sydney Opera House CEO Louise Herron AM says:** "The Opera House was conceived with very broad ambitions in mind, as then-NSW Premier JJ Cahill said in 1954 'to help mould a better and more enlightened community'. The Environmental Sustainability Plan we are launching today is part of achieving that ambition.

"We take our responsibility to the community seriously, and we are proud of all the Opera House has achieved since our first Environmental Sustainability Plan in 2010, including \$1million in electricity savings, increasing our operational waste recycling rates from 20 to 65% and making Vivid LIVE carbon neutral for a number of years.



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"Our aim by our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023 includes achieving a 5 Star Green Star Performance rating, building on our 4 star rating achieved in 2015, and recycling 85% of our operational waste. These are ambitious targets but I am confident they are realistic based on the Opera House's embracing of sustainability, which is brought passionately to life by the people who work here.'

**NSW Deputy Premier Troy Grant says:** "The Sydney Opera House continues to lead the way in sustainability practices and initiatives in NSW and across Australia. They remain one of the few World Heritage Buildings to have achieved a 4 Star Green Star Performance Rating from the Green Building Council of Australia. The Opera House's commitment to best practice in sustainability in their ESP demonstrates to the world that Australia cares for our natural environment. It also sets an example and challenge for NSW businesses, that no matter what you do, it is possible to embed sustainability in your business."

**Romilly Madew CEO Green Building Council Australia says:** "The Sydney Opera House has shown the world that even the most challenging, iconic and historic buildings can be sustainable. Some organisations might rest on their laurels after achieving a 4 Star Green Star rating, but instead the Sydney Opera House is looking to embed sustainability throughout the organisation, and to push towards a 5 Star Green Star rating. This is why the Sydney Opera House's commitment to diversity and inclusion, to increase access for all people, and to strengthen the community through a Reconciliation Action Plan, once again raises the bar. If the Opera House can go green, anything can go green."

Read the **Environmental Sustainability Plan** in full [HERE](#)

See our **Sustainability Stars** video [HERE](#)

See the Sydney Opera House's **Sustainability achievements** [HERE](#)

See the Sydney Opera House's **Greening the House** page [HERE](#)

#### **MEDIA CONTACT:**

**Craig Redfearn**

Communications Manager

02 9250 7822 / 0452 524 464

[credfearn@sydneyoperahouse.com](mailto:credfearn@sydneyoperahouse.com)