



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Project overview

Whitehorse City Council is transforming the ageing Whitehorse Centre into a highly accessible, flexible and contemporary venue that will provide an expanded array of arts and cultural opportunities for the entire Whitehorse community to enjoy for generations to come.

The Whitehorse Centre will continue to operate until 16 August 2020. After this date, the site will be prepared for demolition and early civil works as the first stage of construction.

But the show will go on! After closure, the Whitehorse Centre's professional Main Season and Midweek Matinee program will be presented at alternative venues within the municipality while the redevelopment is underway. We're also assisting Whitehorse Centre theatre and function clients to find alternative venues so they can continue their activities during this time.

Construction of the new centre will commence in 2021 with an expected opening in late 2023.

1. Why is Council building a new performing arts facility?

The Whitehorse Centre is Council's performing arts and cultural venue and a beloved community facility, attracting over 100,000 attendees and 40,000 festival goers annually. However, now more than 30 years old, it is nearing the end of its functional working life.

Understanding the enormous value of the Whitehorse Centre to the entire Whitehorse community—for the many local performing arts groups, schools, community groups, private hirers and commercial users as well as the loyal patrons — construction of a new facility is a strategic investment by Council for the long-term future.

The new facility will deliver on Council's arts and cultural vision "to be a creative community that is vibrant, diverse and engaged through our arts, culture and heritage".

2. What features will the new facility have?

Council will build the new facility to cater for current and future use.

Key features will include:

- 600-seat auditorium - large stage and modern backstage area
- 200-seat studio theatre
- multipurpose rehearsal/dance studio
- multipurpose function room
- improved soundshell for community festivals and other outdoor events
- improved car parking, enabling easy and convenient access to the Whitehorse Centre, library, Council offices, local parkland and the nearby Walker Park sports precinct.

3. Will the Whitehorse community have input into the project?

Yes. In the near future, Council will engage again with key stakeholders to commence the schematic design phase of a modern facility for the Whitehorse community to enjoy for generations to come. There will also be opportunities for the wider community to view the plans during the design stage.

4. How will a new performing arts facility benefit user groups and patrons?

The new centre will remain, first and foremost, a community arts and cultural facility, while still attracting high quality national touring shows. The main users of the new centre (an estimated 80 per cent) will be local community groups, schools and community-based Council programs such as the Whitehorse Centre professional Main Season, Midweek Matinee program, sports awards and women's forum.

The new centre will benefit all of these user groups and patrons with improved facilities and infrastructure including: more space and flexibility, modern technology and equipment, and full accessibility.

5. How will a new performing arts venue benefit the broader Whitehorse community?

A larger, purpose-built performing arts facility will enable a greatly expanded range and number of performing arts, events and function opportunities for the wider community to participate in and enjoy.

Council recognises that arts and culture are as important to the community's mental health and wellbeing as sport and recreation are to physical health and wellbeing. As such, Council is committed to its responsibility of providing arts and cultural activities as part of the more than 100 different services it delivers to the community every week.

6. Who will design the new facility?

To achieve the most effective and sustainable outcomes for the project—functionally, operationally and financially—Council conducted a design competition in the first half of 2019. BKK Architects and KTA Architects were announced as the successful lead design team for the project in May 2019.

7. What car parking will be provided?

A new car park will be constructed on site to enable easy, convenient and safe access to the Whitehorse Centre, library, Council offices, local parkland and nearby Walker Park sports precinct.

8. Will the new facility cater for all abilities?

To ensure people of all ages and abilities are able to access the facility, this project will be delivered in line with universal access principles and comply with the *Disability Discrimination Act*.

9. How much will the new centre cost?

The project budget is set at \$78 million and will be funded over several financial years without any new borrowings or rate increases.

10. What sustainability measures will be put in place?

Council is committed to building sustainable, and energy and water efficient buildings in accordance with its Sustainability Strategy 2016-2022.

11. What is the timeframe for the project?

The design stage is underway. The centre will close in August 2020 and the new centre is expected to open in late 2023.

12. How will local parking and traffic flow be affected during construction?

Council will work with VicRoads, as the main road authority, to ensure that traffic and parking associated with the project is planned, managed and monitored. During the construction phase, the appointed contractor will be required to keep local residents and other nearby property owners informed of any changes to pedestrian or traffic movements, and provide traffic management to minimise any potential disruption to local traffic flow.

13. What about potential construction impacts?

The appointed construction contractor will be required to develop a Construction Management Plan that identifies and mitigates against any potential impacts such as noise and dust.

14. What will happen to the current Whitehorse Centre performances, functions and other activities during the construction phase?

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15. What will happen to the leadlight glass windows at the entrance of the Whitehorse Centre?

Council acknowledges the historical significance and sentimental value of the leadlight windows at the entrance to the Whitehorse Centre. As such, the leadlight will be carefully removed and reinstated within the new performing arts centre for the continued enjoyment of the Whitehorse community.

16. How will Council keep the community informed during the project?

Council will communicate regularly with clients and patrons of the Whitehorse Centre as well as local residents and others in the immediate vicinity of the site. Council will also keep the wider community up-to-date on the project with regular project newsletters, a dedicated website, local newspaper updates and via the community newsletter *Whitehorse News*.

People can stay informed of this project and/or sign up to regular email updates, by visiting www.whitehorsecentre.com.au/whitehorse-centre-redevelopment or contacting the project team by sending an email to whitehorsecentre.redevelopment@whitehorse.vic.gov.au or calling 9262 6357.