



Sydney Opera House unveils designs for Renewal

– Renewal plans prepare Opera House for future generations of performers, audiences and visitors –

Sydney – Thursday, 11 August 2016. The NSW Deputy Premier and Minister for the Arts, Troy Grant, today unveiled working designs for the largest program of upgrades to the Opera House since it opened in 1973.

The Renewal projects will open more of the Opera House to the public, improve access and ensure it meets the needs and expectations of audiences, artists and the 8.2 million people who visit each year.

The NSW Government has committed \$202 million from the Cultural Infrastructure Fund to the Renewal plans revealed today, which will:

- Upgrade the acoustics, accessibility, efficiency and flexibility of the Opera House’s largest internal performance space, the Concert Hall, which hosts world-leading classical and contemporary musicians, speakers and other performers;
- Transform office space into a new Creative Learning Centre, a dedicated place for children, families and young people;
- Remove the existing intrusive marquee from the Northern Broadwalk, and build a premium Function Centre within the building envelope, with spectacular views of the harbour; and
- Create a welcoming, car-free entrance under the Monumental Steps, and improve access to a more comfortable and inviting main foyer.

Australia’s premier tourist destination and performing arts centre, the Opera House contributes \$775 million annually to the NSW economy and has a national-identity value of \$4.6 billion (Deloitte Access Economics, 2013).

NSW Deputy Premier and Minister for the Arts Troy Grant said the plans will ensure the Opera House is able to meet the increasing popularity of Australia’s leading tourist destination and busiest performing arts centre.

“The Sydney Opera House is the symbol of modern Australia. It is our responsibility as custodians of this extraordinary place to maintain and renew it for all Australians,” Mr Grant said.

“That’s why we are investing more than \$200 million in these wonderful projects, which represent the biggest upgrade to the Opera House since it opened 43 years ago.”

Sydney Opera House CEO Louise Herron AM said: “The Opera House, a ‘masterpiece of human creative genius’, belongs to us all and is central to our identity as Australians. These Renewal projects are designed to ensure the Opera House continues to evolve, welcoming and inspiring people in as many ways as possible.

“The Opera House has exceeded everyone’s expectations, from the scale, range and intensity of performances and events to the wide variety of visitors it attracts from around the world. So much of what the Opera House does today could not have been envisaged when it was first conceived and built. It is crucial that as we work through these Renewal projects we respect our incredible heritage,” Ms Herron said.

“The Opera House has worked incredibly hard for us all and it is wonderful that, thanks to our greatest supporter, the NSW Government, the upgrades and improvements it needs are now under way.”

Jan Utzon, architect and member of the Opera House’s Eminent Architects Panel (EAP), said his father believed the building would need to change over time to meet the requirements of the day, while retaining the integrity of its architecture.



“When my father was re-engaged to look into the Opera House, he realised it was necessary to look at the Opera House with new eyes,” said Mr Utzon, who worked with his father after Jørn’s re-engagement in 1999. “He realised times had changed and that a functioning arts centre will always need to adapt to the culture of the moment.”

Sydney Symphony Orchestra Managing Director Rory Jeffes said the SSO had been closely involved in the development of the Renewal plans, and that the musicians were excited about the improvements to their Concert Hall home.

“For the first time the Concert Hall will deliver the true ambitions of the original creators of this incredible building – and the real winners will be the audiences. People will be able to come and sit and enjoy the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and other great orchestras of the world right here at the Sydney Opera House in one of the greatest acoustics in the world,” he said.

The largest of the four NSW Government-funded projects, the Concert Hall upgrade is expected to take 18 months to complete. Construction will begin in mid-2019 and the hall will reopen with the SSO’s 2021 season.

In addition to the four projects revealed in today’s designs, the first stage of Renewal also includes a \$45 million self-funded project to replace the ‘engine’ in the Opera House’s second-largest internal performance space, the Joan Sutherland Theatre (JST). Announced in June 2015, the Theatre Machinery Project will improve the safety and reliability of the JST, which will close from May to December next year, during construction.

The Renewal works will be staged so that audiences and visitors can continue to enjoy world-class experiences at the Opera House while these critical upgrades are completed. When the Joan Sutherland Theatre closes for seven months in 2017, the Opera House’s five other performance stages, its food and beverage outlets, tours and on-site facilities will remain open and fully operational. This same will be the case during the Concert Hall closure.

The Opera House’s EAP and Conservation Council have been, and will continue to be, closely involved in the design process for all Renewal plans. This will ensure the plans align with Utzon’s design principles for the building and the Opera House’s Conservation Management Plan.

For more information see: sydneyoperahouse.com/renewal

Images and video content are available for download here: <http://bit.ly/2b7rEd9>

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Sydney Opera House

The Opera House is a masterpiece that belongs to all Australians. It is the country’s number one tourist destination and its busiest performing arts centre, welcoming more than 8.2 million visitors a year on site and hosting 2,000 performances attended by 1.5 million people. Deloitte has estimated the total social asset value of the Sydney Opera House to Australia at \$4.6 billion. On its 40th Anniversary in 2013, the Opera House embarked upon a Decade of Renewal to prepare it for future generations of artists, audiences and visitors.