



THE FUTURE OF THE WHITEHORSE CENTRE

DETAILED RESEARCH FINDINGS

PREPARED FOR WHITEHORSE CITY COUNCIL
JUNE 2016

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This report has a companion document: The Future of the Whitehorse Centre – Community Opinion and Research Report



QUANTITATIVE KEY FINDINGS

600 TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

QUALITATIVE KEY FINDINGS

6 FOCUS GROUPS

DETAILED RESEARCH FINDINGS



JWS RESEARCH

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Six focus group discussions were held from 11th - 15th February 2016 as follows:

- Four general community groups: Two 'older' and two 'younger' groups of Whitehorse residents.
- One 'regular user' group: Whitehorse residents of mixed age and gender who visit the Whitehorse Centre at least 4 times per year.
- One 'local resident' group: Residents of mixed age and gender living within 500 metres of the Whitehorse Centre (same side of Maroondah Highway as the Whitehorse Centre).

Focus Group Matrix	25-54 y/o	55+ y/o	TOTAL
General Whitehorse Community	2	2	4
	Mixed age 25+ y/o	TOTAL	
Regular Whitehorse Centre Users	1	1	
Local Residents	1	1	
TOTAL	2	6	

QUANTITATIVE 600 PERSON TELEPHONE SURVEY METHODOLOGY



12 minute telephone survey, of n=600 City of Whitehorse residents, aged 18+ years

Survey quotas on age, gender and location, with weighting applied at the analysis stage to actual state age/ gender/ location proportions based on ABS census data.

The maximum margin of error on the total sample of n=600 is +/-4% at the 95% confidence level; **differences of +/-1% for net scores are due to rounding.**

Primary qualitative and quantitative research has been conducted in compliance with AS-ISO 20252.

TELEPHONE SURVEY STRUCTURE

Survey structure

Screening questions (incl. gender, age, suburb and postcode)

Q1. Awareness of Whitehorse Centre

Q2. Awareness of what Council is considering for the future of the Whitehorse Centre

Q3. Source of information about options

Q4. Personal and family attendance of festivals at Whitehorse Centre

Q5. Initial preferred option for future of the Whitehorse Centre

Qs6 & 7. Statements for and against a complete redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre

Q8. Considered preferred option for the future of the Whitehorse Centre

Q9. Communication preference for information regarding the future of the Whitehorse Centre

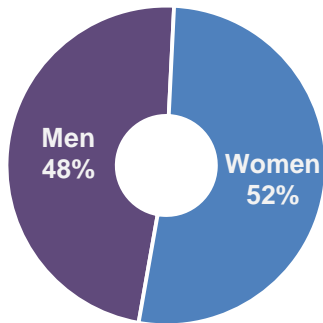
NOTE TO READER: Throughout the report, where there are significant differences between subsamples when compared to the total (at the 95% confidence level) these have been highlighted as follows:

Figures that are significantly higher than total at 95% confidence interval

Figures that are significantly lower than total at 95% confidence interval

DEMOGRAPHICS – QUANTITATIVE 600 PERSON TELEPHONE SAMPLE PROFILE

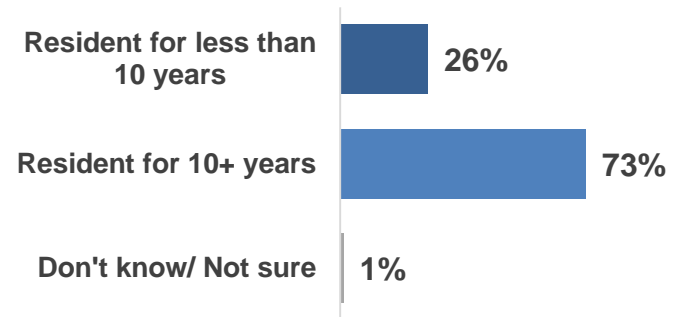
Gender



Whitehorse Centre/ Festival attendance	
Attended the Whitehorse Centre/ Festival (or member of household)	68%

Housing situation	
Own (Self or family)	85%
Rent	14%
Prefer not to say	1%

Time lived in Whitehorse area



Age	
18-39 years old	32%
40-64 years old	47%
65+ years old	22%

Totals may vary due to rounding

KEY FINDINGS



First and foremost, both the qualitative and quantitative research indicate that option C: Do nothing and close the Whitehorse Centre within 2 years, is generally not supported by the community. The Centre is valued by most and only a few residents would be happy with this solution.



This effectively makes it a decision between option A: Complete redevelopment; and option B: Essential works. Both qualitatively and quantitatively, **community opinions are largely divided** with a slight favouritism towards option A.



Those in support of Option A typically display some concern around the proposed cost, however they are more likely to appreciate the range of benefits the redevelopment will bring to the broader community (and not just for those interested in performing arts), as well as the expanded breadth of uses the proposed Centre will offer. This is in-line with the quantitative findings.

The proposed cost of a complete redevelopment and new carpark (Option A) is the key driver for support of investing the \$7 million to conduct essential works (Option B). This is apparent in both the quantitative and qualitative findings. For most supporters of Option B, the cost of Option A is seen as so large it is not justifiable to them. A major factor in this is the carpark, which is perceived to cost a large amount for what it is. These residents are not necessarily against the idea of redeveloping the Whitehorse Centre, or making improvements; they are looking to be convinced that the benefits of the project will outweigh the cost, and that there is a real community need for the project.



Ultimately, the findings of the research program suggest that there are solid grounds to pursue option A. Nonetheless, given the divide in opinion between option A and option B, there is potential for a community backlash regardless of which option is chosen.

MOST IN THE COMMUNITY ARE AWARE OF THE WHITEHORSE CENTRE AND THE OPTIONS BEING CONSIDERED BY COUNCIL FOR ITS FUTURE

The quantitative findings indicate that **a majority of the community are aware of the Whitehorse Centre.**

- 75% of respondents are aware of the Whitehorse Centre.
 - There is *significantly higher* awareness amongst older residents (those aged 40-64 or 65 years and over) and residents that have lived in the Whitehorse area for more than 10 years.
- Almost a quarter (22%) of the Whitehorse population are unaware of the Whitehorse Centre, whilst a further 4% are unsure.
 - Those that are unaware of the Centre tend to be younger residents and those that have lived in the Whitehorse area for less than 10 years.
 - Both these groups displayed *significantly lower* awareness of the Whitehorse Centre and were *significantly less* likely to have attended an event at the Whitehorse Centre personally or have member of household who has attended an event.

Qualitatively, the Whitehorse Centre is **valued by the community** as there is an inherent view amongst those in our qualitative sample that the Centre is vital to the Council's delivery of arts and cultural services. This statement rings true also for those that do not use the Centre on a regular basis. Although usage may be limited amongst this group, there is still an understanding that there are others in the community that benefit a great deal from these services.

THERE IS MORE SUPPORT AMONGST THE COMMUNITY FOR REDEVELOPMENT [OPTION A]

There is **widespread awareness that Council is considering options for the Whitehorse Centre's future.**

- However, beyond this broad awareness, and talk at a high level about the costs involved, there is not a comprehensive or clear understanding by most in the community of what each of the three options are in any detail.

On initial response, the community is largely divided between option A: Complete redevelopment and option B: Essential works with more in favour of option A. There is little relative support for option C: Complete closure.*

- Quantitatively, 41% of residents are in favour of option A while 31% prefer option B (18% support option C and 9% not sure). The higher level of support for option A can be attributed to the more detailed information provided to respondents. The qualitative findings indicate that respondents are seeking to know more than just the cost of each option and feel this is necessary to make an informed decision.
- Qualitatively we found that when focussed only on cost implications, reactions tend to result in more support for option B. At a high level where information is limited to cost, intuitive responses create a 'knee-jerk' reaction to the price-tag associated with each option. This causes a fair amount of apprehension to option A as the price is perceived to be too high. In relative comparison, option B is perceived to be more favourable as its price is substantially lower. In addition, there is a perception that option B will provide some kind of upgrade to the existing Centre rather than maintaining it so it can stay open.

SUMMARY OF PERCEIVED PROS AND CONS FOR EACH OPTION FROM BOTH QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Option	Perceived benefits	Concerns
Option A: Complete redevelopment of the Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Centre will be an up-to-date facility that the Whitehorse community can be proud of. The redeveloped Centre will offer a broad range of uses for the local community. There will be reduced need to travel outside of the municipality to attend school and other community group events or concerts. The redevelopment will create employment for local residents and create opportunities for local businesses. Redeveloped Centre will have positive quality of life benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cost is seen as big, which applies to both the Centre and the car park components of the proposed redevelopment. The proposed centre is seen to be not big enough for larger local school groups (i.e. an entire student cohort and their parents). By contrast, some see it as too grandiose and sleek – and that this is a signal that more spend is involved than necessary. Money is being spent at the expense of other important areas. Redeveloped Centre will only benefit a small amount of the population
Option B: Essential works done to the Centre to remain open for 8-10 years, before possible closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents will have a functioning centre without the huge cost outlay of Option A. Maintains the current centre's 'community feel'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncertainty regarding whether the Centre will be open beyond the 8-10 year period. Still not meeting current building codes.
Option C: Closure within 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low cost outlay for Council relative to other options. More land available. No more arguments about 'what to do with it'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This would create an absence of facilities that are currently available to the community. Uncertainty regarding what will replace the Whitehorse Centre if current centre is demolished.

MAIN REASONS TO SUPPORT OPTION A - REDEVELOPMENT ARE FOCUSSES ON HAVING A VENUE THAT MANY GROUPS IN THE COMMUNITY CAN ENJOY

Quantitatively, the main reasons to support the redevelopment of the centre is around **the need to have a venue that can be used by a wide range of the population**. The view that Council has a responsibility to provide a performing arts centre for the community is also rated highly. Consequently, the reasons to support that rated highest are:

- *'It's important to have a venue in Whitehorse that can be used by many people, groups and organisations from our local community'* (86% total agree)
- *'Although I may not use the Whitehorse Centre myself, Council should provide the community with a performing arts centre, like it provides other services such as sports and recreation facilities, aged care services, child and family support and disability support'* (79% total agree)

The main reasons to oppose redevelopment are related to the cost of both the new Centre and the carpark, with the view that the money could be spent in other areas also rating relatively highly:

- *'The \$10.9 million cost of the proposed 3-level car park is too expensive for 211 car spaces'* (69% total agree)
- *'\$67 million for the Centre and \$10.9 million for the car park is too much money to spend on the redevelopment'* (68% total agree)
- *'The money needed to redevelop the Centre could be better spent in other areas'* (59% total agree)

PERCEPTIONS ON FUTURE USES OF THE CENTRE ARE DECISIVE IN DETERMINING PEOPLE'S POSITION

Perceptions regarding future uses of the Centre play a crucial role in influencing people's ultimate positions on the issue of whether or not to support redevelopment.

- A key driver of support for option A is the ability to view the breadth of new uses and beneficiaries that a redeveloped Whitehorse Centre would bring to the community. Those that assume this position appreciate the intangible community, cultural, societal and ultimately, quality of life benefits that redevelopment could produce.
- Support for option B is driven by the perception that the benefits of option A are not enough to justify the cost. Residents who adopt this point of view perceive that the usage of a redeveloped Centre will be limited and it will only benefit a few.

It is worth noting that most in the community **place value on arts and cultural services**.

- The argument that *'Arts and cultural services are not as important as other services or programs for our community'* was rated second lowest in terms of reasons to oppose redevelopment. Importantly, this argument had relatively high 'strongly disagree' responses (29%), indicating that the value of arts and cultural services is not being questioned. Rather those in the community are looking for sound justification that redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre is needed today and that the benefits will be worth the cost.

CONSIDERED SUPPORT SHOWS OPTION A IS STILL THE MOST PREFERRED OPTION

Quantitatively, on a **considered basis (after contemplation of balanced messaging)** support is **still largely divided between option A** (42% preferred option) **and option B** (37% preferred option); however there is still more support for option A.

Whilst starting more in favour of option B, those in our qualitative sample tended to shift their opinions **more in favour of option A**.

- The presentation of balanced messaging and other stimulus enabled those in our groups to make an informed decision on the option that they preferred. The questions and concerns that are raised when the options are considered on a cost implication basis only are answered to some extent and this provides enough reassurance for some. It was clear from the discussions that eventuated that those in favour of essential works are looking to be convinced that there is a need for option A, but need more than just intangible benefits.

PERCEPTIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS THAT COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS WILL NEED TO ADDRESS OR OVERCOME

Option	Community perception / assumptions	Communication recommendations
Option A: Complete redevelopment of the Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cost of the redevelopment is too high • The cost is not justifiable • The Council hasn't 'done it's homework' and forecast current vs. potential usage, or completed a business case for the project • Council is only undertaking this project to 'outdo' it's neighbours and create something that looks good, but costs a lot of money • It's not important to undertake this project now, it can wait another 8-10 years • Money could be better spent in other areas • The cost of the carpark is too high and not necessary • Redevelopment will not benefit enough of the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge that this is a significant project for the City of Whitehorse. Council has undertaken a comprehensive body of work to explore different options available for the future of the Whitehorse Centre. • This body of work has involved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ determining the relative costs and benefits of the different options for the future of the Whitehorse Centre and preparation of a detailed Business Case ○ comprehensive consultation with the community • Acknowledge that there is a significant cost outlay if Option A is undertaken, however there are significant benefits to be realised for the local community. A redeveloped centre would allow for a broader range of uses than the current Centre, and provide for an up to date facility that will benefit a much larger proportion of the local community. • Explain why this option is better value for money/brings greater benefits to the community than Option B. • Provide assurance to clients, current centre users and attendees, and local residents, that services will not be compromised, rates will not increase to directly fund this project, and Council will do its best to minimise disruptions during construction. • Action is needed now: the current centre needs to be updated or replaced as a matter of urgency.

PERCEPTIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS THAT COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS WILL NEED TO ADDRESS OR OVERCOME

Option	Community perception / assumptions	Communication recommendations
Option B: Essential works done to the Centre to remain open for 8-10 years before possible closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$7-8 million implies improvements or an upgrade will be made, rather than just doing enough to keep the Centre operational • There is a lack of clarity regarding future of the Whitehorse Centre in 8-10 year's time – would redevelopment be an option then? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full range of benefits are explained - clear outline on what \$7 million includes • Communicate with clarity, inclusions for spend • Let the community know what future implications are – what are the possible future options? • Provide assurance that consultation has been thorough – present findings in clear and palatable form • Communicate clearly the reasons why Council determined option B was preferable to option A

THERE ARE IMPORTANT COMMUNICATION IMPERATIVES THAT COUNCIL NEEDS TO CONSIDER

Moving forward, the option that Council chooses to pursue will bring about some important communication imperatives that must be considered. These imperatives have been outlined in more detail in the full report.

➤ **Key communications tasks for Council if Option A is pursued:**

- The costs have been carefully considered
- Consultation has been thorough
- Benefits of a new Centre are multiple and for many in the community
- Usage of the Centre will expand
- Problems with the current Centre mean action is needed now
- Assurance to clients and residents that services will not be compromised, rates will not increase and that Council will do it's best to minimise disruptions during construction

➤ **Key communications tasks for Council if Option B is pursued:**

- The costs have been carefully considered – it is especially important to explain carefully what the \$7 million outlay includes, and **also what it does not include**
- Consultation has been thorough
- Reasons why Council determined option B was preferable to option A
- Future implications – what are the possible future options? Is redevelopment an option down the track?

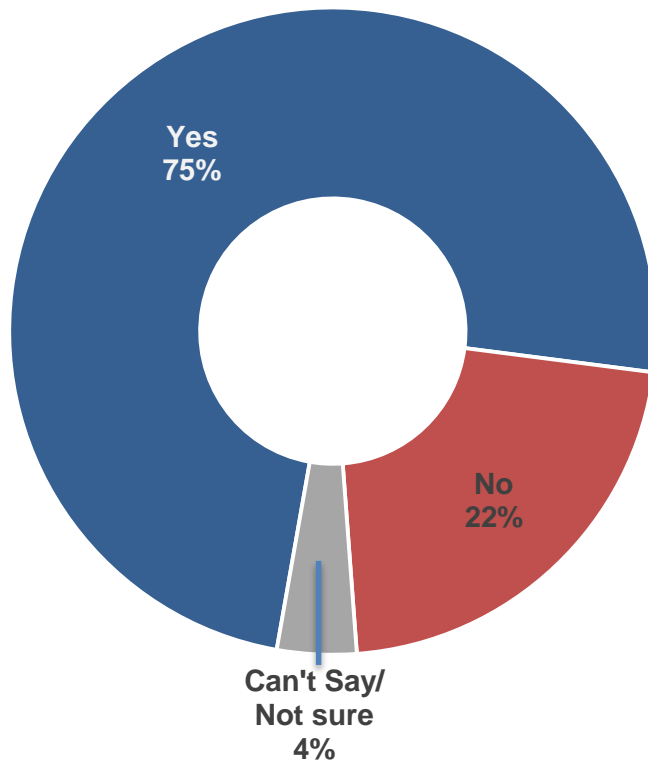


COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND ATTENDANCE AT THE WHITEHORSE CENTRE

AWARENESS IS RELATIVELY HIGH WITH 3 QUARTERS OF RESIDENTS SAYING THEY ARE AWARE OF THE WHITEHORSE CENTRE

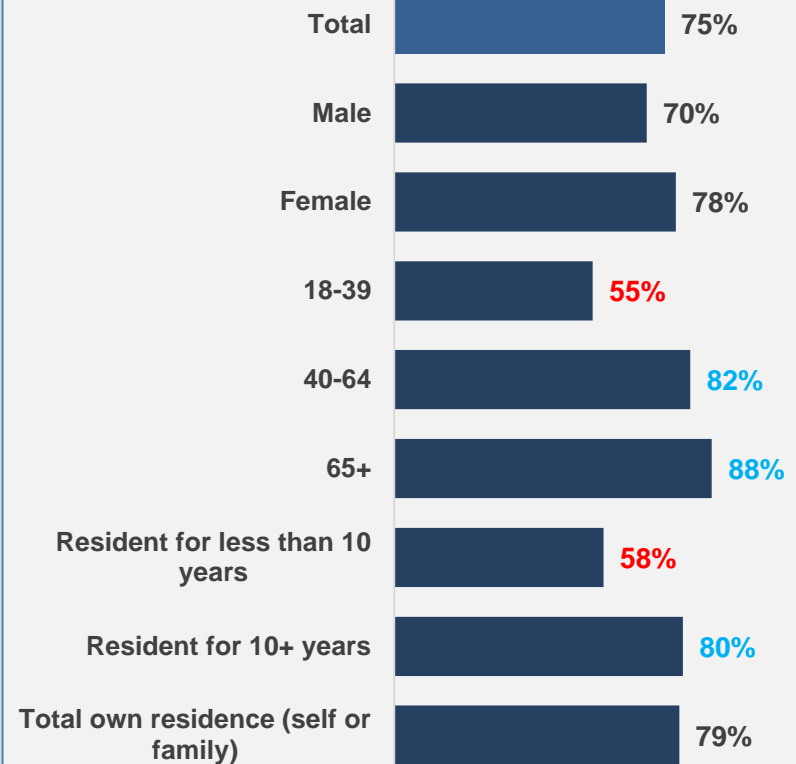
Awareness of the Whitehorse Centre

Net Awareness (Total Yes – Total No) = **+53**



Awareness of the Whitehorse Centre amongst demographics

Total aware

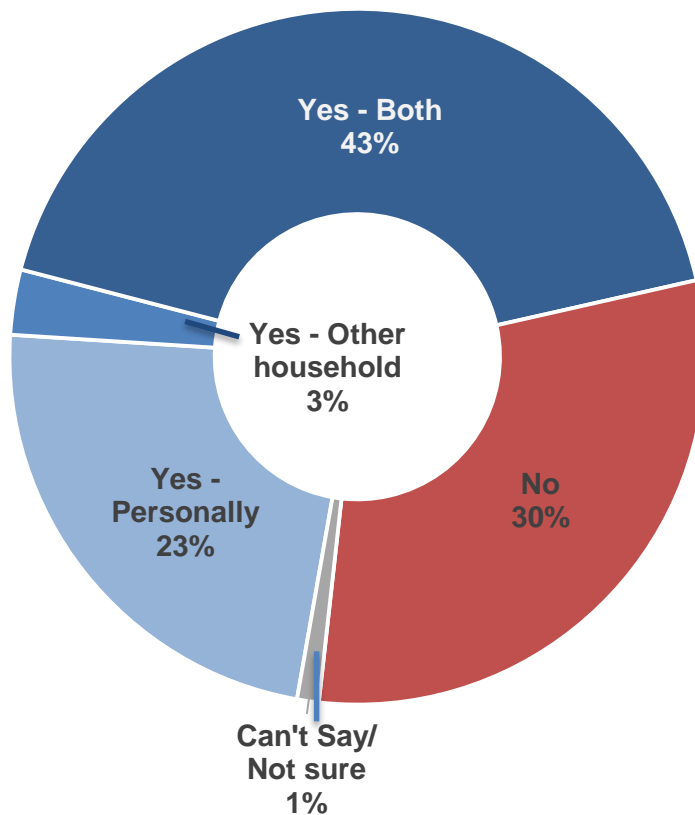


Q1. First of all, have you ever heard of the Whitehorse Centre before?
Base: All respondents, n=600. Totals may vary due to rounding.

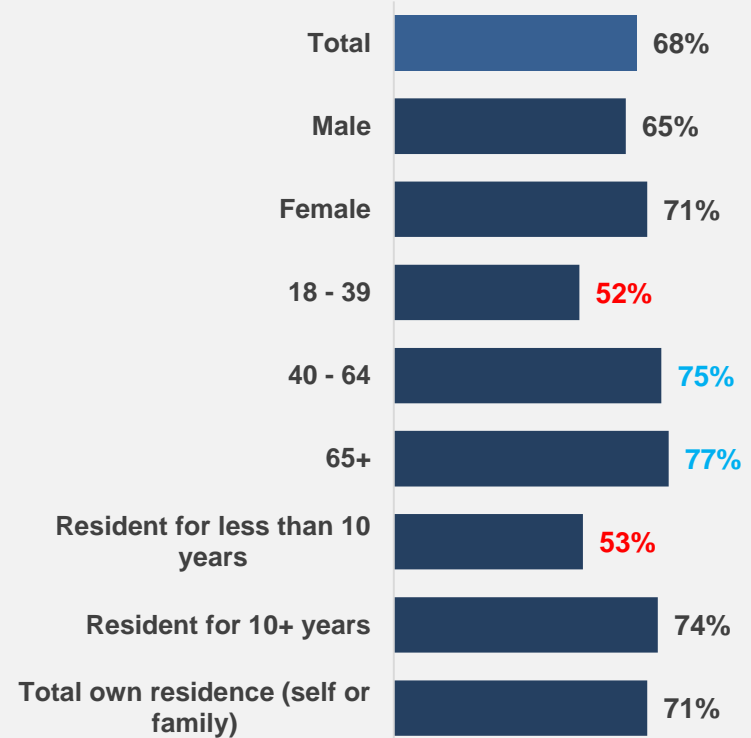
Significantly higher than total at 95% confidence interval
Significantly lower than total at 95% confidence interval

AROUND 7-IN-10 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TO THE CENTRE OR HAVE SOMEONE IN THEIR HOUSEHOLD WHO HAS

Whitehorse Centre attendance
Total Yes = 68%



Whitehorse Centre attendance amongst demographics
Total yes



Significantly higher than total at 95% confidence interval
Significantly lower than total at 95% confidence interval

QUALITATIVELY, AWARENESS OF THE CENTRE IS HIGH BUT IS GENERALLY LIMITED TO AN APPRECIATION OF COMMUNITY EVENTS THAT ARE HELD

- In line with the quantitative findings, awareness of the Centre itself is relatively high amongst residents. While most have limited knowledge as to the theatre and art shows that are staged at the Centre, there is an appreciation that the Centre does provide a good location for community arts and festivals.
- Additionally, people speak fondly of the festivals that Council holds at the Whitehorse Centre site such as the Carols and the Australia Day celebrations.
- There is also awareness of the various crafts and farmers markets that are held in the grounds next to the Centre.

“Council’s Australia day event is really top class. Over 20,000 local people come to this event.”

(General Community, Younger)

“They’ve got the craft market and the farmers market here.”

(General Community , Younger)

USAGE AMONGST THE COMMUNITY IS GENERALLY LIMITED TO CASUAL VISITS BUT MOST VALUE THE ROLE PLAYED FOR THE COMMUNITY

- Apart from the regular users groups, usage of the Centre remains limited amongst the general community to a casual but infrequent visit. A few have been to the Centre at some point in the past whilst others speak of family members who utilise the Centre on a more frequent basis.
- In essence, most value arts and cultural services but tend to not make such things a priority in their everyday lives.
- However, it is clear that although people may not use the Centre frequently themselves, there is an innate perception that the Centre plays an important role in the delivery of arts and cultural services for the community. Although most may not value such services as highly as others, they acknowledge that these services play an important role in the community and that there is a part of the Whitehorse population that derive great worth from the arts.

"We have young kids, so don't really go to many exhibitions. We used to go before kids. Agree it's important to acknowledge diversity."
(General Community, Younger)

"I've been to a few flower shows with friends."
(General Community, Older)

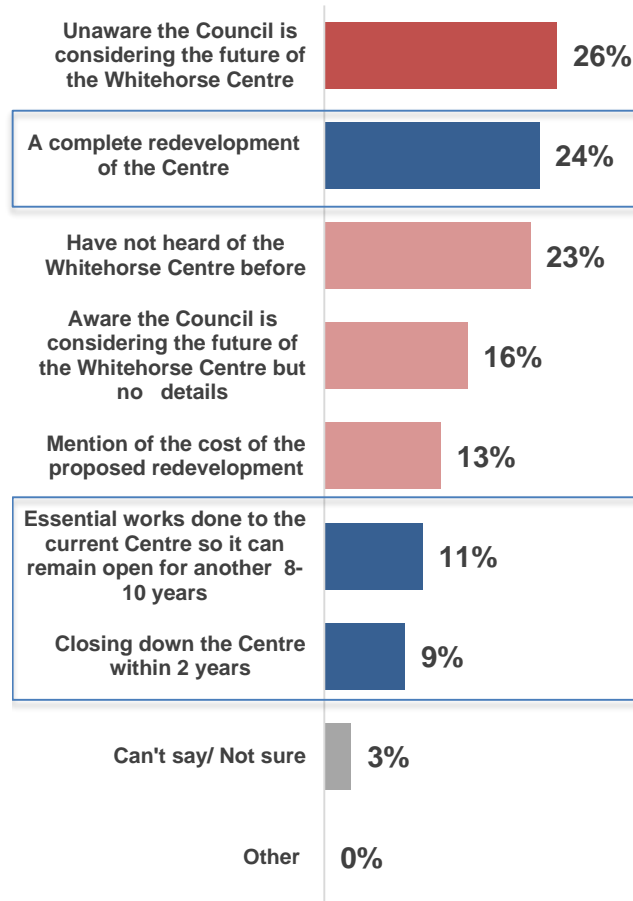
"I've only heard what my mother in law told me, she goes regularly to the events there. She thought it was terrific."
(Local Resident)



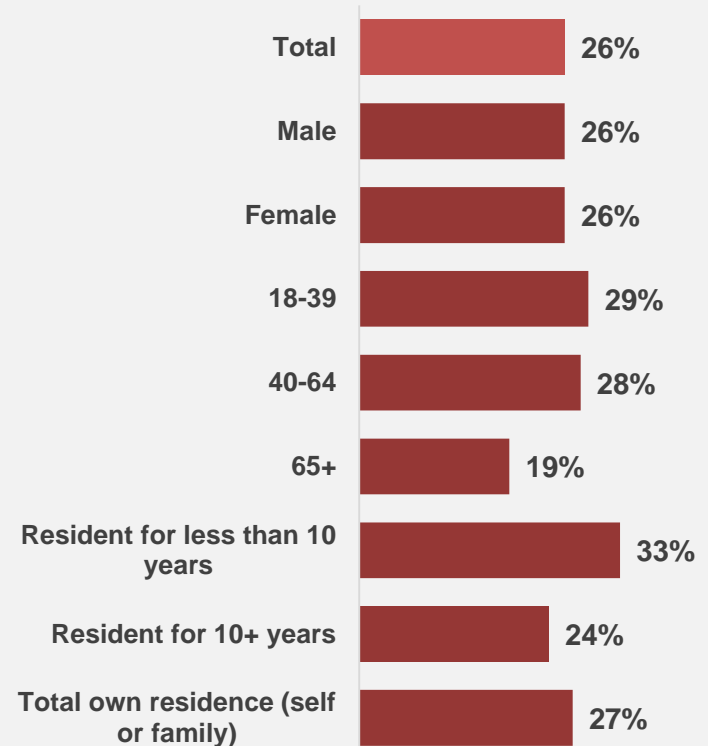
AWARENESS OF OPTIONS BEING CONSIDERED BY COUNCIL

ONLY 1-IN-4 RESIDENTS ARE AWARE THAT A COMPLETE REDEVELOPMENT IS BEING CONSIDERED BY COUNCIL

Awareness of future of Whitehorse Centre



Unaware the Council is considering of the future of the Whitehorse Centre amongst demographics



Q2. Have you heard that Council is considering the future of the Whitehorse Centre but don't know any details, or have you not heard of the Whitehorse Centre before now? MULTIPLE OPTIONS ALLOWED IN RESPONSE
 Base: All respondents, n=600. Totals may vary due to rounding.

DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE VARIOUS OPTIONS PUT FORWARD BY COUNCIL IS GENERALLY THIN AND LIMITED TO A BASIC AWARENESS

- Most in our qualitative sample **are aware** that Council is considering a possible redevelopment for the Whitehorse Centre.
- For most however, **depth of knowledge remains limited** to the fact that redevelopment is being contemplated and that such a thing will be costly.
- On an unprompted basis, there are some in the general community that have a higher level of knowledge and who are able to articulate that Council is considering three different options for the future of the Centre.
- Nonetheless, knowledge of any substantial detail of the three options is also limited amongst these residents and does not extend past a simple outline of the three options and an awareness of the cost of each. Generally, the detail of each option is not understood - apart from the highly rare exceptions where a resident has taken the time to read the business case put forth by Council (and notably, of which most are unaware).
- There is also confusion as to how much each option will cost, with many wrongfully speculating a range of figures.

"It feels like there isn't enough detail about what it is."

(General Community, Older)

"I think there is \$70 million to knock it over and re-do it or something like \$9 million to fix it. They weren't sure how long it would last for though."

(General Community, Younger)

REGULAR USERS TEND TO HAVE A GREATER AWARENESS AND A DEEPER KNOWLEDGE OF THE OPTIONS BEING CONSIDERED

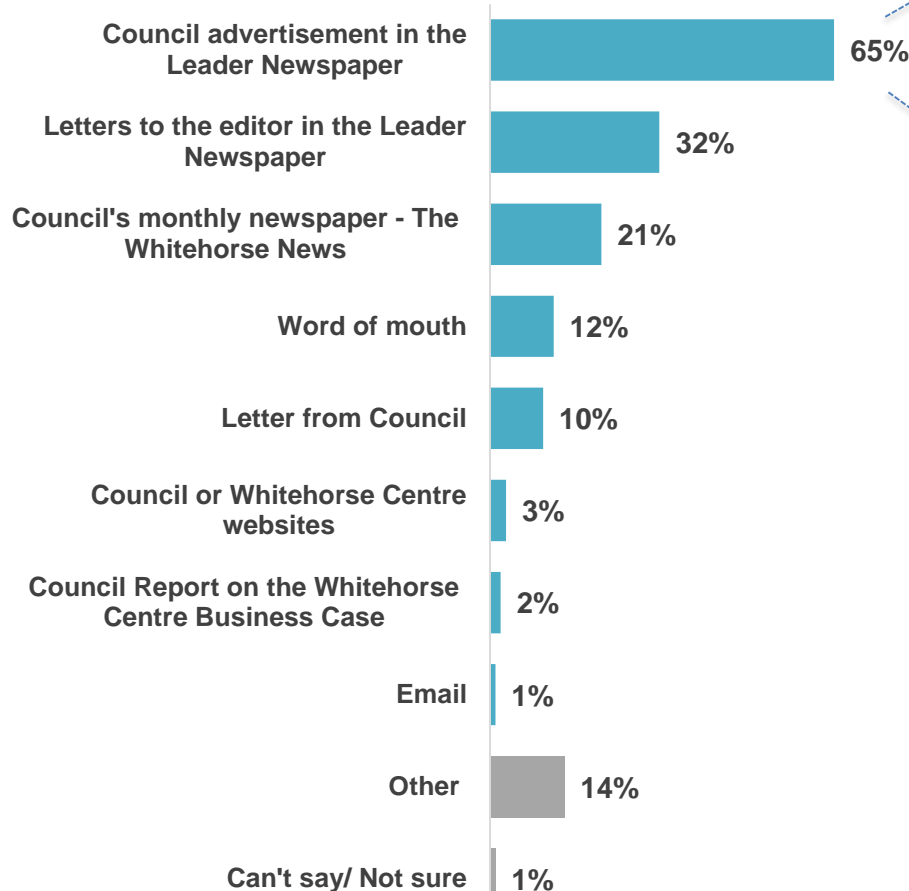
- However, **regular users** of the Centre are more likely to:
 - a) Be aware of all the options that Council is considering for the future of the Centre; and
 - b) Hold a greater depth of knowledge concerning these options.
- This is a result of regular users simply being more active and engaged as to what is happening regarding arts and cultural services in the city of Whitehorse.

"The theatre is only growing by 25%, it's not getting substantially bigger."
(Regular user)

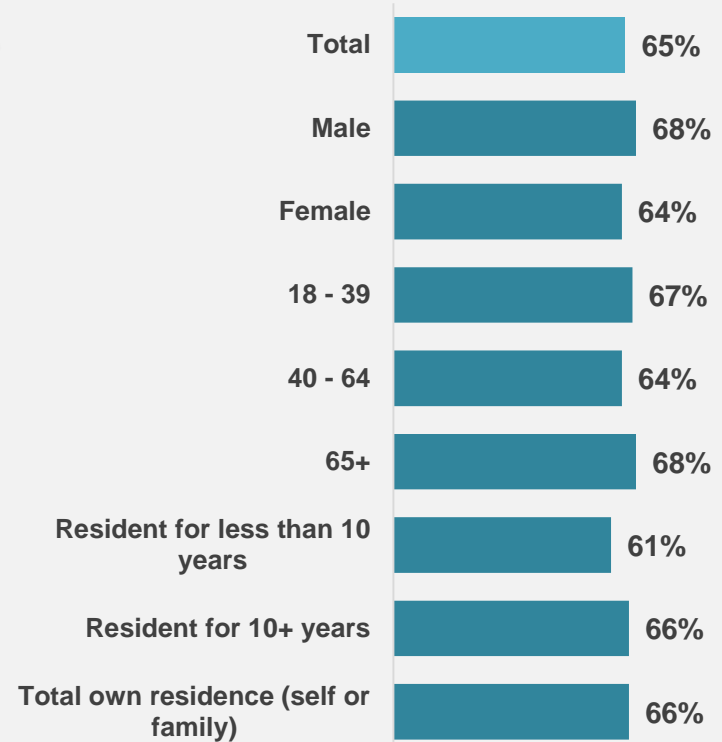
"It hasn't been renovated since it was built."
(Regular user)

ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE LEADER NEWSPAPER ARE EFFECTIVE AT CREATING AWARENESS

Medium in which proposal was heard



Council advertisement in the Leader newspaper amongst demographics



Q3. And where did you hear about these options/this option? MULTIPLE OPTIONS ALLOWED IN RESPONSE

Base: Respondents that are aware of options in Q2, n=213. Totals may vary due to rounding.

QUALITATIVELY, THOSE THAT HAVE SEEN THE CENTRE MENTIONED IN THE LEADER TEND TO NOT TAKE MUCH INTEREST IN WHAT WAS WRITTEN

- In line with the quantitative findings, those in our qualitative groups tend to gain any awareness of the options that Council is considering for the future of the Whitehorse Centre from advertisements in the local Leader newspaper.
- Those that did notice any mention of the Whitehorse Centre in the Leader tend to not take much interest in what was being said, leading to recall of the Centre being referred to, but uncertainty as to the details of the articles.
- Some local residents had also been made aware due to a Council letterbox drop, however this was only true for those who lived in close proximity to the Centre.

"I read about it in the local paper. Haven't heard people in the street talking about it."
(Local resident)

"There was a letterbox drop before Christmas. They stated that they could do an update for 2 million but it would be closed in 2 years."
(Regular user)

"I noticed something in local paper asking people for their views. Asked about the different options, but haven't responded yet."
(General Community, Older)



INITIAL PREFERENCE

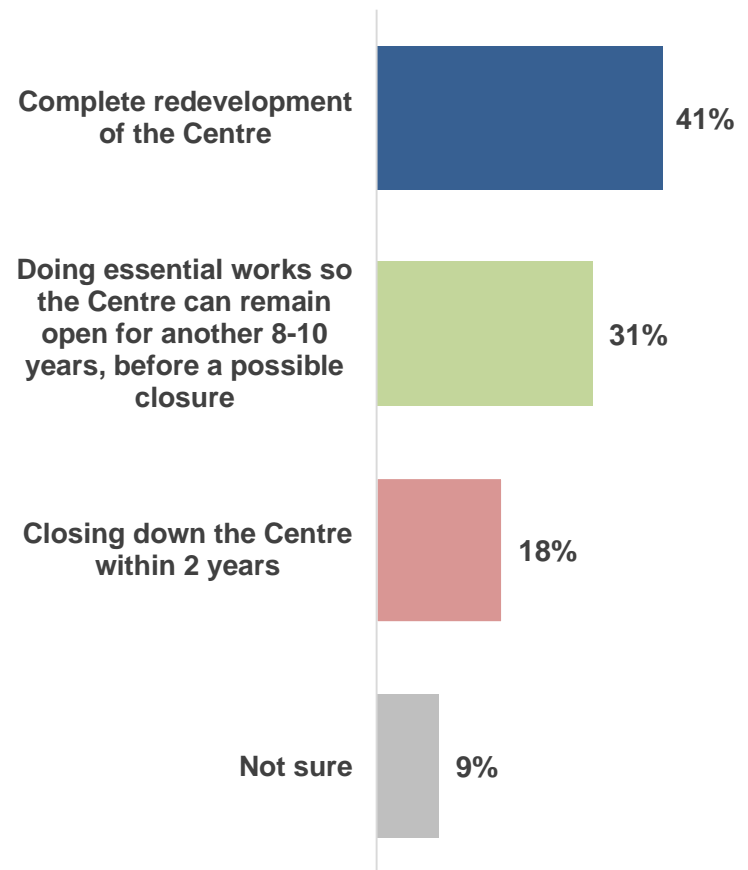
WHEN MORE INFORMATION IS GIVEN, OPTION A IS MOST PREFERRED AMONGST RESIDENTS WITH 4-IN-10 PEOPLE CHOOSING THIS OPTION

Information provided at Q5

Over the last five years, Whitehorse City Council has conducted independent feasibility and business case studies to inform the future of the Whitehorse Centre. The Council is considering three different options for the future of the Whitehorse Centre.

- A complete redevelopment of the Centre, including a main theatre, a studio theatre, a function room with increased capacity for dinner style seating, bigger foyer space, increased rehearsal space, and a soundshell for community events such as the Australia Day Concert. It would also include a new 211 space 3 level car park to service the broader Civic Centre complex. This would cost around \$67 million, plus \$10.9 million for the car park. This redevelopment was recommended in the most recent business case report.
- Doing essential works to the current Whitehorse Centre, so it can remain open for 8-10 more years, and then possibly closing. This would involve works such as replacing the roof, making repairs to the building fabric, and technical improvements, but not increasing centre capacity and unable to address disability and access issues. This option would cost around \$7 million.
- Closing the Whitehorse Centre within 2 years, demolishing the Centre and returning the area to parkland. This would cost around \$2 million.

Initial preferred option regarding the future of the Whitehorse Centre

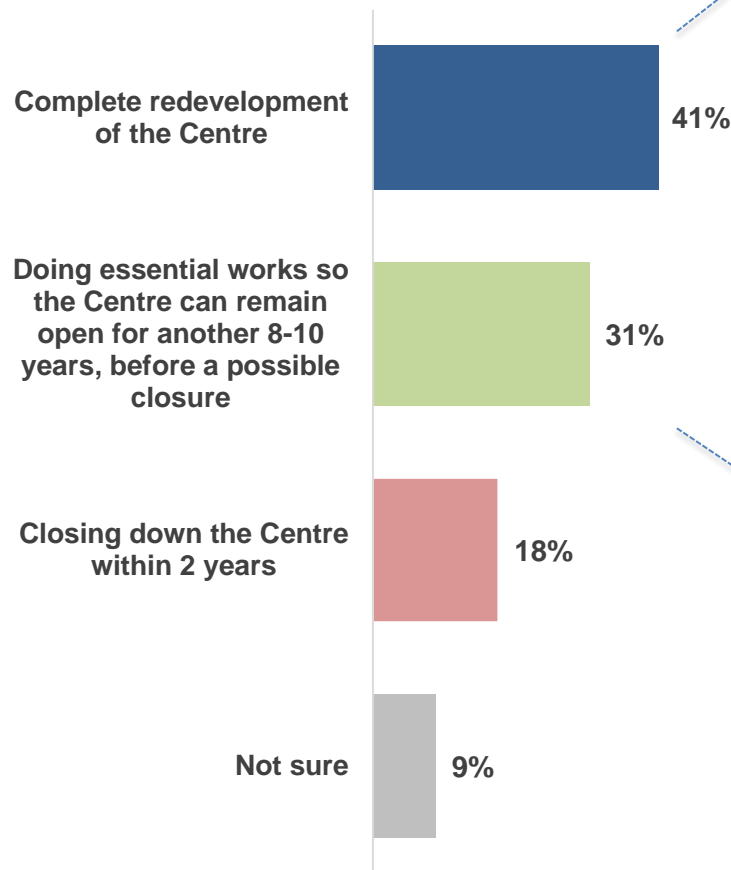


Q5. Based on this information, what is your preferred option regarding the future of the Whitehorse Centre? Is it...?

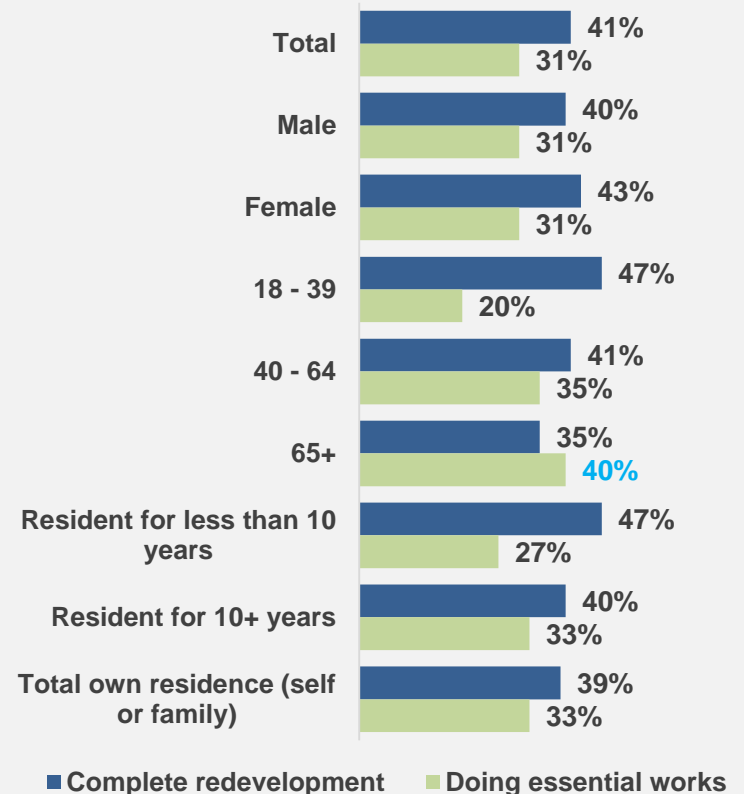
Base: All respondents, n=600. Totals may vary due to rounding.

PREFERENCES FOR OPTION A ARE HIGHER AMONGST YOUNGER RESIDENTS AND THOSE THAT HAVE LIVED IN THE AREA FOR LESS THAN 10 YEARS

Initial preferred option regarding the future of the Whitehorse Centre



Initial preferred option regarding the future of the Whitehorse Centre amongst demographics



Q5. Based on this information, what is your preferred option regarding the future of the Whitehorse Centre? Is it...?

Base: All respondents, n=600. Totals may vary due to rounding.

Significantly higher than total at 95% confidence interval

WHEN FOCUSSED ONLY ON COST IMPLICATIONS, FOCUS GROUP REACTIONS RESULT IN MORE SUPPORT FOR OPTION B

- Qualitatively, through the focus group sessions, there is a slightly higher level of initial support for option B: Essential works. This tends to be concentrated around the fact that initial reactions to the price-tag of option A are met with apprehension, as the intuitive response for some is that it is too costly. Moreover, at a high level, the response to option B is more positive because of the lower relative price associated with it and the perception that this option is about providing some sort of upgrade rather than just keeping the Centre open.
- Those who are initially in favour of option A understand that the proposed redeveloped Centre is expensive but see past the price-tag and understand the potential intangible gains, such as improvements to quality of life, of a redeveloped Centre
- Virtually no-one in our qualitative sample wanted to see the Whitehorse Centre closed down. The few that did had never utilised it and did not perceive it to be of any value to the community.

"It's a valuable part of our infrastructure. As population increases we will need more facilities and this is already at capacity. Kids don't engage as much with the community and this gives them the option to engage with the community. Anything that looks short term doesn't play out well in the long term. It's a great area for facilities, I'd hate to see that decrease."

(Local Resident)

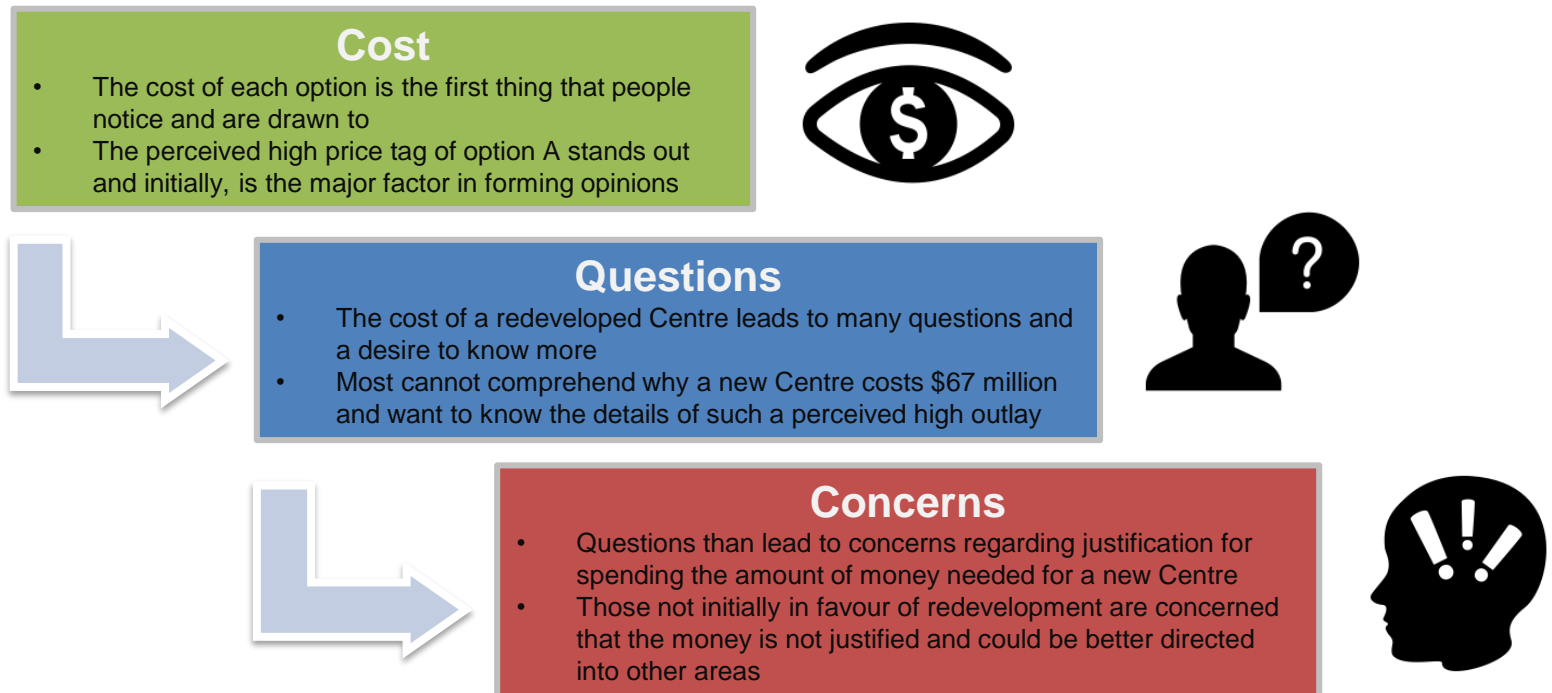
"I reckon it's a great option, number B... it's on its last legs. I'd go to B with threats. Give it a reason to be saved, then look at the whole redevelopment. Option B appeases those worried about the cost of it, and those who worry about it closing. (General Community, Younger)

"If they want high density living they need the facilities to match. Major events are really important, it will generate business, increases house prices."

(General Community, Younger)

COST IS A MAJOR FACTOR WHEN CONSIDERING THE OPTIONS AND THIS GENERATES QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS AMONGST RESIDENTS

Qualitatively, when options are focussed only on cost implications, respondents react strongly to the price associated with each option. For many, this is an important hurdle that makes the options hard to properly consider without knowing the details of each, especially those associated with option A. Questions surrounding the cost then lead to concerns related to a perceived large outlay of funds. These concerns centre around justification for spending and speculation that the money could be better spent in other areas.



COST IMPLICATIONS GENERATE QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS AROUND USAGE AND POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF A REDEVELOPED CENTRE

"I would like to see cost projections for the full redevelopment. I'd like more information on usage."

(General Community, Older)

"I chose B because it was more conservative. I don't have enough information to make a decision really. I wouldn't be keen on making any decision unless Council was very clear about the benefits. If it was based on emotions then I'd say yes, but we need usage stats and cost benefit analysis. Option C seemed to be a complete waste of money."

(Local Resident)

"In a lot of ways I'd like A, but I don't think a strong enough case has been put forward. Why would you think about closing it? It's great the way it is... is a study being done to see if they'd get the people in the door to justify the costs. I like the idea it's not coming out of rates. What's going to be the cost, what are the shows going to be?"

(General Community, Older)

"I can't justify spending that much money. Also I would like information on what other councils have."

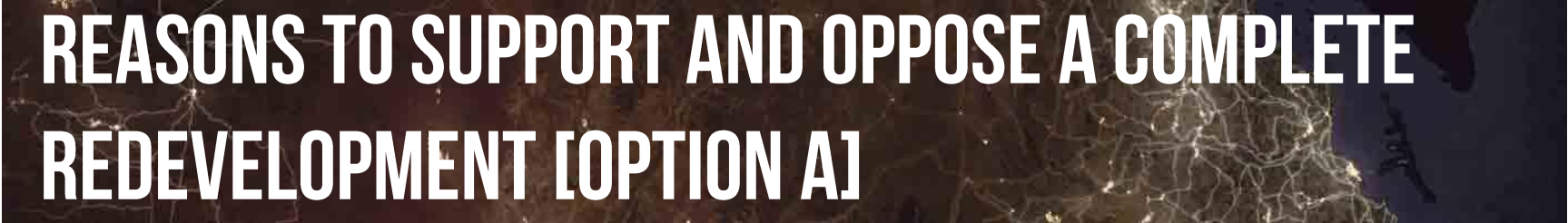
(General Community, Older)

"Do they really need a bigger and better auditorium? There's no way big plays would come here. Will they get return for the money they are investing? It should be able to pay it's own way. It should have the 10 year projection, if it takes this time to recoup the investment."

(General Community, Older)

"I can't see why it costs so much. I don't think the government has \$67 million to build it from the start. If they need to put a bit of money in until they have the money it's better."

(General Community, Younger)

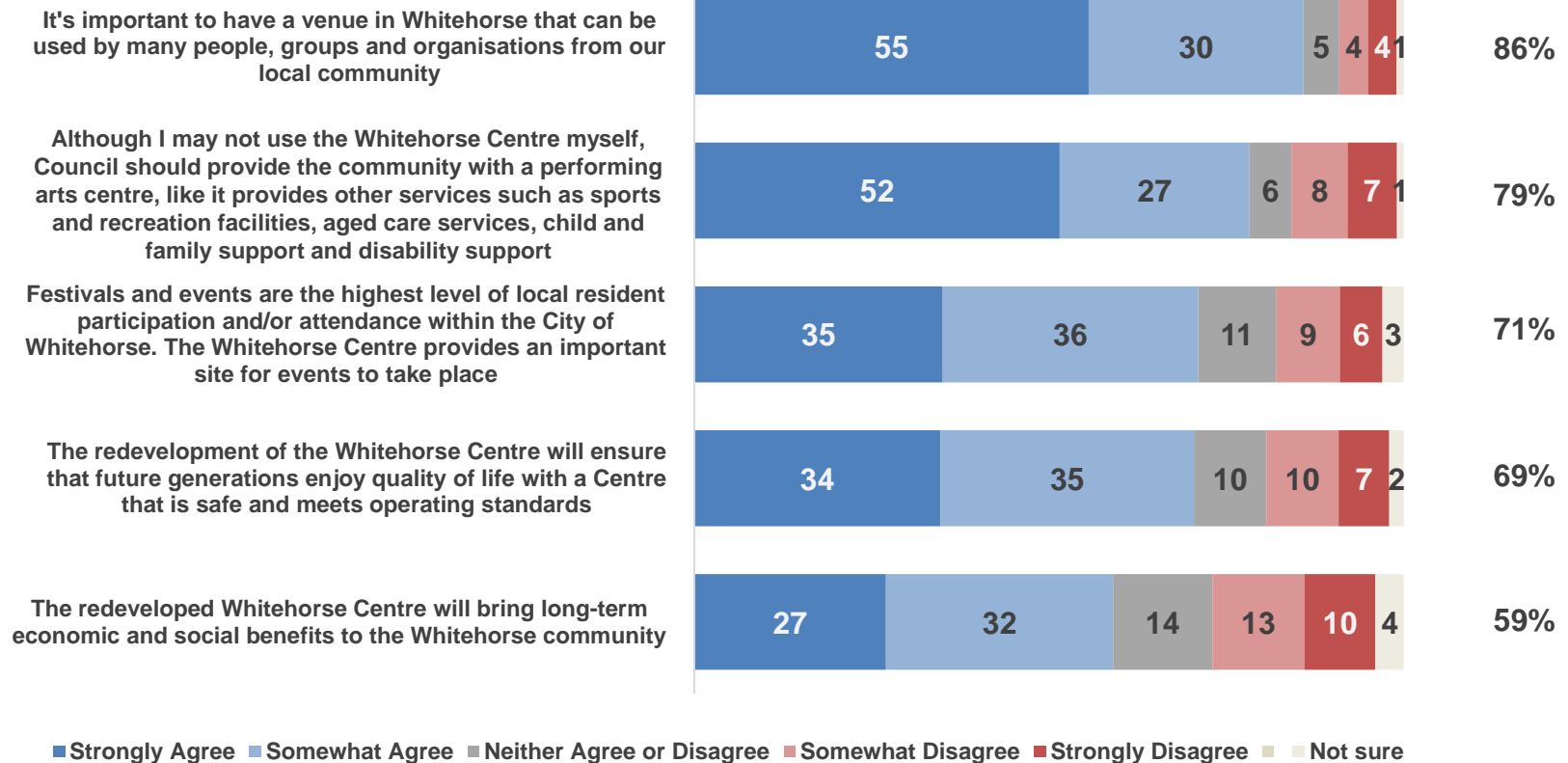


REASONS TO SUPPORT AND OPPOSE A COMPLETE REDEVELOPMENT [OPTION A]

HAVING A VENUE THAT CAN BE UTILISED BY MANY PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY IS SEEN AS THE MAIN REASON TO SUPPORT REDEVELOPMENT

Main reasons to support complete redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre (%)

Total Agree =
Strongly Agree +
Somewhat Agree



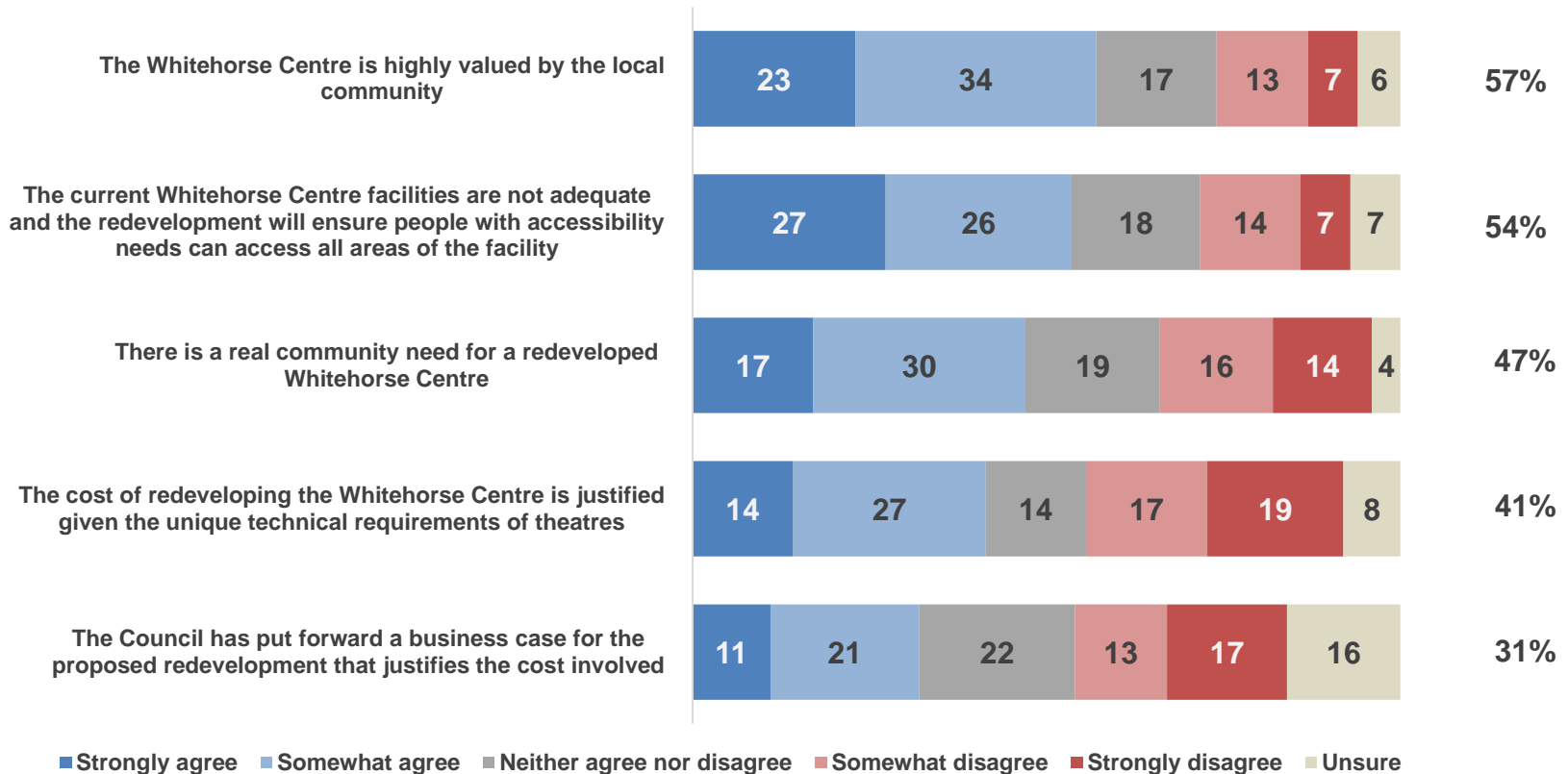
Q6. I am now going to read out a short list of statements that some people have said are reasons to support the complete redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.

Base: All respondents, n=600. Totals may vary due to rounding.

AWARENESS OF THE BUSINESS CASE IS LOW AND IS THEREFORE SEEN AS THE LEAST FAVOURED REASON TO SUPPORT REDEVELOPMENT

Other reasons to support complete redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre (%)

Total Agree =
Strongly Agree +
Somewhat Agree



Q6. I am now going to read out a short list of statements that some people have said are reasons to support the complete redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.

Base: All respondents, n=600. Totals may vary due to rounding.

QUALITATIVELY, THOSE IN SUPPORT OF REDEVELOPMENT ARE ABLE TO APPRECIATE THE POTENTIALLY BROADER BENEFITS OF A NEW CENTRE

- The qualitative research shows that those that are in favour of option A are able to see past the price tag of a redeveloped Centre and form an appreciation for the wider benefits that a new Whitehorse Centre could have for the community.
- They understand that a new Centre has the capacity to be used for a wide array of uses and can envision how the population that the current Centre caters for, could be expanded to include more people.
- These people are also able to look towards the future and see how a new Centre would benefit future generations. The notion that Council is looking forward is particularly appealing to this group as they appreciate potential problems that are associated with reactive planning.

"We're not just one faceted in this community. I go to Aqualink a lot, but it's nice to know we have these things if we decide to go."

(General Community, Older)

"The words future generations appeals to me. Hopefully we have something lasts longer then what we currently have."

(Regular user)

- Furthermore, those in favour of option A want diversity in the services offered by Council and are supportive of money being spend in an array of areas that is not just limited to sports and recreation.

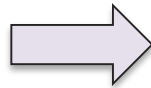
"I agree that sports need investment but there isn't a lot of arts facilities in the area. It plays to all ages. I'm proud to be part of a community that has all the services... It provides and extra richness to the community. We've got lots of good things in Whitehorse, we should be very proud of it. All ages can use it."

(Local resident)

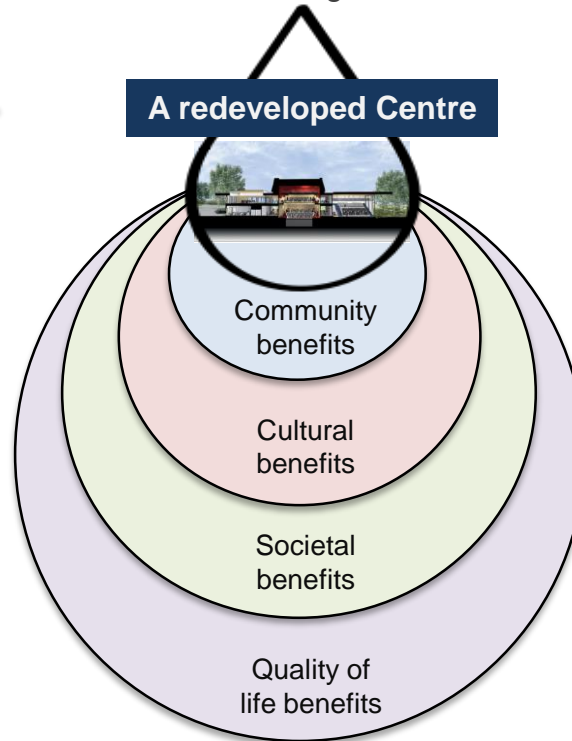
FOR THOSE IN SUPPORT OF OPTION A, THE COST IS SEEN AS JUSTIFIABLE AS THE BENEFITS ARE SEEN TO BE NUMEROUS AND WIDESPREAD

Qualitatively, those who are in favour of option A...

View things largely through an holistic lens....



... seeing the widespread benefits to many that a redeveloped Centre could bring...



...to the extent that these benefits outweigh the cost (while still acknowledging a significant outlay will be required)



FOR THOSE IN SUPPORT OF OPTION A, THE COST IS SEEN AS JUSTIFIABLE AS THE BENEFITS ARE SEEN TO BE NUMEROUS AND WIDESPREAD

"Comparing to other communities that have a lot of cultural activities. Community health and well being is perpetuated by group events."

(General community, Younger)

"There is a lack of nice venues here. I belong to an organisation and we're always looking for a place to have functions. Claridges is nice, there's pubs, but nothing like this. It could be a hub."

(General community, Older)

"It could be available for school productions, it will become a greater facility. If we just maintain it will become a waste of money. To not spend anything at all will be terribly sad. It's a great facility and can be used for so many things."

(Local resident)

"The environment, the community coming together, there is something about it."

(Regular user)

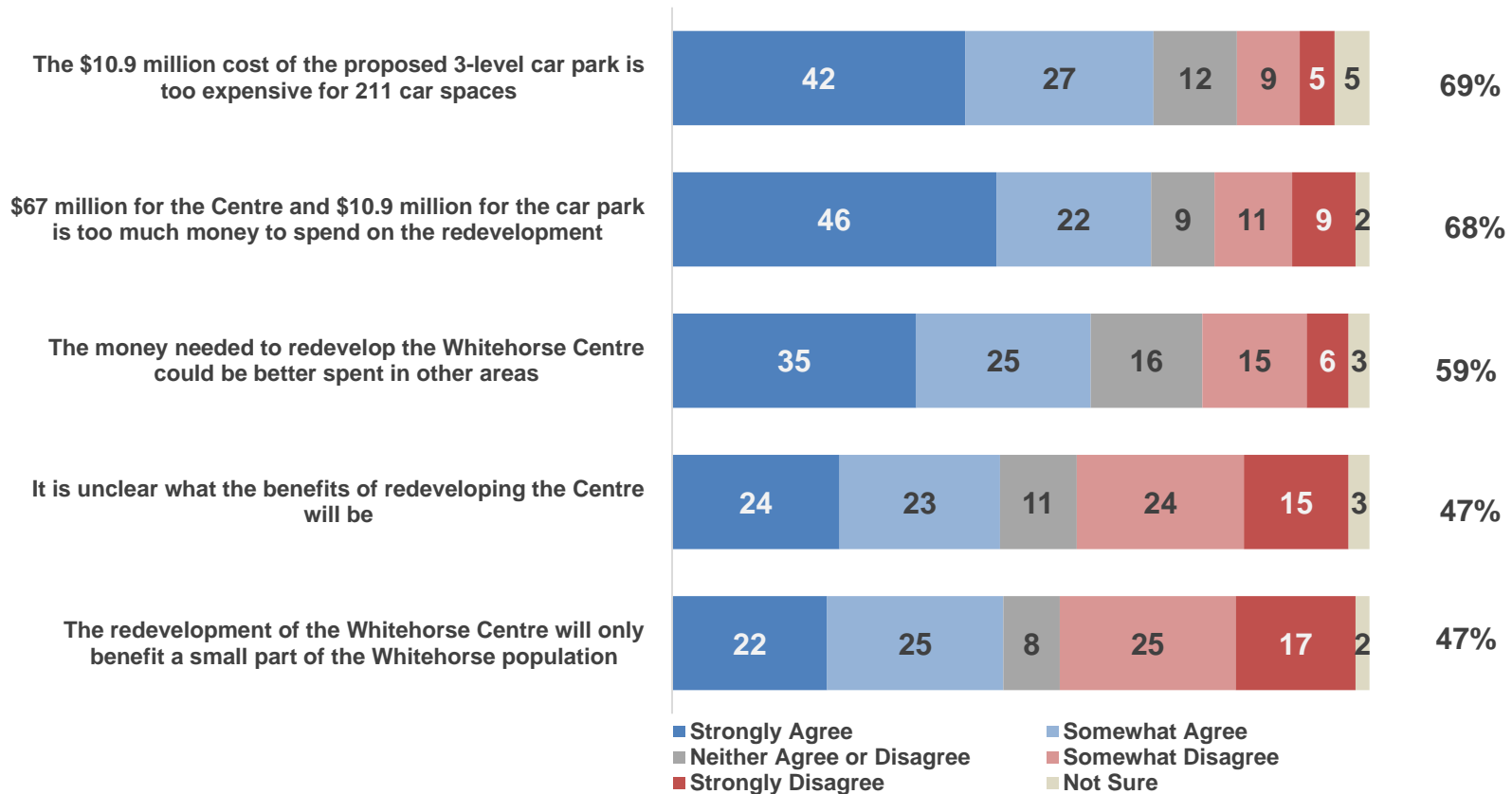
"You have to put money aside, community needs are intangible."

(Regular user)

THE COST OF REDEVELOPMENT AND CARPARK ARE SEEN AS THE MAIN REASONS TO OPPOSE REDEVELOPMENT

Main reasons to oppose complete redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre (%)

Total Agree =
Strongly Agree +
Somewhat Agree



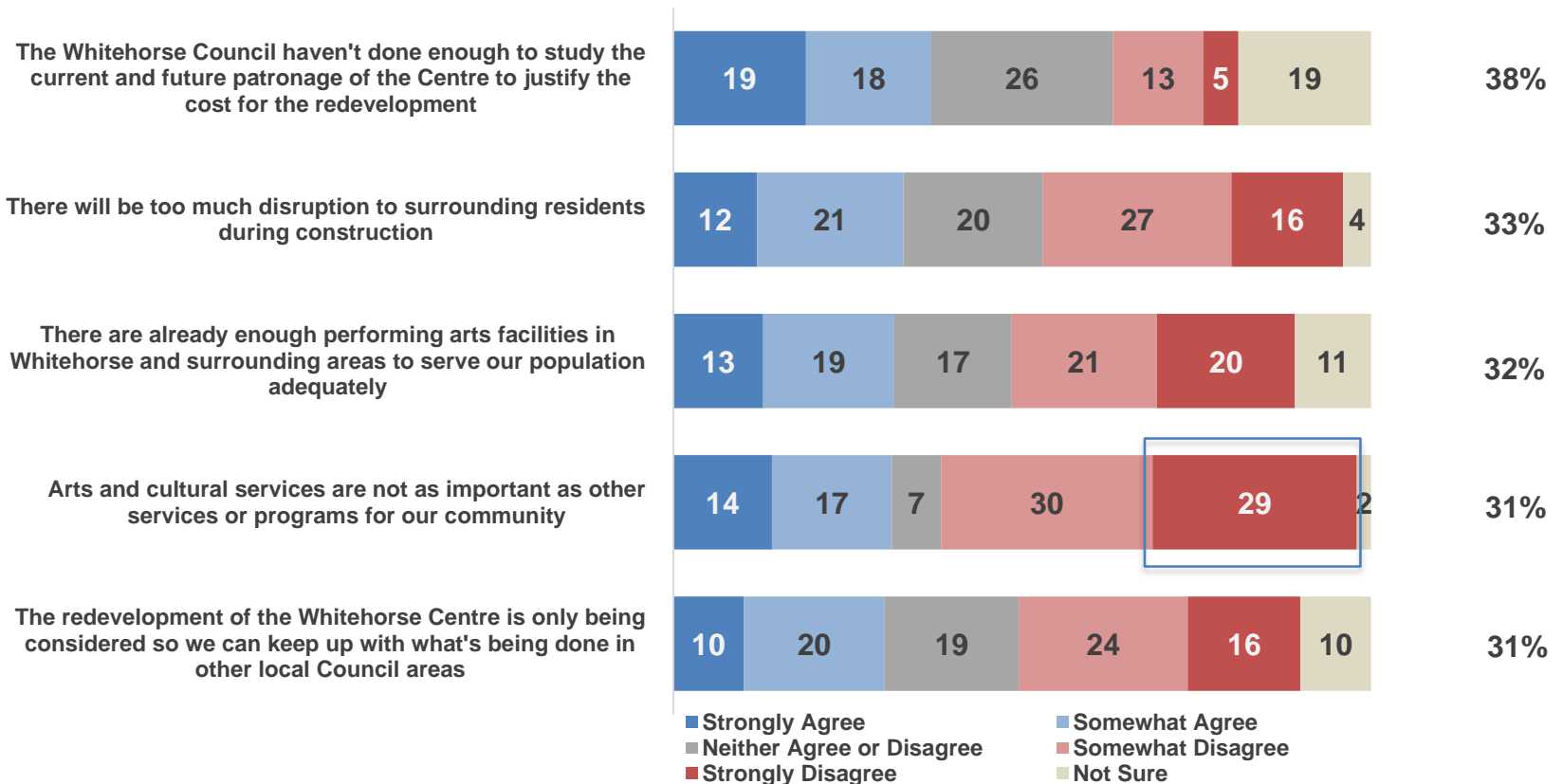
Q7. I am now going to read out a short list of statements that some people have said are reasons to oppose the complete redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.

Base= All respondents, n=600. Totals may vary due to rounding.

A FEW POTENTIAL CONCERNS FAILED TO GARNER AS MUCH SALIENCE

Other reasons to oppose complete redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre (%)

Total Agree =
Strongly Agree +
Somewhat Agree



Q7. I am now going to read out a short list of statements that some people have said are reasons to oppose the complete redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.

Base= All respondents, n=600. Totals may vary due to rounding.

THE VALUE PLACED ON DIFFERENT SERVICES IS A MAJOR FACTOR WHEN DECIDING WHICH OPTION TO SUPPORT

- Qualitatively, those opposed to redevelopment believe the money could be better spent in other areas.
- In line with the quantitative findings, these residents recognise that it is **important to spend some money on arts and cultural services**, however they believe that more people would benefit from the money being spent in other areas e.g. sporting club rooms.

"If Ringwood has got these facilities already then what's the point? The council has already shown that they can't afford to spend money on other facilities so why should they spend the money on this?."
(General community, Younger)

"I chose B mainly because I don't go to the Whitehorse centre... I'd rather see the money go towards another child care facility, I think more people would benefit from it as there is lots of young families in the areas."
(Local resident)

- Ultimately, it comes down to the value that people place on different service areas and it is clear that those who are more in favour of option B place a higher value on other services as they feel that they cater more to their individual needs as well as the wider population.

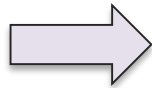
"To spend that much money, you don't know what things will be like. I'd like to see the money spent on other things. There's not much in the area for parks."
(Local resident)

"If I'm a selfish person I'd say there are other things to spend money on like the footy club, but 70 million seems like a lot of money."
(General Community , Younger)

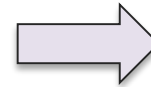
THOSE IN SUPPORT OF OPTION B BELIEVE THAT THE AMOUNT OF MONEY SPENT ON A SERVICE SHOULD REFLECT THE AMOUNT OF PEOPLE IT SERVES

Qualitatively, those who are in favour of option B...

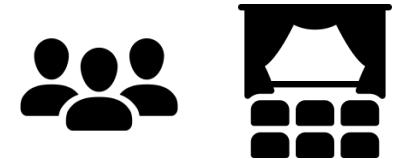
View things largely through an economic lens....



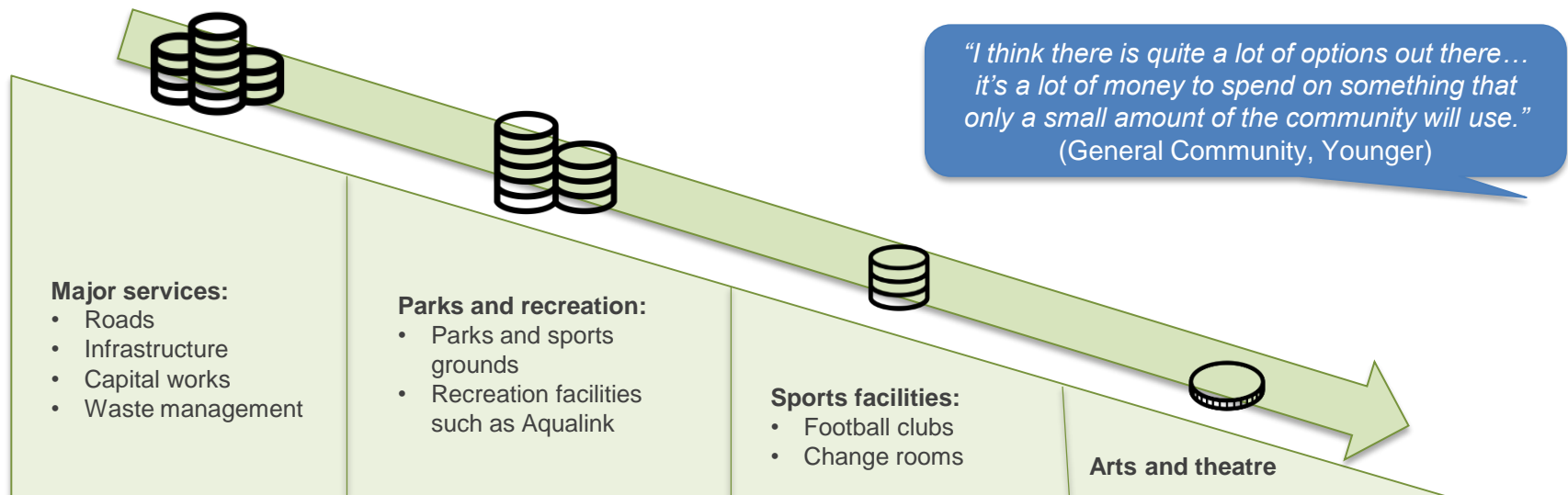
... making cost a **major** factor when considering their preferred option...



... leading to the view that the spend is too big for the number of future users (with future users viewed as the same as current rather than a broader group)



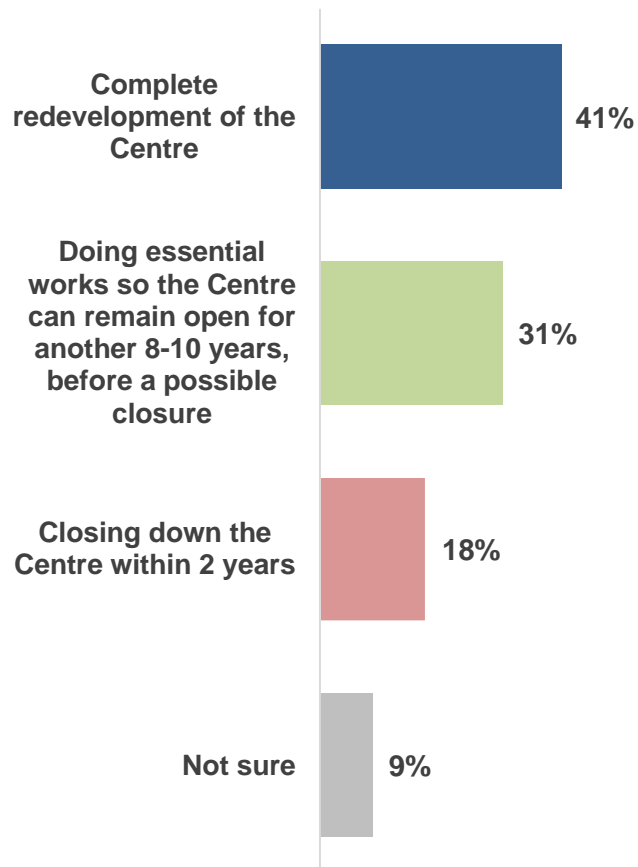
The proportion of population that utilises and benefits from particular services is perceived to be on a sliding scale and therefore the amount of money spent on each area should reflect the number of people it serves.



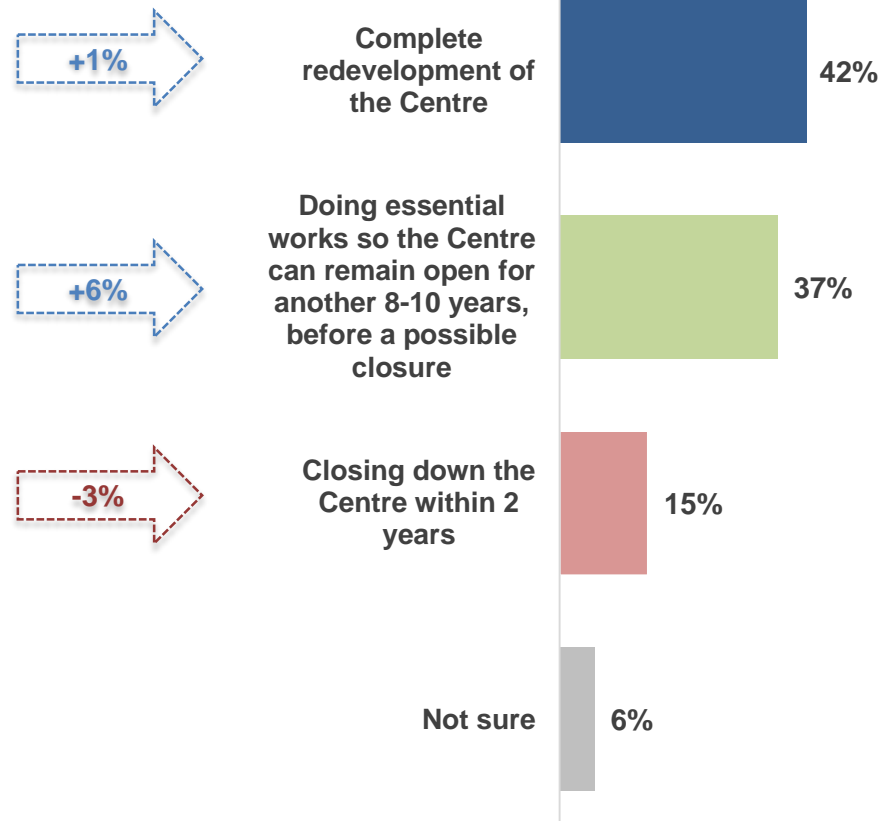
CONSIDERED PREFERENCE

UPON CONSIDERATION OF BALANCED MESSAGING, THERE IS SOME MOVEMENT, HOWEVER REDEVELOPMENT IS STILL MOST PREFERRED

Initial preference for the future of the Whitehorse Centre



Considered preference for future of the Whitehorse Centre (after consideration of arguments for/against redevelopment)

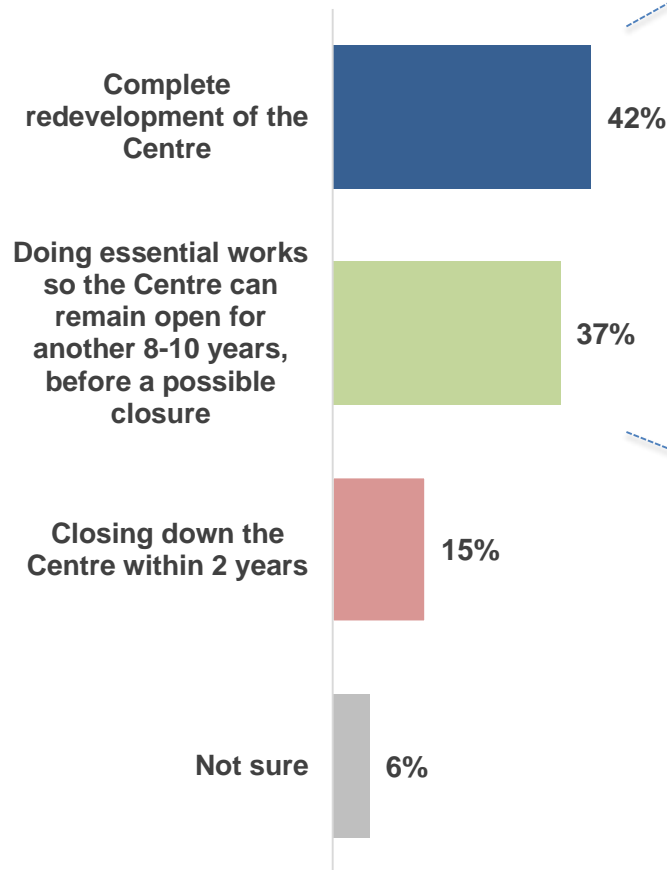


Q5. Based on this information, what is your preferred option regarding the future of the Whitehorse Centre? Is it...?/ Q8. Having now considered some of the reasons why people either support or oppose the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre, what is now your preferred option for the future of the Whitehorse Centre? Is it...?

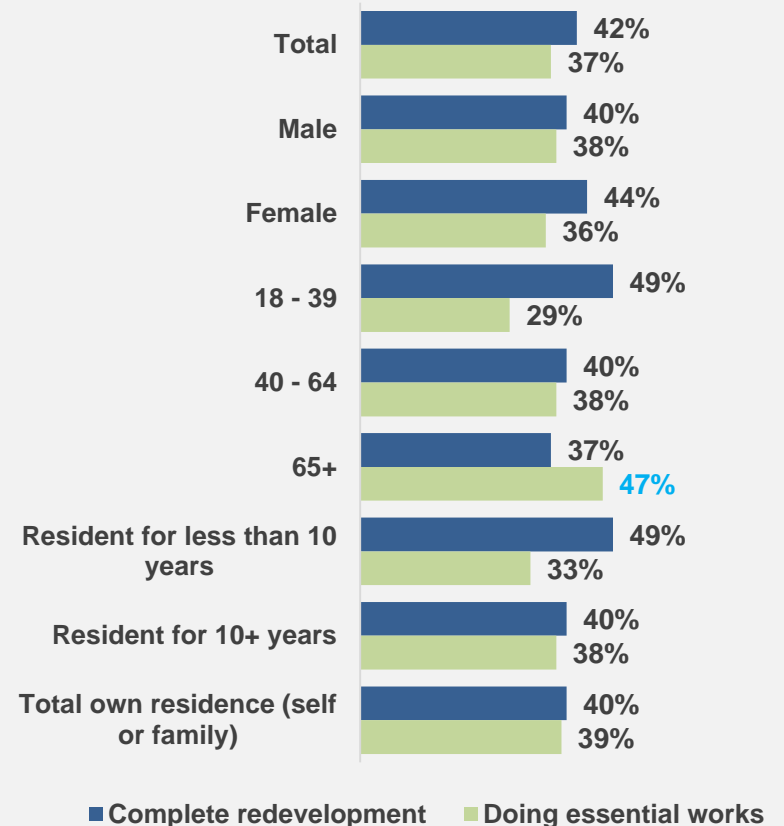
Base= All respondents, n=600. Totals may vary due to rounding.

THOSE 65 AND OLDER ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE IN FAVOUR OF OPTION B, WHILE SUPPORT FOR OPTION A IS HIGHER AMONGST YOUNGER RESIDENTS

Considered preference for future of the Whitehorse Centre (after consideration of arguments for/against redevelopment)



Considered preference for future of the Whitehorse Centre amongst demographics



Q8. Having now considered some of the reasons why people either support or oppose the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre, what is now your preferred option for the future of the Whitehorse Centre? Is it...?

Base= All respondents, n=600. Totals may vary due to rounding.

Significantly higher than total at 95% confidence interval

QUALITATIVELY, UPON PRESENTATION OF MORE DETAIL OF EACH OPTION, SUPPORT IS SPLIT BETWEEN OPTION A AND OPTION B

- Whilst originally more in favour of option B, upon presentation of more detail relevant to each option, those in our qualitative sample tended to shift their opinions to be equally in favour of **both** option A and option B.
- The information provided was sufficient in answering questions that participants had surrounding the various options as most from our sample were unclear on the details concerning the alternatives put forward by Council.
- Providing this detail allowed participants to make a more informed and objective decision. This level of information is imperative as opinions formed at a high-level centre around the cost associated with each option.
- Whilst opinions remained largely divided, those in support of option B are still seeking to be shown how the benefits of a redeveloped Centre will outweigh the costs. The qualitative research suggests that this group is open to notion of a complete redevelopment but need more convincing than those that have chosen option A.

"I stayed with B although A is looking very appealing. In my mind it is still too big, a big concern is will having something so big and flashy put the cost of going there up? I'm wondering how often you are going to fill 600 seat capacity."
(Regular user)

"The extra information made me more excited about it. The soundshell made me think of Sidney Myer Music Bowl it will make Box Hill an icon for festivals. If this is going to be a world class building is it going to be fully sustainable etc.?"
(General Community, Younger)

WHILST CONSIDERATION OF BALANCED MESSAGING AND OTHER STIMULUS SHIFTED SUPPORT MORE IN FAVOUR OF OPTION A

- Upon consideration of arguments for and against redevelopment and other stimulus relating to Council expenditure, breakdown of funding and the costs involved with performing arts centres, participants in our qualitative sample shifted slightly more in favour of option A.
- Much of the stimulus evoked discussions that would occur in normal community settings, allowing for rich and in-depth conversation to occur. The carpark is a point of concern for many with the cost perceived to be too high for what is gained.
- It is clear from the group discussions that the decision is polarising in the sense that those who are in favour of option B want to see the tangible benefits of a new Centre, whilst those in favour of option A have an understanding of the intangible benefits a new Centre could bring.
- Those in favour of option B are looking to be convinced but need more than just intangible benefits. Exposure to the business case could help in this instance as it perceived to contain a more concrete analysis.

"I'd use it more. My family would start to use it more, it's modern, state of the art technology. At the moment we would go into city because it has more modern feel. We'd walk here instead of driving into city."

(Local resident)

"The car park sounds expensive for what it is."
(General Community, Older)

"How many nights of the week is it going to be full to capacity? Possibly Fri and Sat. for the amount of money being put into it. To get a return... it's not going to be used mid week. These times it will be just sitting around. It's dead money."

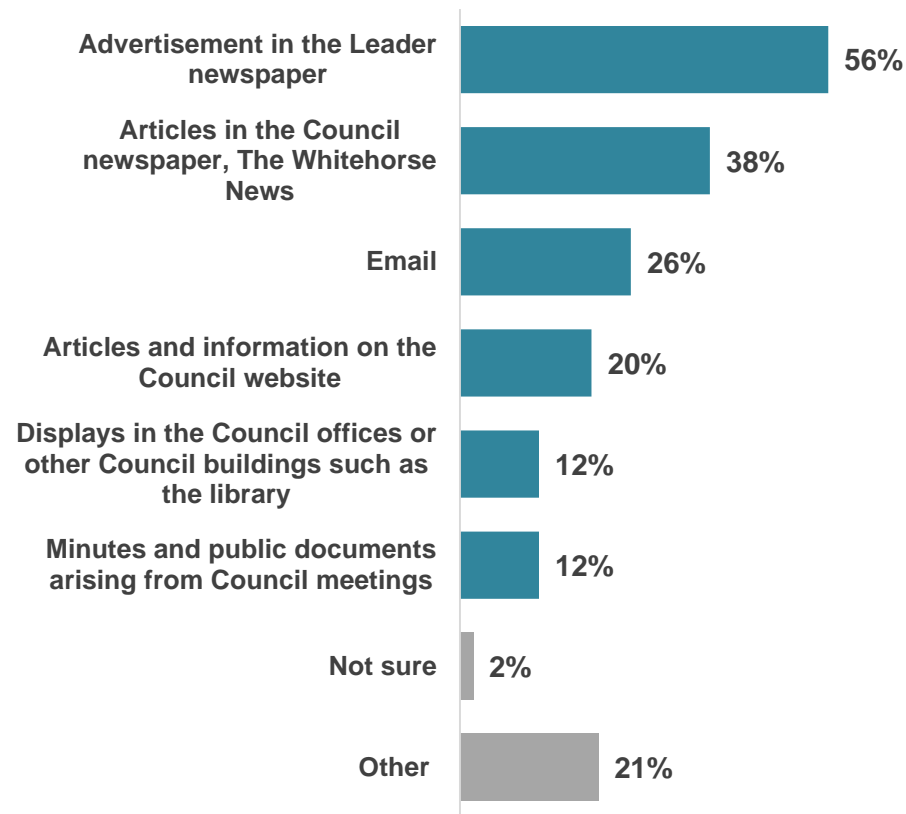
(General Community, Older)



FUTURE COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES

ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE LOCAL PAPER AND ARTICLES IN THE COUNCIL NEWSPAPER ARE THE PREFERRED COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Preferred Communication Channel – Regarding the future of the Whitehorse Centre



Q9. How would you prefer Council to communicate with you about the future of the Whitehorse Centre?

Base: All respondents, n=600

Note: Respondents have the choice of more than 1 option therefore results equal more than 100%

APPENDICES

INFORMATION PROVIDED TO FOCUS GROUPS AT A HIGH-LEVEL

Initial information provided to groups at a high-level

- **Option A:** Potential Redevelopment of the Centre. \$67 million for Whitehorse Centre, \$10.9 million for car park
- **Option B:** Approximately \$7 million for essential Works to existing Centre to remain open for 8-10 years before a potential closure
- **Option C:** Closure of the Whitehorse Centre within 2 years at a cost of approximately \$2 million.

DETAILED OUTLINE OF OPTIONS PROVIDED TO QUALITATIVE SAMPLE

Information provided to groups at a more detailed level

Option A: Potential Redevelopment of the Centre

- \$67 million for building of a brand new Whitehorse Centre
- \$10.9 million for the building of new car park facilities
- Redevelopment components include:
 - New Main Theatre with 580-600 seat capacity
 - New Studio Theatre with 200 seat capacity
 - New Function Room with capacity for 300 dinner style seating
 - Soundshell integrated into the centre enabling effective and efficient festival site
 - Bigger foyer space in line with size of the new venue
 - New and increased studio space
 - New car park that would service the Whitehorse Centre, library, Civic Centre and Walker Park

Option C: Closure of the Whitehorse Centre within 2 years

- Do nothing which would result in the closure of the Whitehorse Centre with the next 2 years.
- Existing centre would be demolished and returned to parkland at an estimated cost of \$2+ million.

Option B: Essential Works to existing Centre to remain open for 8-10 years before a potential closure

- \$7 million investment to keep existing facility functional for another 8-10 years before possible closure (e.g. roof replacement within 2 years; improvements to building fabric such as external cladding, roof sheets, gutters and downpipes; and technical upgrades)
- At that point (40 years old) the building may no longer effectively meet the needs of Centre users, provide appropriate working conditions or be competitive to other performing arts and function centres and Council would most likely need to consider the likely closure of the Centre, alter the services available and continue to increase the operating subsidy.
- Costs are based on like-for-like type replacement and does not include costs to modify building to comply with current Australian Building Code requirements. Eg: accessibility requirements. Essential works do not improve size or capacity of the Centre. Works to improve access would require major structural changes to the Centre and would likely require the entire Centre to compliant to current day Australian Standards
- The Whitehorse Centre Business Case states that if the essential works can only maintain the existing building without improvement there is a projected decline in usage over the next 8-10 years. It is forecast there would be an increasing cost to operate the Centre during this period.

ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST REDEVELOPMENT PROVIDED TO QUALITATIVE SAMPLE

It would be appreciated if you wait until the moderator asks before turning the page.

WHITEHORSE CENTRE – EXERCISE THREE: ARGUMENTS FOR REDEVELOPMENT

TICK THE TOP 3 ARGUMENTS THAT ARE THE MOST COMPELLING REASONS TO SUPPORT REDEVELOPMENT OF THE WHITEHORSE CENTRE. THEN, CIRCLE THE NUMBER 1 MOST COMPELLING REASON (OUT OF THE 3 CHOSEN).

		TOP 3 MOST COMPELLING
1.	Arts and Cultural services play an important part in supporting a healthy, vibrant, inclusive and diverse community.	
2.	The Whitehorse Centre is valued highly by the Whitehorse community.	
3.	Arts and culture is an integral part of what Whitehorse Council does because it represents the cultural identity of the City of Whitehorse.	
4.	The Whitehorse Centre contributes to the local economy through tourism, industry, employment and education.	
5.	A redevelopment of the centre will increase access and participation levels for the community	
6.	The redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre will ensure that future generations enjoy a good quality of life with a Centre that is safe and modern	
7.	Arts and cultural activity builds social cohesion and improves community health and wellbeing.	
8.	Festivals and events are the highest level of local resident participation and/or attendance within the City of Whitehorse and the Whitehorse Centre provides an important site for events to take place.	
9.	A new Whitehorse Centre will be more economically and environmentally sustainable.	
10.	The current Whitehorse Centre facilities are not adequate and the redevelopment will increase access and usage.	

It would be appreciated if you wait until the moderator asks before turning the page.

WHITEHORSE CENTRE – EXERCISE FOUR: ARGUMENTS AGAINST REDEVELOPMENT

TICK THE TOP 3 ARGUMENTS THAT ARE THE MOST COMPELLING REASONS TO OPPOSE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE WHITEHORSE CENTRE. THEN, CIRCLE THE NUMBER 1 MOST COMPELLING REASON (OUT OF THE 3 CHOSEN).

		TOP 3 MOST COMPELLING
1.	\$69 million for the Centre and \$10.9 million for the car park is too much money to spend on the redevelopment.	
2.	The money needed to redevelop the Whitehorse Centre could be better spent in other areas such as sport and recreation.	
3.	The amount of people that use the Whitehorse Centre does not justify a complete redevelopment.	
4.	Whitehorse City Council should focus on bettering the delivery of other services rather than redeveloping the Whitehorse Centre.	
5.	It is unfair to expect Whitehorse ratepayers to contribute to the cost of a new Centre when only a small amount of people use the Whitehorse Centre.	
6.	Arts and cultural services are not as important as other service areas.	
7.	There are enough arts and cultural facilities in Whitehorse so spending the money to redevelop the Centre is unjustified.	
8.	There will be too much disruption to surrounding residents during construction.	
9.	It is unclear what the benefits of the investment in redeveloping the Centre will be.	
10.	Arts and cultural services have little impact on the overall quality of life of the community.	

OTHER QUALITATIVE STIMULUS

WHITEHORSE CENTRE – HANDOUT ONE: ISSUES FACING THE EXISTING WHITEHORSE CENTRE

The existing Whitehorse Centre is facing a number of issues. These include:

- **Building standards and community expectations have changed:** Since it was built 30 years ago and many aspects of the facility would not comply if today's codes were applied. Council would not be able to get a permit for the current building if it were built today.
- **The centre lacks disability access in many places:** Including toilet facilities not complying, door circulation spaces, all backstage areas, orchestra pit, technical areas, and insufficient accessible seating positions and locations.
- **The foyer is crowded for events:** The theatre, functions and rehearsal rooms all open off the one small foyer and it is estimated to be 68 per cent smaller than desirable.
- **The function room has no windows and is in poor condition:** Its capacity is also relatively small when compared to other venues.

WHITEHORSE CENTRE – HANDOUT THREE: BREAK DOWN OF FUNDING

Approximately 77% of the combined funding for the project would be from non-rate sources. Preliminary long term financial modelling was undertaken during preparation of the 2015/16 Budget. This was based on a scenario of Council proceeding with both the Nunawading Community Hub project on the Former Nunawading Primary School site and the Whitehorse Centre project. The funding model of these two projects would approximately assume:

- 46% would be drawn from existing reserves and realise fund from asset sales
- 31% from long term loans
- 21% over a five year period from rates surplus
- 2% would be sought through as yet unidentified grants or other income sources

CITY OF WHITEHORSE – COUNCIL EXPENDITURE

Whitehorse Sports Facilities

- Over the past 10 years, Whitehorse City Council has spent over \$50 million on maintaining and upgrading 33 sports pavilions and 52 sports fields. This is an average of just over \$5 million a year.
- In addition to this, Aqualink Box Hill was redeveloped at a cost of \$42 million.

Whitehorse Centre

- The current cost of operating and maintaining the Whitehorse Centre is \$0.98 million a year. If essential works are completed, this is expected to increase to \$2 million by the year 2024.
- As the new centre establishes itself, a redevelopment would see an initial increase in operation and maintenance costs which would peak at approximately \$1.75 million in 2019. Operating costs would then decrease to normal levels of \$0.98 million by the year 2024.

OTHER QUALITATIVE STIMULUS

Why are performing arts centres so expensive?

Theatres are (surprisingly) expensive because:

- Complex, large-span volumes & voids with extensive structure and dynamic live loads in the stagehouse
- Lack of repetition, increased construction difficulty and risk for the contractor, attracting a cost premium.
- Acoustic treatment almost everywhere – walls, ceilings, roofs, plumbing, ductwork, equipment, etc
- Intensive building services: substantially larger volume, low speed systems, intensively equipped.
- Intensive plumbing which cannot be efficiently stacked like an office building
- Specialist services: technical systems, fire protection, evacuation, stage communications, foyer paging, etc
- Theatrical equipment: an appropriate benchmark is 15 – 20% of construction cost (ie +\$8–\$10m)
- Fully fitted, fully functioning, high standard of finishes, with extensive furniture and equipment complements
- Complexity leads to higher design fees (many specialists), intensive construction labour / management
- 'Inflation costs on a long-lived project



QUANTITATIVE KEY FINDINGS

**1292 COMPLETED SUBMISSIONS FROM THE ONLINE AND
HARDCOPY SELF-SELECT SURVEYS**

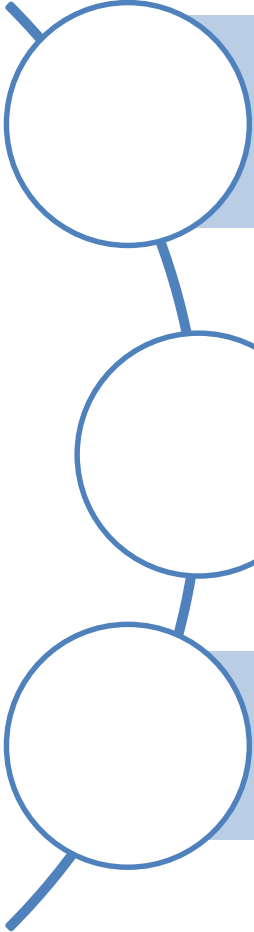
DETAILED RESEARCH FINDINGS



JWS RESEARCH

SELF-SELECT ONLINE/HARDCOPY QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

METHODOLOGY



12 minute self-select online and hard-copy survey, of n=1292 residents, predominately from the Whitehorse Council area, aged 18+ years. Detailed sample breakdown outlined on following page.

Results from self-select surveys are indicative only as sample is not random and therefore is not representative of the wider population, **differences of +/-1% for net scores are due to rounding.**

Due to nature of self-select survey, base sizes for questions may differ as not all questions were completed by all participants

SELF-SELECT ONLINE AND HARDCOPY SURVEY STRUCTURE

Survey structure

Screening questions (incl. gender, age, suburb and postcode)

Q1. Awareness of Whitehorse Centre

Q2. Awareness of what Council is considering for the future of the Whitehorse Centre

Q3. Source of information about options

Q4. Personal and family attendance of festivals at Whitehorse Centre

Q5. Initial preferred option for future of the Whitehorse Centre

Qs6 & 7. Statements for and against a complete redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre

Q8. Considered preferred option for the future of the Whitehorse Centre

Q9. Communication preference for information regarding the future of the Whitehorse Centre

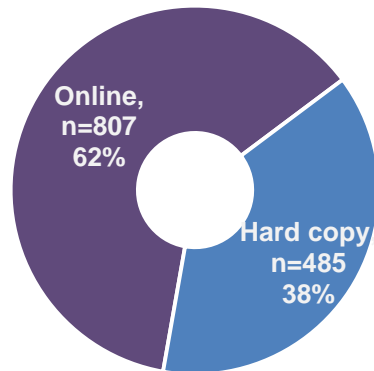
NOTE TO READER: Throughout the report, where there are significant differences between subsamples when compared to the total (at the 95% confidence level) these have been highlighted as follows:

Figures that are significantly higher than total at 95% confidence interval

Figures that are significantly lower than total at 95% confidence interval

SELF-SELECT QUANTITATIVE SAMPLE BREAKDOWN

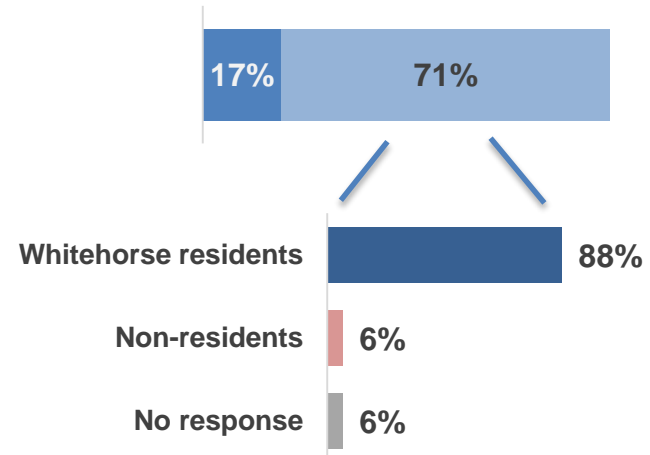
Survey type



Whitehorse Centre/ Festival attendance	
Attended the Whitehorse Centre/ Festival (or member of household)	88%

Housing situation	Total sample	Whitehorse residents
Own (Self or family)	92%	93%
Rent	4%	4%
Prefer not to say	4%	4%

■ Resident for less than 10 years ■ Resident for 10+ years



Gender	
Male	39%
Female	61%
Age	
18-39 years old	12%
40-64 years old	42%
65+ years old	43%
No response	3%

KEY FINDINGS



Matching the rest of the research program, the self-select results indicate that option C: Do nothing and close the Whitehorse Centre within 2 years, is generally not supported by the community. The Centre is valued by most and only a few residents would be happy with this solution.



This effectively makes it a decision between option A: Complete redevelopment; and option B: Essential works. In the self-select results **community opinions are more in favour of option A: Complete redevelopment** with the majority of respondents in favour of this option.



Highest rated reasons to support redevelopment:

- 'It's important to have a venue in Whitehorse that can be used by many people, groups and organisations from our local community'
- 'Although I may not use the Whitehorse Centre myself, Council should provide the community with a performing arts centre, like it provides other services such as sports and recreation facilities, aged care services, child and family support and disability support'

Highest rated reasons to oppose redevelopment:

- 'The \$10.9 million cost of the proposed 3-level car park is too expensive for 211 car spaces'
- '\$67 million for the Centre and \$10.9 million for the car park is too much money to spend on the redevelopment'



Ultimately, the findings of this aspect of the research program suggest that there are solid grounds to pursue option A. Nonetheless, given that there is still some support for option B, there is potential for a community backlash regardless of which option is chosen.

AWARENESS OF THE WHITEHORSE CENTRE AND OPTIONS BEING CONSIDERED BY COUNCIL IS SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER IN THE SELF-SELECT RESULTS

- Unsurprisingly, awareness of the Whitehorse Centre is considerably higher among the self-select results. 96% of people in the self-select survey are aware of the Whitehorse Centre compared to 75% in the telephone survey.
- Mirroring the telephone findings, awareness is significantly lower amongst those who have lived in the Whitehorse area for less than 10 years although this figure still differs substantially between the two surveys (92% aware in self-select compared to 58% in telephone).
- Additionally, Whitehorse Centre attendance is considerably higher among those who completed the self select survey, with 88% of respondents having visited the Whitehorse Centre personally or have someone in their household who has visited the Centre. This number is significantly higher than the telephone result of 68%.
- Awareness of what Council is considering for the future is also considerably higher for the self-select survey. This is to be expected as those completing the self-select surveys are opting to do so, therefore their awareness is much higher. A quarter of respondents (26%) in the telephone survey are unaware that Council is considering the future of the Whitehorse Centre, compared to 2% in the self-select. Awareness of all three options is also considerably higher in the self-select survey.

THE MAJORITY OF SELF-SELECT RESPONDENTS ARE IN FAVOUR OF REDEVELOPMENT

- The most common source of information regarding the proposed redevelopment is a Council advertisement in the Leader paper (56%) and is consistent with the telephone results. However, more people in the self-select survey indicated that they had heard about the proposal in Council's monthly newspaper – The Whitehorse News, compared to those in the telephone survey (46% and 21% respectively).
- On a prompted basis, more than half (55%) of self-select survey respondents indicated that option A is their preferred option, whilst 29% chose option B, 13% are in favour of option C and 3% not sure. In the self-select results, preferences for option A are higher compared to the telephone in which 41% indicated option A was their most favoured option and a further 31% indicating option B was their most favoured.
- Results vary between online and hardcopy submissions as follows:

	Online	Hardcopy
Option A: Complete redevelopment	52%	60%
Option B: Essential works	28%	32%
Option C: Closure	17%	5%
Not sure	3%	3%

REASONS TO SUPPORT OR OPPOSE REDEVELOPMENT MIRROR THE TELEPHONE FINDINGS

- The most favoured reasons to **support redevelopment** are generally consistent with the telephone results. The highest rating arguments are:
 - ‘It’s important to have a venue in Whitehorse that can be used by many people, groups and organisations from our local community’ (77% total agree)
 - ‘Although I may not use the Whitehorse Centre myself, Council should provide the community with a performing arts centre, like it provides other services such as sports and recreation facilities, aged care services, child and family support and disability support’ (70% total agree)
- Main reasons to **oppose redevelopment** are also consistent with telephone results. The highest rated arguments are:
 - ‘The \$10.9 million cost of the proposed 3-level car park is too expensive for 211 car spaces’ (52% total agree)
 - ‘\$67 million for the Centre and \$10.9 million for the car park is too much money to spend on the redevelopment’ (48% total agree)
 - ‘The money needed to redevelop the Centre could be better spent in other areas’ (39% total agree)

CONSIDERED SUPPORT SHOWS NO SHIFT IN PREFERENCES FOR ANY OF THE OPTIONS WITH OPTION A STILL THE MOST FAVOURED

- Also mirroring the telephone results are the relatively high 'strongly disagree' ratings for the argument 'Arts and cultural services are not as important as other services or programs for our community'. Half of respondents (50%) said they 'strongly disagree' with this statement in the self-select survey. This indicates that there is value placed on these types of services amongst the community.
- After consideration of balanced messaging, levels of support do not shift significantly for either option. Only support for option A improved, up 1% to 56% of respondents.
- Matching results in the telephone survey, respondents' preferred future communication channel is an advertisement in the Leader newspaper (61%) and articles in the Council newspaper (55%).

SUMMARY OF RESULTS: SELF-SELECT VS TELEPHONE

Summary of results: Self-select vs telephone

Q1. Awareness of Whitehorse Centre

	Self-select	Telephone
Total aware	96%	75%

Q2. Awareness of what Council is considering for the future of the Whitehorse Centre (multiple responses allowed)

	Self-select	Telephone
Complete redevelopment	78%	24%
Essential works	67%	11%
Closing down the Centre within 2 years	61%	9%
The cost of the proposed redevelopment	60%	13%
Aware Council is considering the future of the Whitehorse Centre but no details	5%	16%
Unaware the Council is considering the future of the Whitehorse Centre	2%	26%
Have not heard of the Whitehorse Centre before	1%	23%

SUMMARY OF RESULTS: SELF-SELECT VS TELEPHONE

Q3. Source of information about options (multiple responses allowed) – *Top 3 sources*

	Self-select	Telephone
Council advertisement in the Leader Newspaper	56%	65%
Council's monthly newspaper – The Whitehorse News	46%	21%
Letters to the editor in the Leader Newspaper	44%	32%

Q5. Initial preferred option for future of the Whitehorse Centre

	Self-select	Telephone
Complete redevelopment of the Centre	55%	41%
Doing essential works so the Centre can remain open for another 8-10 years, before a possible closure	29%	31%
Closing down the Centre within 2 years	13%	18%
Not sure	3%	9%

Q4. Personal and family attendance

	Self-select	Telephone
Yes – Personally	40%	23%
Yes – Another household member	3%	3%
Yes - Both personally and another household member	45%	42%
TOTAL YES	88%	68%

SUMMARY OF RESULTS: SELF-SELECT VS TELEPHONE

Q6. Statements for a complete redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre – *Total agree*

	Self-select	Telephone
It's important to have a venue in Whitehorse that can be used by many people, groups and organisations from our local community	77%	86%
Although I may not use the Whitehorse Centre myself, Council should provide the community with a performing arts centre, like it provides other services such as sports and recreation facilities, aged care services, child and family support and disability support	70%	79%
Festivals and events are the highest level of local resident participation and/or attendance within the City of Whitehorse. The Whitehorse Centre provides an important site for events to take place	68%	71%

Q7. Statements against a complete redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre – *Total agree*

	Self-select	Telephone
The \$10.9 million cost of the proposed 3-level car park is too expensive for 211 car spaces	52%	69%
\$67 million for the Centre and \$10.9 million for the car park is too much money to spend on the redevelopment	48%	68%
The money needed to redevelop the Whitehorse Centre could be better spent in other areas	39%	59%

SUMMARY OF RESULTS: SELF-SELECT VS TELEPHONE

Q8. Considered preferred option for the future of the Whitehorse Centre

	Self-select	Telephone
Complete redevelopment of the Centre	56%	42%
Doing essential works so the Centre can remain open for another 8-10 years, before a possible closure	29%	37%
Closing down the Centre within 2 years	13%	15%
Not sure	2%	6%

Q9. Communication preference for information regarding the future of the Whitehorse Centre (multiple responses allowed)

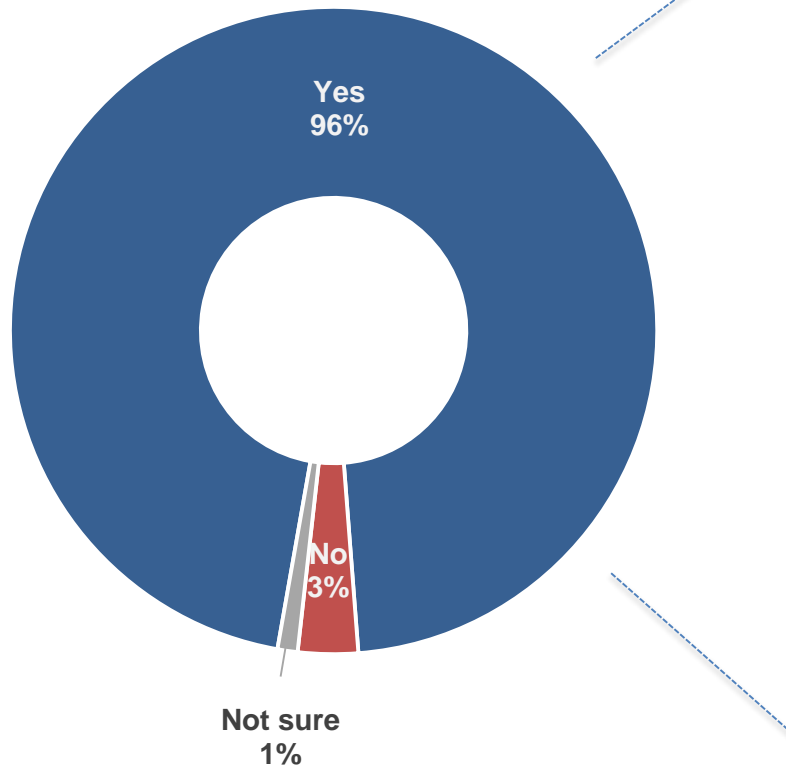
	Self-select	Telephone
Advertisement in the Leader newspaper	61%	56%
Articles in the Council newspaper, The Whitehorse News	55%	38%
Email	33%	26%
Articles and information on the Council website	32%	20%
Displays in the Council offices or other Council buildings such as the library	28%	12%
Minutes and public documents arising from Council meetings	16%	12%



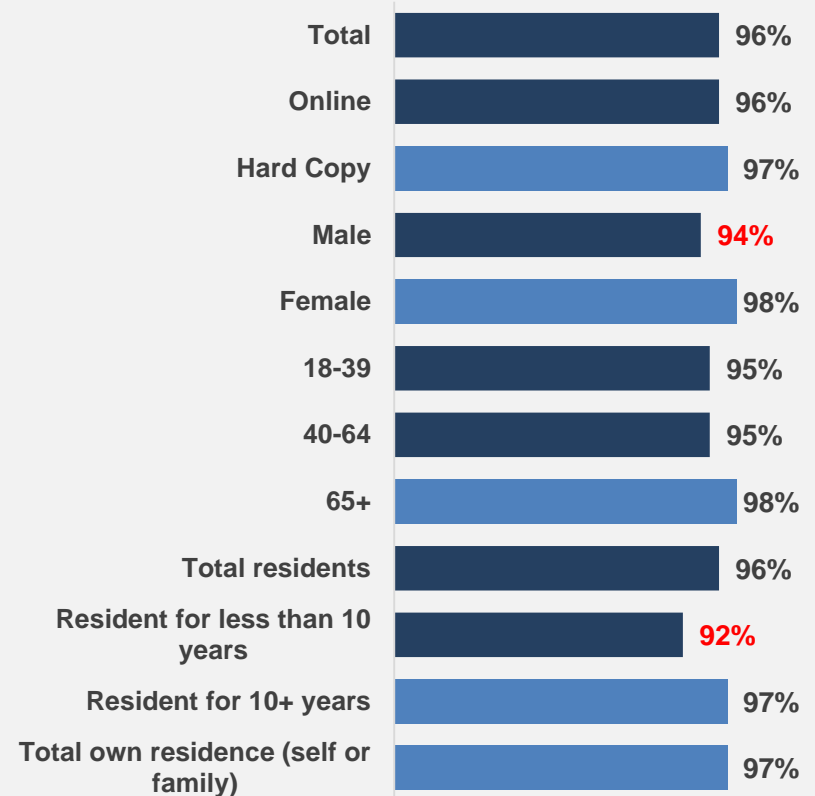
COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND ATTENDANCE AT THE WHITEHORSE CENTRE

UNSURPRISINGLY, THERE IS RELATIVELY HIGH AWARENESS OF THE WHITEHORSE CENTRE

Awareness of the Whitehorse Centre



Awareness of the Whitehorse Centre
Total aware



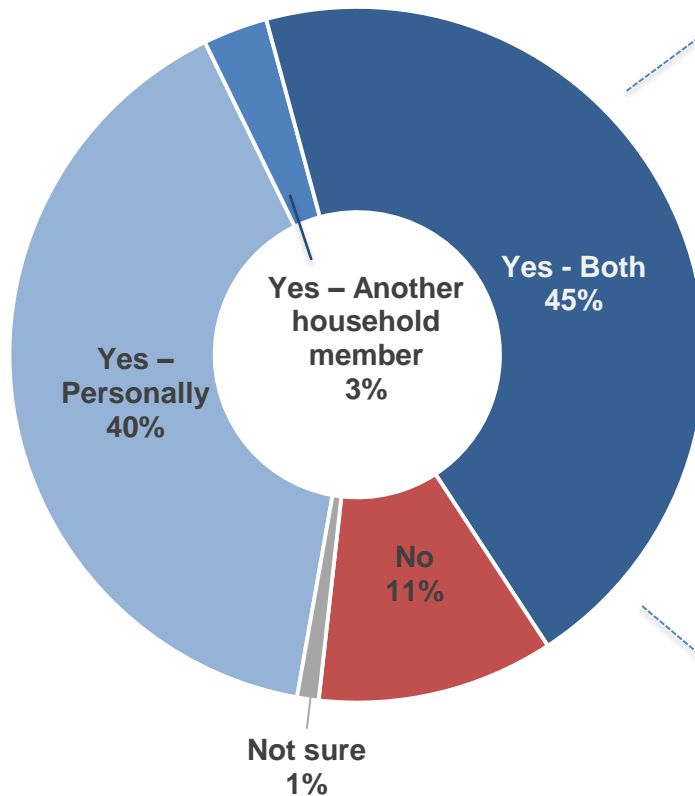
Significantly lower than total at 95% confidence interval

Q1. First of all, have you ever heard of the Whitehorse Centre before?
Base: All respondents, n=1240. Totals may vary due to rounding.

ALMOST 9-IN-10 PEOPLE WHO COMPLETED THE SURVEY HAVE EITHER BEEN TO THE WHITEHORSE CENTRE THEMSELVES OR HAVE A MEMBER OF THEIR HOUSEHOLD WHO HAS ATTENDED

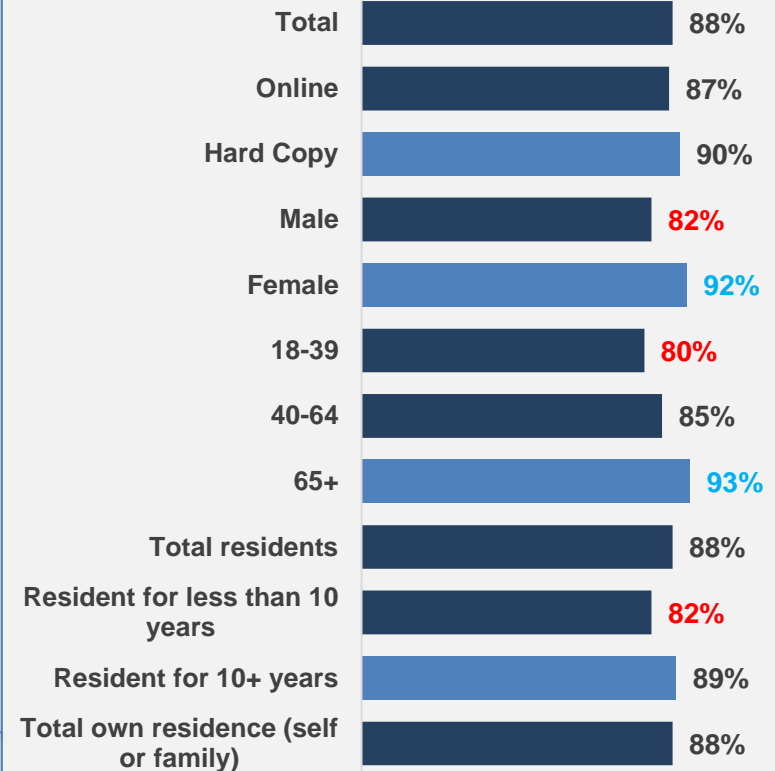
Whitehorse Centre attendance

Total Yes = 88%



Whitehorse Centre attendance amongst demographics

Total Yes



Significantly higher than total at 95% confidence interval
Significantly lower than total at 95% confidence interval

Q4. Have you or a member of your household ever been to the Whitehorse Centre, or attended a festival on the Whitehorse Centre site such as the Spring Festival, Whitehorse Carols or the Australia Day Concert and Fireworks?

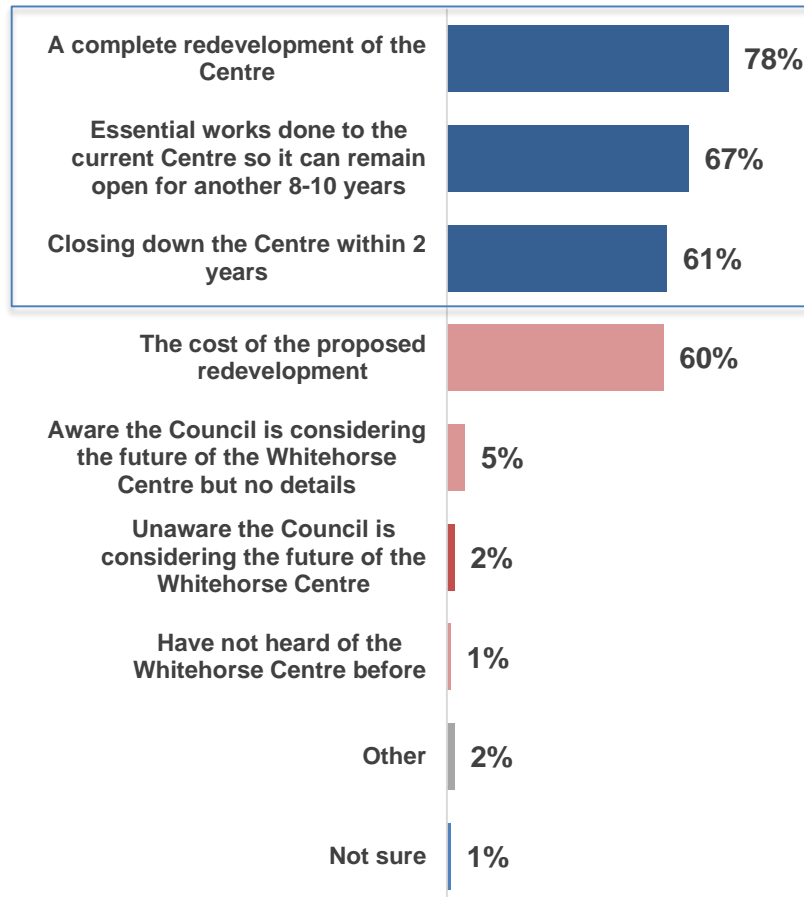
Base= All respondents, n=1226. Totals may vary due to rounding.



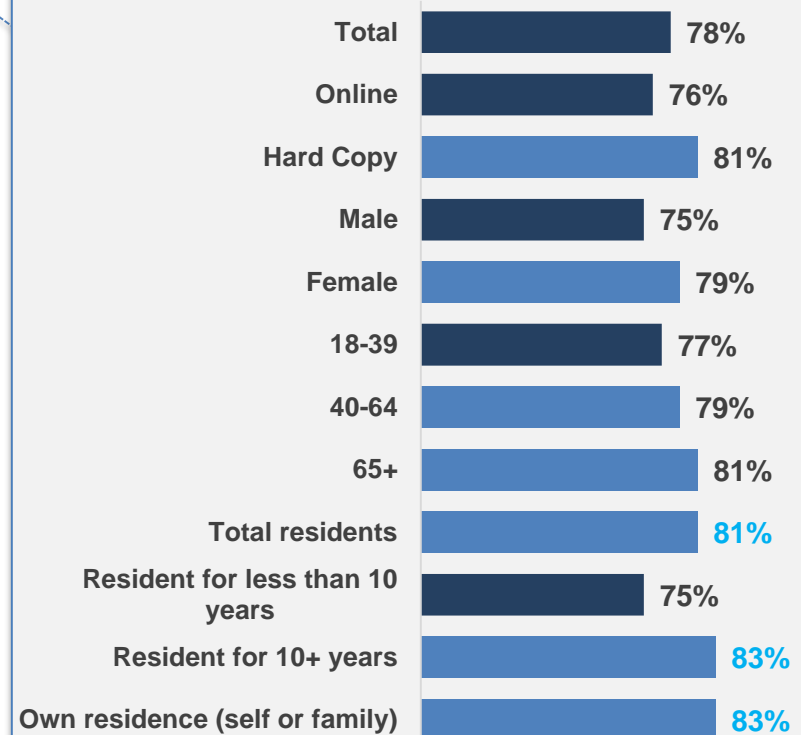
AWARENESS OF OPTIONS BEING CONSIDERED BY COUNCIL

THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS ARE AWARE OF ALL THE OPTIONS THAT COUNCIL IS CONSIDERING

Awareness of future of Whitehorse Centre



Aware that Council is considering a complete redevelopment of the Centre



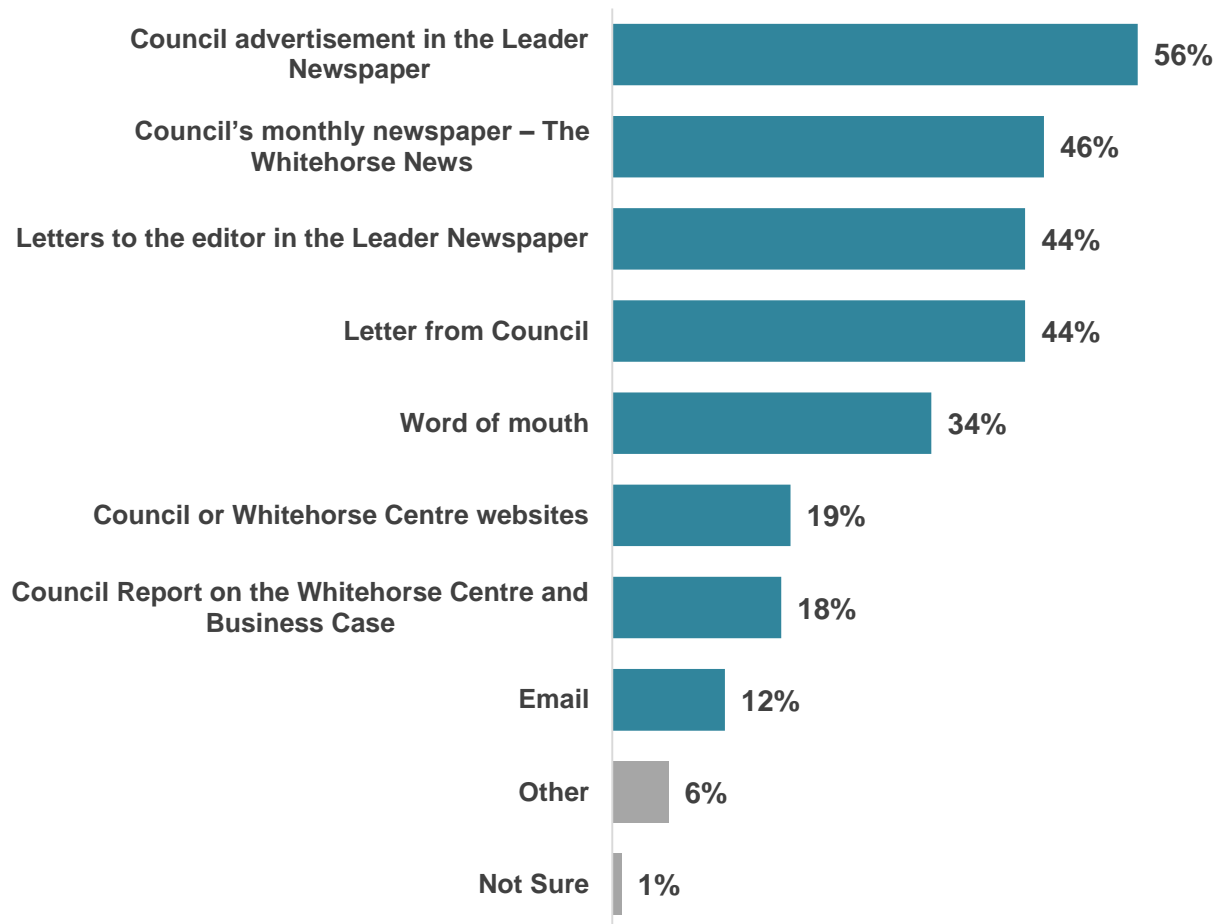
Significantly higher than total at 95% confidence interval

Q2. Have you heard that Council is considering the future of the Whitehorse Centre but don't know any details, or have you not heard of the Whitehorse Centre before now?

Base: All respondents, n=1292. Totals may vary due to rounding.

MOST ARE AWARE OF PROPOSALS THROUGH ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE LEADER NEWSPAPER

Medium in which proposal was heard



Q3. And where did you hear about these options/this option? MULTIPLE RESPONSES ALLOWED

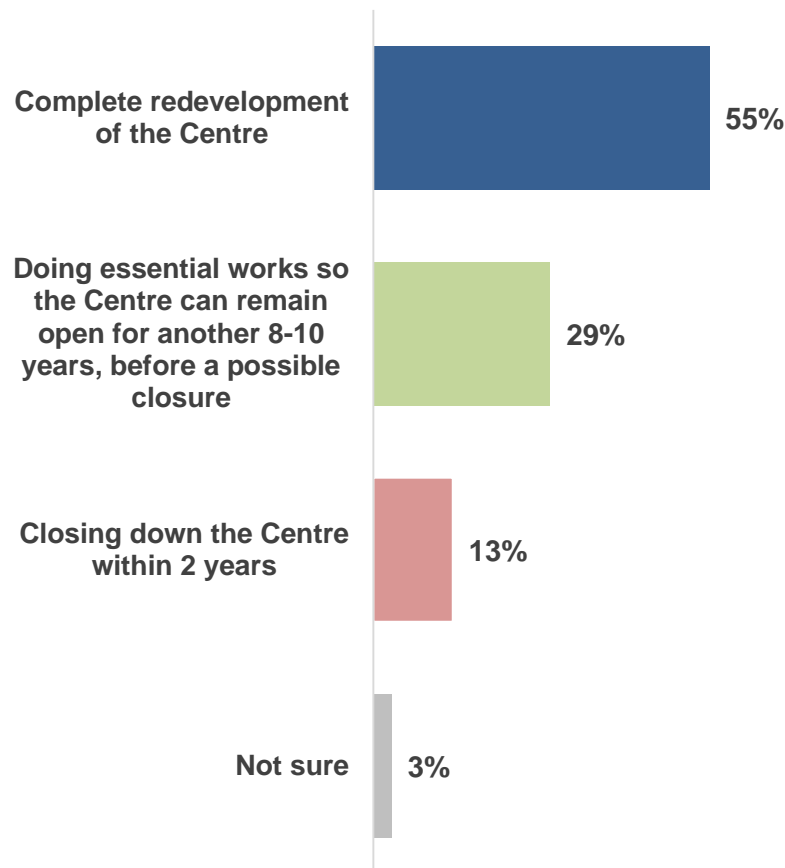
Base: Respondents that are aware of options in Q2, n=1109



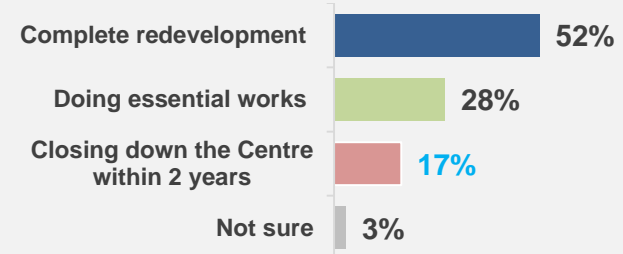
INITIAL PREFERENCE

THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS ARE IN FAVOUR OF OPTION A

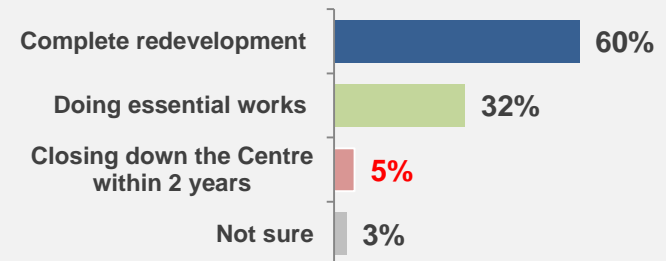
Initial preferred option regarding the future of the Whitehorse Centre



Initial preferred option – Online respondents



Initial preferred option – Hard copy respondents



Significantly higher than total at 95% confidence interval

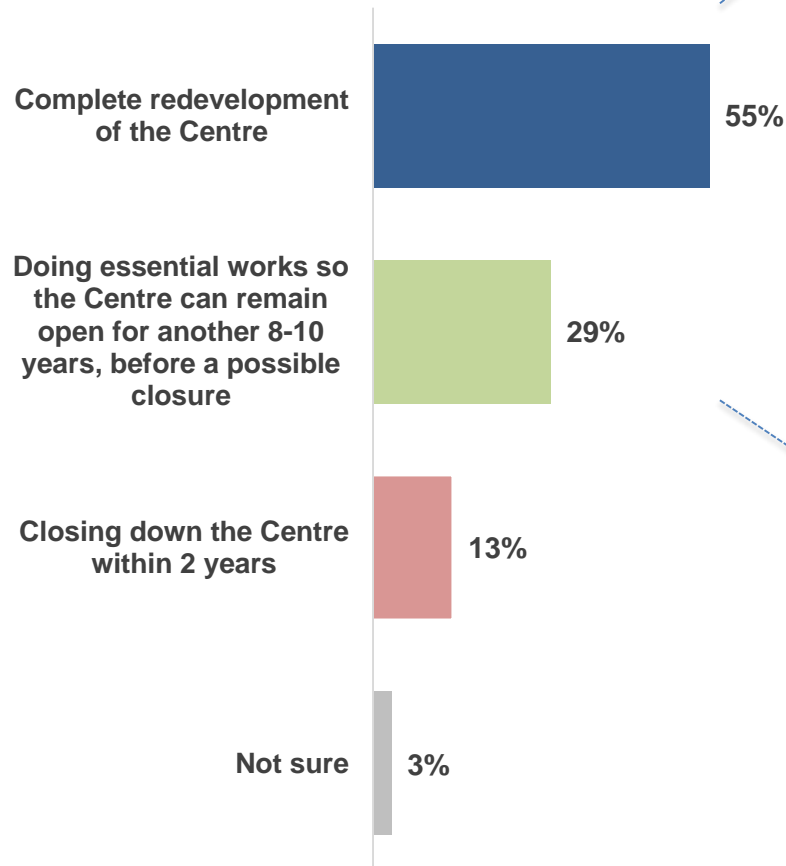
Significantly lower than total at 95% confidence interval

Q5. Based on this information, what is your preferred option regarding the future of the Whitehorse Centre? Is it...?

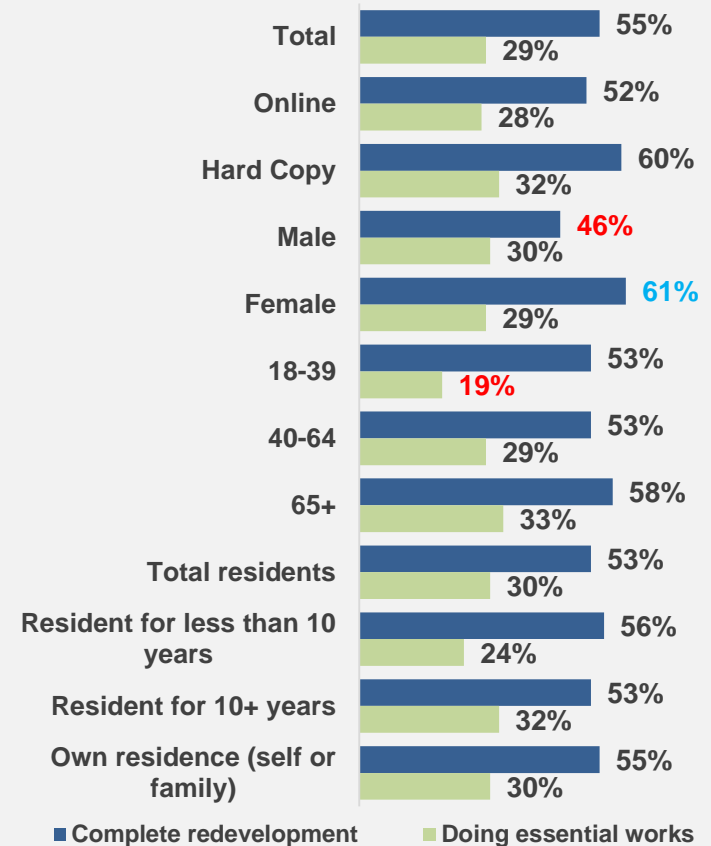
Base: All respondents, n=1218. Totals may vary due to rounding.

WOMEN ARE SIGNIFICANTLY LIKELY TO BE MORE IN FAVOUR OF OPTION A, WHILE YOUNGER RESIDENTS ARE LESS IN FAVOUR OF OPTION B

Initial preferred option regarding the future of the Whitehorse Centre



Initial preferred option regarding the future of the Whitehorse Centre amongst demographics

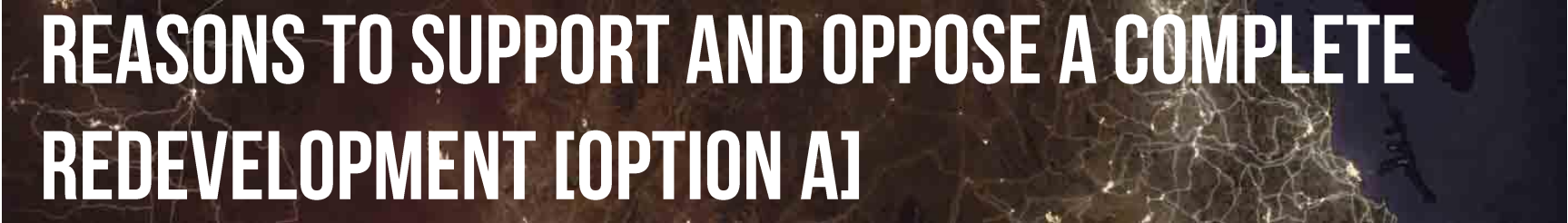


Q5. Based on this information, what is your preferred option regarding the future of the Whitehorse Centre? Is it...?

Base: All respondents, n=1218. Totals may vary due to rounding.

Significantly higher than total at 95% confidence interval

Significantly lower than total at 95% confidence interval



REASONS TO SUPPORT AND OPPOSE A COMPLETE REDEVELOPMENT [OPTION A]

HAVING A VENUE THAT CAN BE UTILISED BY MANY IN THE COMMUNITY IS THE MOST FAVOURED REASON TO SUPPORT REDEVELOPMENT

Main reasons to support complete redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre (%)

Total Agree =
Strongly Agree +
Somewhat Agree

It's important to have a venue in Whitehorse that can be used by many people, groups and organisations from our local community



77%

Although I may not use the Whitehorse Centre myself, Council should provide the community with a performing arts centre, like it provides other services such as sports and recreation facilities, aged care services, child and family support and disability



70%

Festivals and events are the highest level of local resident participation and/or attendance within the City of Whitehorse. The Whitehorse Centre provides an important site for events to take place



68%

The Whitehorse Centre is highly valued by the local community



68%

The redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre will ensure that future generations enjoy quality of life with a Centre that is safe and meets operating standards



65%

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree ■ Somewhat Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Not sure

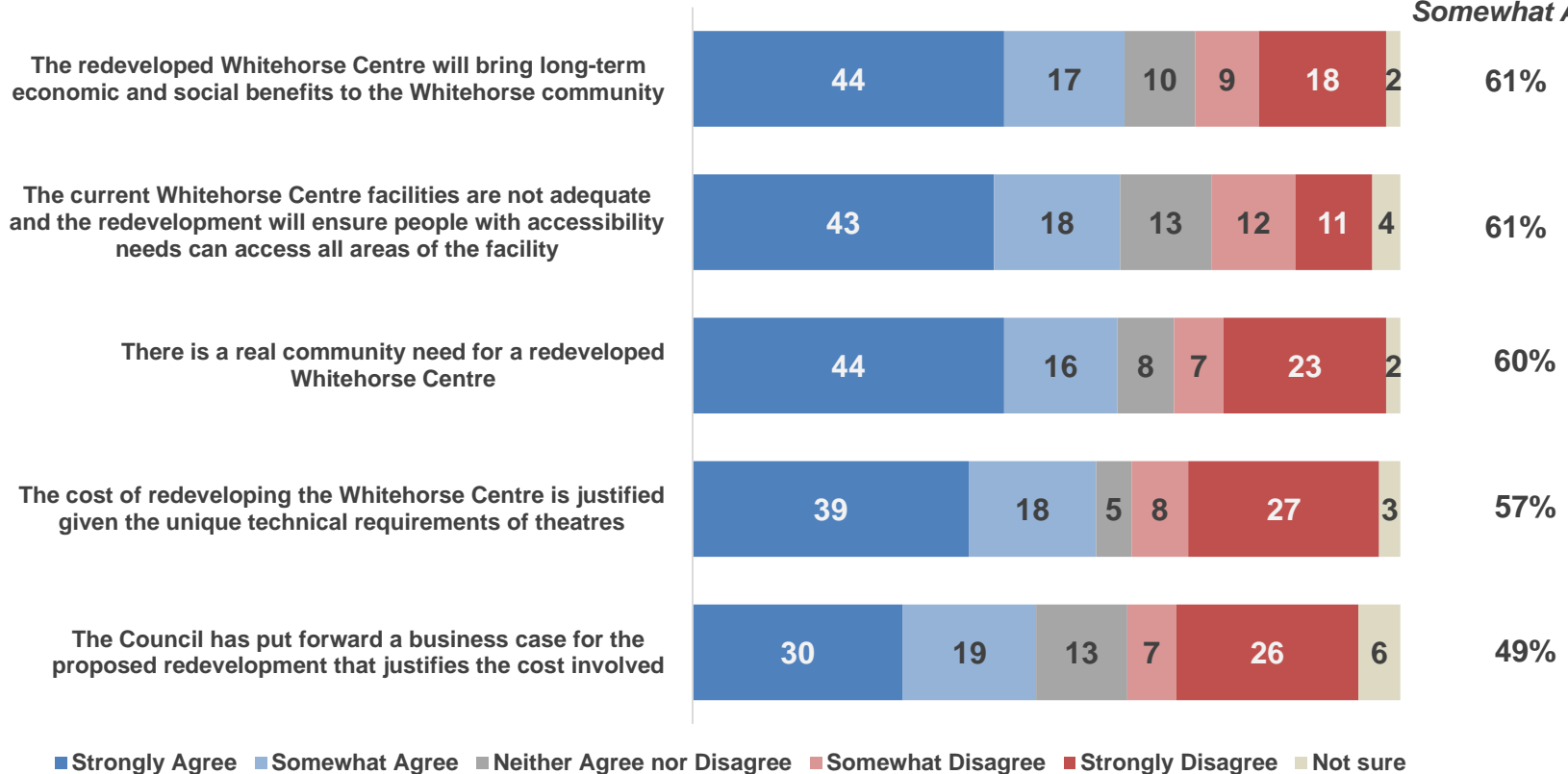
Q6. I am now going to read out a short list of statements that some people have said are reasons to support the complete redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.

Base: All respondents, n= 1187. Totals may vary due to rounding.

THE BUSINESS CASE PUT FORTH BY COUNCIL IS NOT REASON IN ITSELF TO SUPPORT THE REDEVELOPMENT

Other reasons to support complete redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre (%)

Total Agree =
Strongly Agree +
Somewhat Agree



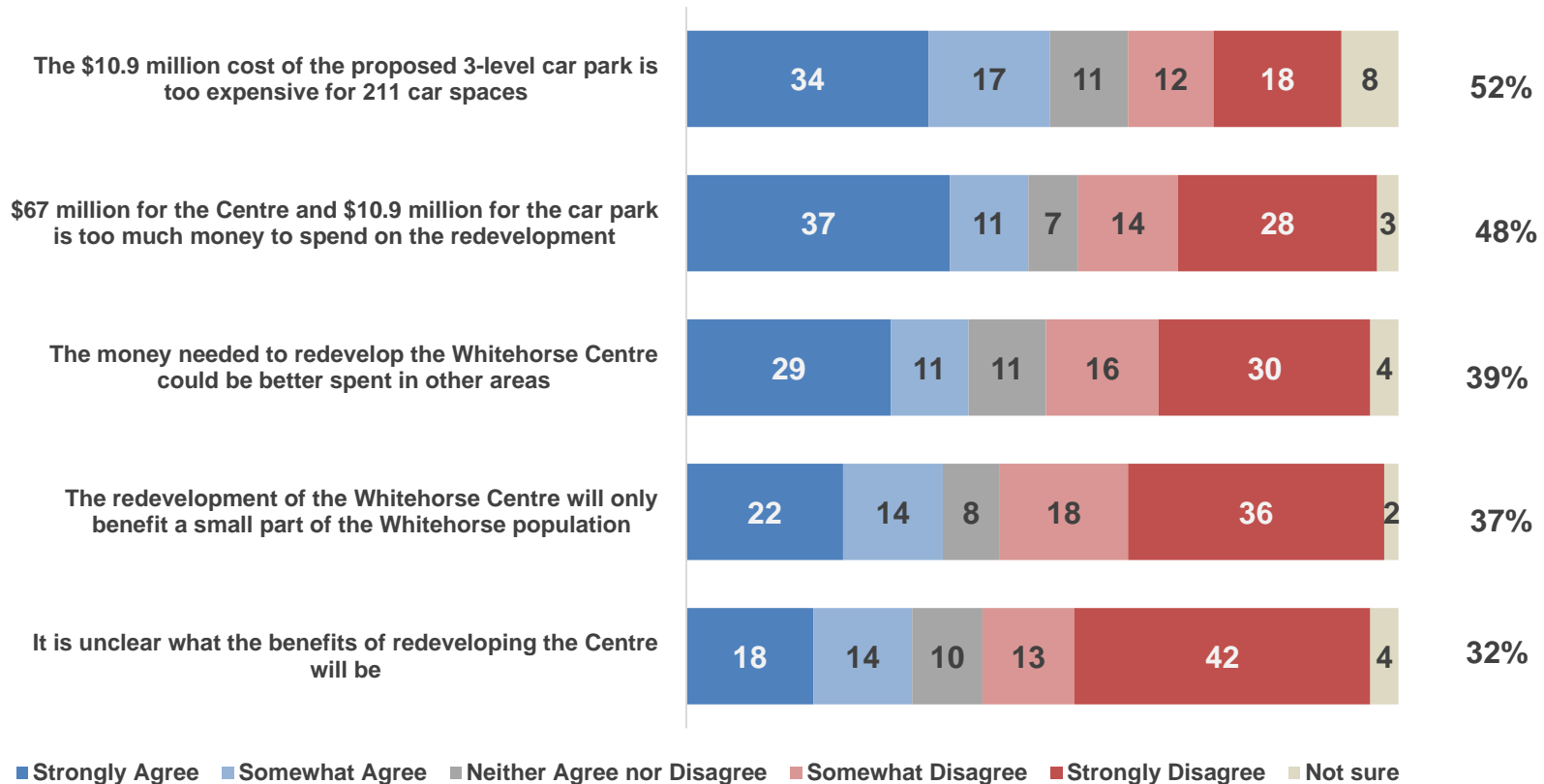
Q6. I am now going to read out a short list of statements that some people have said are reasons to support the complete redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.

Base: All respondents, n=1187. Totals may vary due to rounding.

THE COST OF THE CENTRE AND MOST PARTICULARLY THE CARPARK ARE THE STRONGEST REASONS TO OPPOSE REDEVELOPMENT

Main reasons to oppose complete redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre (%)

Total Agree =
Strongly Agree +
Somewhat Agree



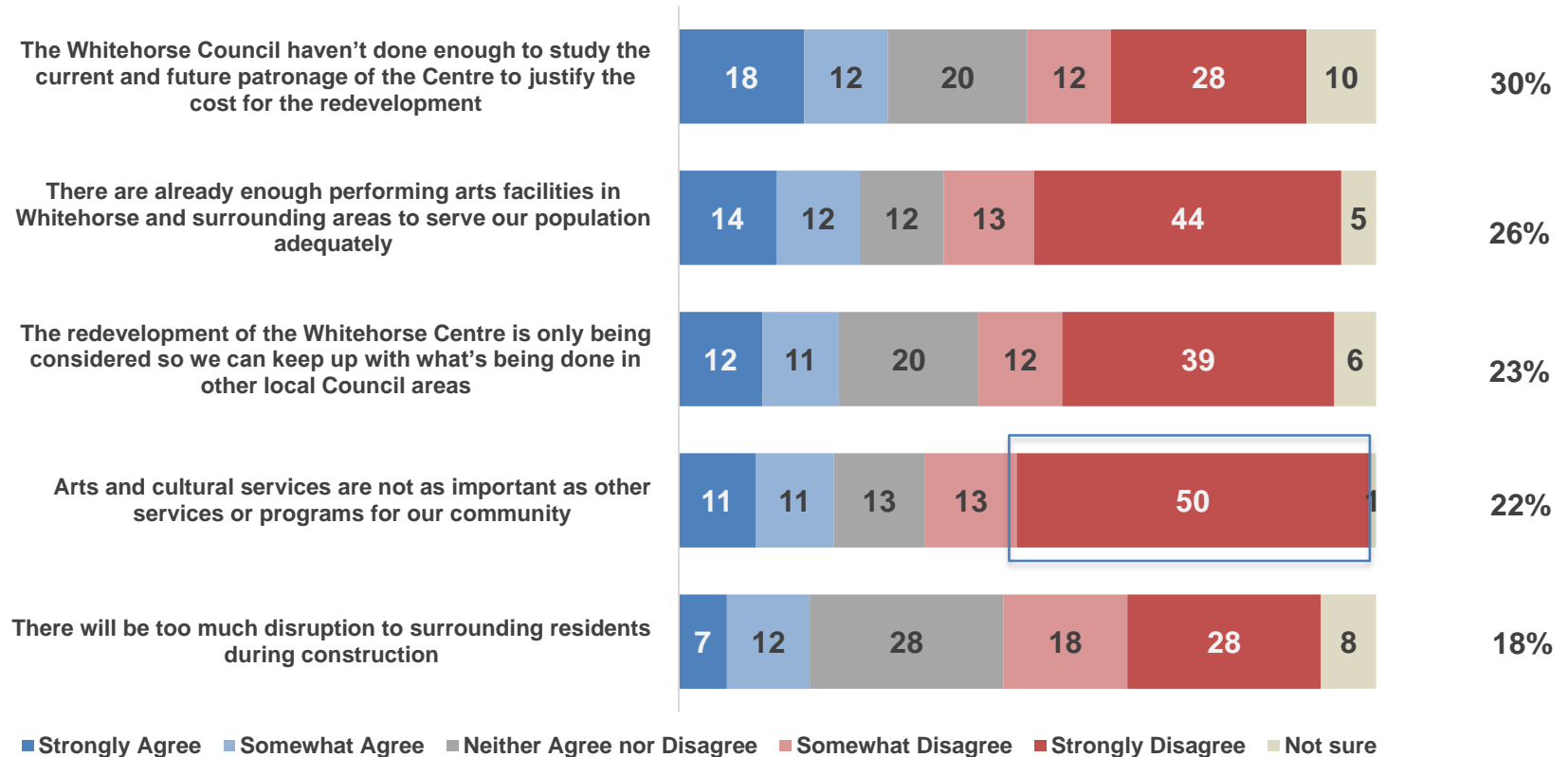
Q7. I am now going to read out a short list of statements that some people have said are reasons to oppose the complete redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.

Base= All respondents, n= 1197. Totals may vary due to rounding.

DISRUPTION TO LOCAL RESIDENTS DURING REDEVELOPMENT IS OF LEAST CONCERN TO RESPONDENTS

Other reasons to oppose complete redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre (%)

Total Agree =
Strongly Agree +
Somewhat Agree

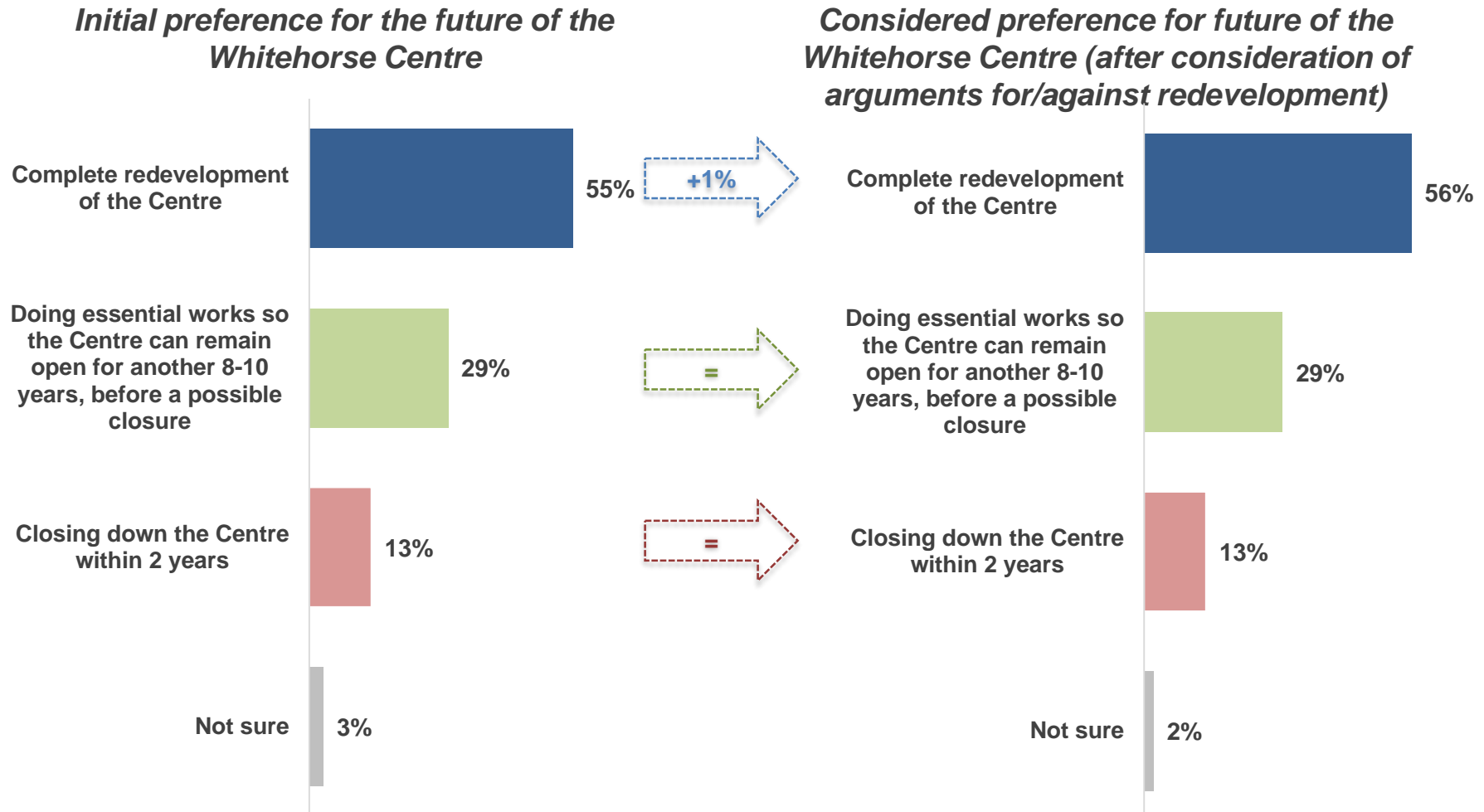


Q7. I am now going to read out a short list of statements that some people have said are reasons to oppose the complete redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.
Base= All respondents, n=1197. Totals may vary due to rounding.



CONSIDERED PREFERENCE

THERE IS LITTLE MOVEMENT IN PREFERENCE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATION OF REASONS TO SUPPORT AND OPPOSE REDEVELOPMENT

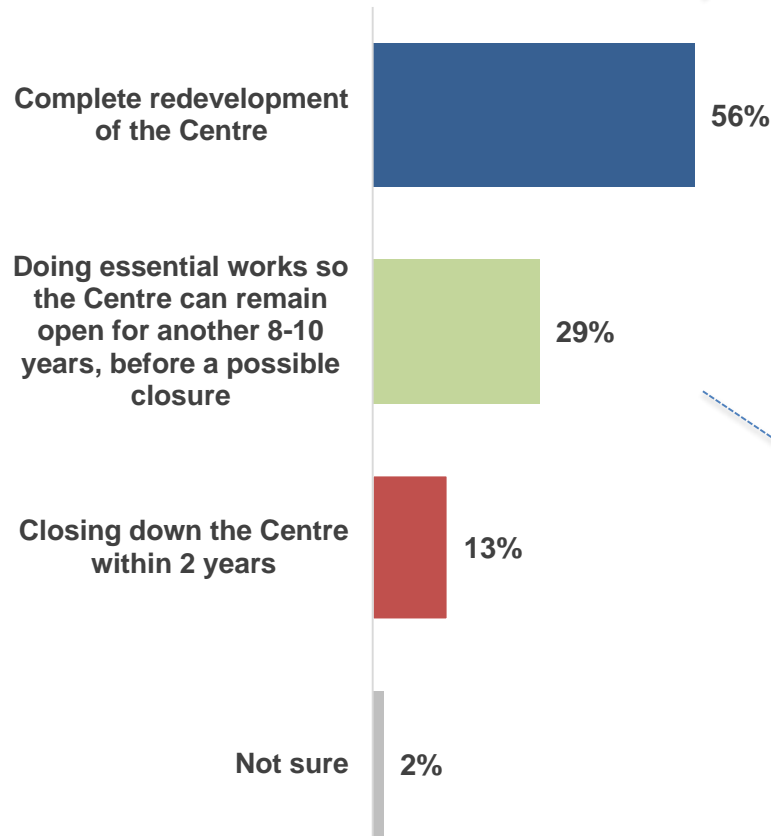


Q5. Based on this information, what is your preferred option regarding the future of the Whitehorse Centre? Is it...?/ Q8. Having now considered some of the reasons why people either support or oppose the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre, what is now your preferred option for the future of the Whitehorse Centre? Is it...?

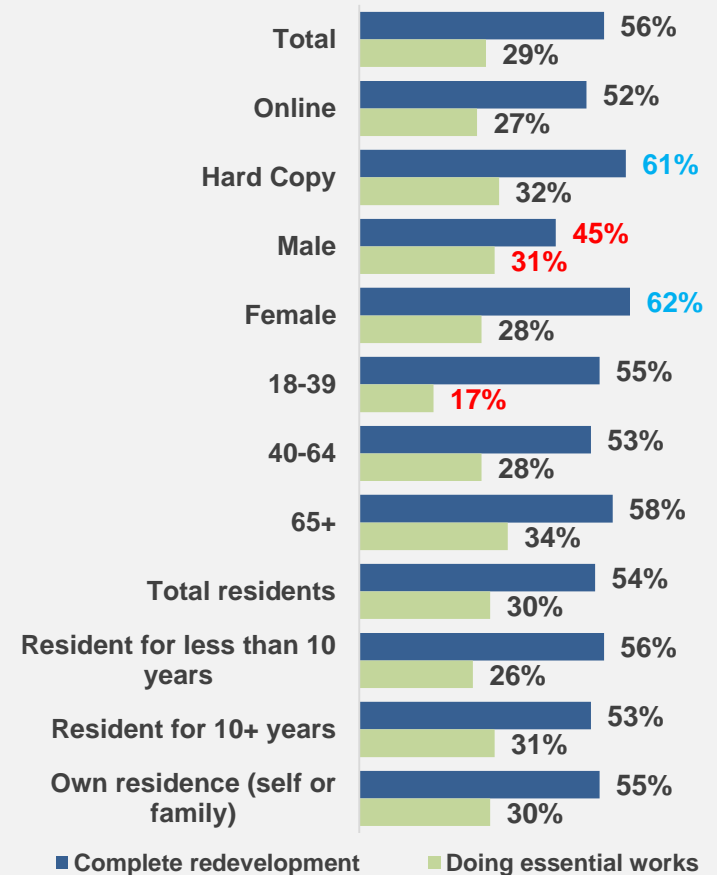
Base= All respondents, Q5, n=1218; Q8, n=1173. Totals may vary due to rounding.

HARD COPY AND FEMALE RESPONDENTS ARE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE IN FAVOUR OF OPTION A ON A CONSIDERED BASIS

Considered preference for future of the Whitehorse Centre (after consideration of arguments for/against redevelopment)



Considered preference for future of the Whitehorse Centre amongst demographics



Q8. Having now considered some of the reasons why people either support or oppose the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre, what is now your preferred option for the future of the Whitehorse Centre? Is it...?

Base= All respondents, n=1173. Totals may vary due to rounding.

Significantly higher than total at 95% confidence interval

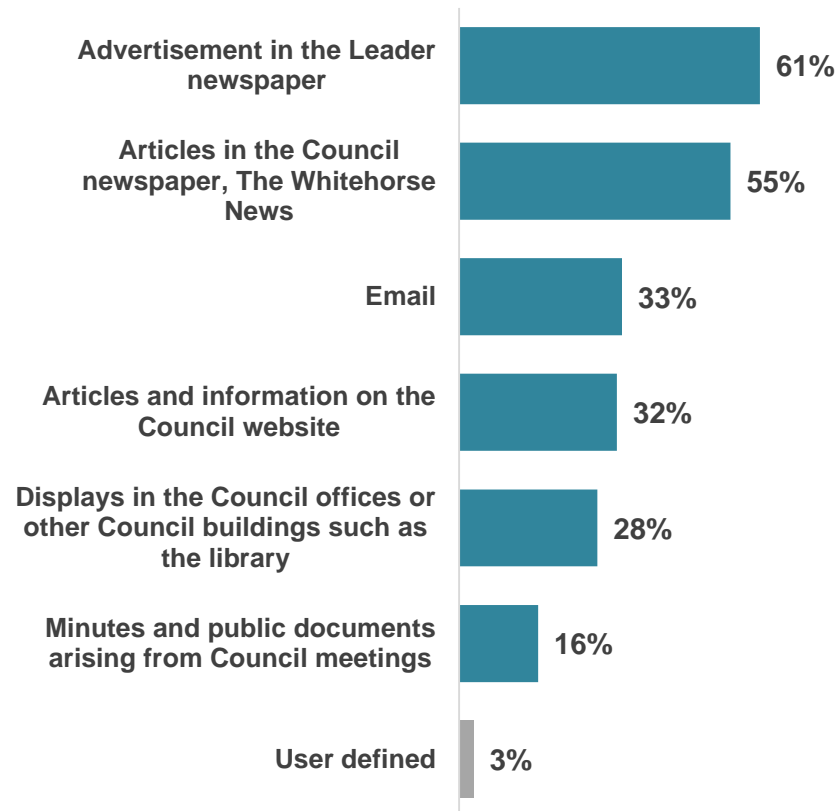
Significantly lower than total at 95% confidence interval



FUTURE COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES

ADVERTISEMENT IN THE LOCAL PAPER AND ARTICLES IN THE COUNCIL NEWSPAPER ARE THE MOST PREFERRED COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Preferred Communication Channel



Q9. How would you prefer Council to communicate with you about the future of the Whitehorse Centre?

Base: All respondents, n=1292

Note: Respondents have the choice of more than 1 option therefore results equal more than 100%

APPENDICES

DETAIL OF INFORMATION PROVIDED RESPONDENTS AT Q5

Information provided at Q5

Over the last five years, Whitehorse City Council has conducted independent feasibility and business case studies to inform the future of the Whitehorse Centre. The Council is considering three different options for the future of the Whitehorse Centre.

- A complete redevelopment of the Centre, including a main theatre, a studio theatre, a function room with increased capacity for dinner style seating, bigger foyer space, increased rehearsal space, and a soundshell for community events such as the Australia Day Concert. It would also include a new 211 space 3 level car park to service the broader Civic Centre complex. This would cost around \$67 million, plus \$10.9 million for the car park. This redevelopment was recommended in the most recent business case report.
- Doing essential works to the current Whitehorse Centre, so it can remain open for 8-10 more years, and then possibly closing. This would involve works such as replacing the roof, making repairs to the building fabric, and technical improvements, but not increasing centre capacity and unable to address disability and access issues. This option would cost around \$7 million.
- Closing the Whitehorse Centre within 2 years, demolishing the Centre and returning the area to parkland. This would cost around \$2 million.



QUALITATIVE KEY FINDINGS

TEN CLIENT INTERVIEWS

DETAILED RESEARCH FINDINGS



JWS RESEARCH

QUALITATIVE CLIENT DEPTH INTERVIEW METHODOLOGY



N=10 x 30 minute depth interviews conducted with key clients of the Whitehorse Centre.

Telephone interviews were employed.

Interviews conducted from 5 – 14 April 2016.

Clients taking part in the research included representatives from theatre/ performance groups and events/ meetings groups as outlined on next page.

Conducted in compliance with AS-ISO 20252.

Note: Qualitative research is exploratory in nature, and so the findings within this report are indicative only and are not necessarily representative of the full client population.

INTERVIEW STRUCTURE AND MATRIX

Interview structure

- Perceptions on Council's performance in delivery of arts and cultural services
- Perceptions on how well the current Whitehorse Centre is meeting organisation's needs and how these might change in the future.
- Unprompted awareness of what Council is considering for the future of the Whitehorse Centre.
- Prompted views on the options Council is considering for the future of the Whitehorse Centre.
- Preferred option for the future of the Whitehorse Centre and the factors driving these views.
- Exploration of perceived benefits and concerns regarding each option.
- Final comments and concerns moving forward.

Interview matrix

Type	Number
Theatre/ performance	5
Events/ meetings	5
Total	10



Theatre/ Performance clients – theatre production companies, performance groups and dance schools



Events/ Meetings clients – functions, community group gatherings, corporate gatherings and static-art shows

KEY FINDINGS



In-line with the quantitative and qualitative findings and even more-so amongst clients, option C: potential closure within 2 years, is not supported. Clients do not want to see the Centre shut down.



Slightly different to the broader community-based research, opinions are split between option A and option B. Views on the direction that Council should take are very much dependent on the way that the various clients make use of the Centre. For instance, those in theatre and performance have a more in-depth understanding of the current limitations of the Centre given they directly experience these limitations when putting on shows. On the other hand, clients who predominantly hire rooms for events and/or meetings tend to be more than satisfied with the current Centre, and as such, struggle to see a need for a complete redevelopment.



In exploring the different options for the future of the Whitehorse Centre, there are some primary concerns amongst clients that were consistently raised. If Council decides to go ahead with a complete redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre, the research suggests that addressing the following points in communications with current clients will be key:

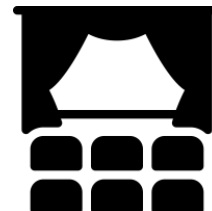
- What will happen to clients whilst the Centre is being redeveloped: Where will they stage productions, classes, meetings and gatherings?
- What the costs for hire will be once the new Centre is completed: Will they be higher? Will community groups still be subsidised?
- Will current clients be guaranteed a 'spot' once the new Centre is completed: **Many voiced concern about their future and would value reassurance from Council that they will not be 'pushed out' by bigger players with more money at their disposal.**

MOST CLIENTS VIEW COUNCIL AS DOING A GOOD JOB IN THEIR DELIVERY OF ARTS AND CULTURAL SERVICES

Each client we spoke with was certainly different and diverse in both how they use the Whitehorse Centre and in their needs relating to the Centre. In the context of this diversity, there is however, **some common themes emerging amongst this group regarding their considerations for the future of the Centre.**

Apart from some minor critiques, the general perception amongst clients is that Council are doing a **good job in its delivery of arts and cultural services, in the context of the resources at its disposal.** Further, clients generally have positive things to say when discussing their dealings with Council, and speak highly of Council's staff and of the support they receive.

Minor critiques tend to centre around the views that Council can still improve in its communication and promotion of arts and culture amongst the community. Furthermore, there is a view amongst some clients that the visual arts are well implemented, but some improvements can be made in the area of performing arts. **Overall though, clients see Council as doing the best they can given the "limited facilities available".**



PERCEPTIONS OF THE CURRENT CENTRE DIFFER ACCORDING TO TYPE OF USAGE

Clients differ in their views of the Whitehorse Centre's current state. This tends to be a consequence of how the different clients use the Whitehorse Centre. For instance, those involved in **theatre and performance** appear to interact with the Centre on a more frequent and intimate basis. **This leads to a more innate understanding of the limitations of the Centre and how such limitations are restrictive from a performance perspective.**

On the contrary, clients using the Centre for purposes not involving theatre or performance (such as hosting events, meetings or visual art shows) are more likely to view the **current Centre as more than adequate**. Although these clients acknowledge the Centre could use some 'polishing', most in this group do not believe it needs drastic modifications. This may be due to these clients being less likely to consider that the Centre is restrictive to their organisations in the same way that those involved in theatre or performance may feel.

Additionally, for these non-performance clients, it is difficult to envision a circumstance where their organisations will grow to a point where their needs may change significantly. Ultimately, this drives support for essential works – a redevelopment is seen to involve disruptions to their organisations which are not necessary if current organisational needs are already being fulfilled.

AWARENESS OF THE OPTIONS IS GENERALLY HIGH, HOWEVER DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE VARIES

Awareness of the different options being considered for the future of the Whitehorse Centre is relatively high amongst clients.

Most in our sample are, at the very least, aware that Council is considering various options for the future of the Centre. There was one exception - one client was unaware Council was contemplating anything regarding the Centre's future.

Depth of knowledge regarding the options being considered also differs across the sample; this appears to be based on the nature of Centre usage.

- For instance, theatre and performance users tend to be more actively involved in the industry; they are therefore **more likely to have a greater depth of knowledge concerning the options put forward by Council**. These clients are actively engaged in the process and make a concerted effort to remain up to date on the proceedings.
- Amongst clients using the Whitehorse Centre for events and meetings, **depth of knowledge about the different options varies**. This ranges from a basic awareness to an in-depth and thorough knowledge of detail relating to each option. This is not necessarily unsurprising, given the variation in frequency of Centre usage among these groups (i.e. this can range from weekly events to events held annually).

CLIENTS ARE DIVIDED BETWEEN REDEVELOPMENT AND ESSENTIAL WORKS

Ultimately, clients are evenly split in their preferences for redevelopment and essential works.

- Option C is **not a preferred option** for any client that we spoke with.
- Preferences for options A and B appear (again) to be generally **dependent on how the Centre is utilised**. Those in favour of option A tend to be involved in theatre or performance whilst those who are more supportive of option B are more likely to use the Centre for events and meetings.

Further, theatre and performance clients generally perceive the current Centre to be limiting to their organisations; they can therefore envision how redevelopment might enable them to grow and potentially reach a wider audience. However, this is not true for all in this cohort, with some holding the view that the Centre is adequate and that redevelopment has the potential to cause disruptions that could have negative effects on their associations.

Clients using the Centre for events and meetings are generally more in favour of option B. This is largely driven by the perception that the current Centre is more than satisfactory and that it will continue to be so for the foreseeable future. Furthermore, clients from this group tend to see the possibility of having to source an alternative venue during construction of any new Centre as a problem that may be *too difficult to solve*.

- In this sense, these concerns are a **key driver of support for essential works**, as clients are unsure of the future of their organisations if such concerns are not satisfactorily appeased.

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF CONCERNS THAT ARE BOTH DRIVING SUPPORT FOR ESSENTIAL WORKS AND LIMITING SUPPORT FOR REDEVELOPMENT

If Council is to proceed with a redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre, the research suggests that there are some consistent concerns amongst clients that should be addressed in communicating with this group.

These consistent concerns relate to the following key questions:

- **What will happen to clients whilst the Centre is being redeveloped:** Where will they stage productions and where will they hold classes, meetings and gatherings?
- **What the costs for hire will be once the new Centre is completed:** Will they be higher? Will community groups still be subsidised?
- **Will current clients be guaranteed a spot once the new Centre is completed:** With a new Centre, will current clients be 'pushed out' by bigger players with more money?

These concerns have a major impact in determining preferences for either option, suggesting that with further information, preferences may change. Ultimately, these concerns are crucial in both driving support for essential works and limiting support for redevelopment.



DELIVERY OF ARTS AND CULTURAL SERVICES

CLIENTS BELIEVE THAT COUNCIL IS DOING WELL IN THEIR DELIVERY OF ARTS AND CULTURAL SERVICES

Most of the of clients we spoke with consider that Council is doing a good job in their delivery of arts and cultural services in the City of Whitehorse. Most spoke of positive experiences when interacting with Whitehorse Centre staff. They expressed a great deal of praise when describing the support that is received when events and gatherings are being put into action.

However, some clients in our sample believe that there is definitely room for improvement. These include:

- One client expressed the need for a clear artistic policy from Council.
- Others wanted Council to do a better job at communicating and promoting to the community on what is happening in the area of arts and cultural services.
- One client considered that the delivery of visual arts is well implemented; however improvements can be made in the delivery of performing arts as current facilities are restricting Council, but they doing the best they can with what is available.

"Given their principal venue is the Whitehorse Centre, I think they do a pretty good job. There is a good offering of a variety of stuff there."
(Theatre/ Performance)

"They like to get some professional artists in but they are restricted by the facilities that are currently there."
(Theatre/ Performance)



CURRENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE WHITEHORSE CENTRE

HOW CLIENTS USE THE WHITEHORSE CENTRE APPEARS TO SHAPE THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF IT

Generally speaking, clients involved in the theatre and performance side of things tend to have a greater depth of knowledge and understanding of the Centre and its capabilities. As a result, most in this group perceive the current Centre to be restrictive from a performance perspective, and they are more likely to be vocal about their concerns with the Centre in its current state.

"We suffer from very limited wing space, especially on one side... for most productions, the fly tower is barely adequate... one of the things that always worries me is that the orchestra pit only has single entry and exit."
(Theatre/ Performance)

Conversely, clients using the Centre for events and meetings, including visual art shows, on the most part view the Whitehorse Centre as a more than satisfactory venue. Although most of these clients acknowledge the Centre is in need of a 'touch-up', this group tend to be happy with the Centre in its current state. The only consistent complaint from this cohort is the need to upgrade some of the I.T. facilities at the Centre.

"The Centre is tired and it needs rejuvenation."
(Events/ Meetings)

"it suits us perfectly... The Waratah room is perfect for us. It's got the right amount of space, the right type of room for everything we do and for the public that attend. It's one of the reasons we use it, we couldn't find a better venue."
(Events/ Meetings)

CLIENTS INVOLVED IN THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE ARE MORE LIKELY TO UNDERSTAND THE LIMITATIONS OF THE CURRENT CENTRE

Perceptions on the Whitehorse Centre in it's current standing are very much dependent on the capacity in which the Centre is utilised by clients:



Theatre/ Performance Clients	Events/ Meetings Clients
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tend to understand the limitations of the Centre, from a performance perspective. • Are experiencing such limitations in practice. • Can envision their organisations and the capacity of their productions expanding. • These clients are therefore more likely to see the need for upgrades given this has potential to help their organisations grow. • One theatre/ performance client considered the Centre needed upgrades but didn't need to be knocked down. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly use Centre for gatherings and functions. • Given this, tend to see the current Centre as more than meeting their needs. • These clients cannot see their needs changing drastically in the future. • Therefore, they are less likely to see a need for any major upgrades.



AWARENESS OF OPTIONS BEING CONSIDERED BY COUNCIL

AS A RESULT OF DIRECT INVOLVEMENT, CLIENTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE AWARE OF THE OPTIONS BEING CONSIDERED BY COUNCIL

In contrast with the general community, clients are more likely to have a more detailed understanding of what Council is considering for the future of the Whitehorse Centre – this is not entirely surprising given their close and regular involvement with the Centre. On the most part, clients are not only aware of what the different options are for the future of the Whitehorse Centre, they tend to have a relatively in-depth knowledge of the detail concerning each option.

Again, depth of knowledge surrounding the different options differs according to the capacity in which clients use the Whitehorse Centre. Those involved in theatre and performance are far more likely to have an up-to-date and comprehensive awareness of what Council is considering and how this will effect them. This is a result of this group being both directly involved in the industry and directly affected by the outcome of the decision-making process.

"I've seen diagrams of concepts and plans... for us the theatre size they were proposing seemed really good."

(Theatre/ Performance)

"I've read Council minutes to keep up to date and try and track what's been happening."

(Theatre/ Performance)

"Everything. I've been heavily involved in this from when it was first muted, I'm fully informed on it."

(Theatre/ Performance)

THERE IS A BREADTH OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE OPTIONS AMONGST THOSE INVOLVED IN EVENTS AND MEETINGS

Clients who use the Whitehorse Centre to hold events or meetings are highly likely to be aware of the options; however the depth and detail of knowledge amongst this group varies significantly. Notably, knowledge is not generally as thorough as for those involved in theatre or performance.

"I have got some appreciation (of the options) but not a hands-on knowledge... I haven't really engaged too much with what the plans are for the soundshell and the theatre and all those kind of things"
(Events/ Meetings)

Whilst most clients we spoke to from this cohort had a relatively thin level of knowledge regarding the options that Council is considering, one client was particularly well-versed on *all* the options and possessed a great deal of knowledge pertaining to each. This was driven by the fact that this client was also an active community member who took the time to research the proposal as it affected them on a personal and organisational level.

"I'd say I'm extremely well informed, I read their publications in the Council news, I've spoken to staff at the Centre, I've read the things they have mailed and I read a lot of the comments in the local paper."
(Events/ Meetings)

Exemplifying the diverse breadth of knowledge amongst this group, there was one events/ meetings client who was completely unaware that Council was even considering options for the future of the Centre. This client, however, only used the Centre once or twice a year for a corporate function. Nonetheless, this does stress a need for Council to make sure that it is communicating proficiently with *all* clients regarding the future of the Centre.



PREFERRED OPTION FOR FUTURE OF THE WHITEHORSE CENTRE

OPTION C IS OUT OF THE QUESTION FOR ALL CLIENTS, WHILE THOSE IN THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE ARE MORE IN FAVOUR OF OPTION A

Mirroring the general community findings, **option C is *not* supported** by any of the clients we spoke with. All clients we spoke with value the Whitehorse Centre immensely, and whilst some would cope better with a closure than others, no-one wants to see the Centre closed.

The clients we spoke to are **evenly divided in their preference between option A and option B** – differing slightly from the broader community research findings. Like perceptions of the current Centre, preferences for options A or B appear to be shaped, at a high level, by how clients use the Centre;

- Namely, **theatre and performance groups are more likely to be in favour of option A**. They understand and experience the limitations of the Centre and can envisage potential growth amongst their organisations if a redevelopment was to occur.
- However, this is not true for all theatre/ performance clients, with a few from this group more in favour of option B rather than option A. Support for option B in this case is driven by some key concerns which will be outlined later in the report. These tend to be focused around uncertainty as to what will happen to their organisations during and after construction of any redevelopment.

“To say it’s old and obsolete and just shut it down and walk away is a lie... shutting it down, just forget that option. There needs to a middle ground, nut no one is able to ascertain what the middle ground is yet.”
(Theatre/ Performance)

“It might not be right now, but there is not the slightest bit of doubt that we will need a new theatre before too long.”
(Theatre/ Performance)

THOSE WHO UTILISE THE CENTRE FOR EVENTS AND MEETINGS TEND TO BE MORE IN FAVOUR OF OPTION B

Conversely, **clients who utilise the Centre for events and meetings or static-art shows are more likely to be in favour of option B.** They are generally very satisfied with the current Centre, and unlike theatre and performance clients, don't see it as restricting to their organisations and events. In this case, support for option B is also driven by the concern that, should option A be adopted, it would be hard for these organisations and groups to find an alternative venue whilst a new Centre was being built.

"It's too valuable of an asset to be closed, there are no other suitable venues in the municipality to cater for our needs."

(Events/ Meetings)

"I would be going for the speediest, least inconvenient and least expensive option, which would be essential works. I think we will notice a change in around the demographics that use the Centre and therefore the needs will change anyway"

(Events/ Meetings)

For **a few clients** from this group, the concern about finding an alternative venue is not as prominent - and this is what lends to greater support for option A. In these cases, clients can see how a new Centre would benefit both the broader community and other organisations. These clients also noted that the extra car parking being created with option A is valuable.

"I think parking can tend to be an issue over there so if they did redevelopment with parking that would be a better option ."

(Events/ Meetings)

THOSE INVOLVED IN THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE IN FAVOUR OF OPTION A

In summary, there is no support for option C amongst clients, with preferences for option A or option B split - and generally dependent on how clients use the Whitehorse Centre:



Theatre/ Performance Clients	Events/ Meetings Clients
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally more in favour of option A. • See current Centre as limiting and identify possibility for growth with a redevelopment. • A few of these clients are more in favour of option B as concerns around what will happen during and post-construction are <i>more</i> prevalent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally more in favour of option B. • See Whitehorse Centre as meeting current and future needs - they don't see their organisational needs changing drastically. • A few of these clients are more in favour of option A - they appreciate how a new Centre would positively impact the community and concerns around circumstances during and post construction are not as prominent.



PERCEIVED BENEFITS AND DOWNSIDES

BENEFITS AND DOWNSIDES OF THE OPTIONS AS PERCEIVED BY CLIENTS

Perceived benefits and downsides of each option amongst clients:

Option	Perceived benefits	Perceived downsides
Option A: Complete redevelopment of the Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the potential to attract a wider population. • Gives clients opportunities to grow their organisations and productions. • Creates a more flexible venue that can suit a range of different clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seen to be very costly. • Multi-level car park not seen as necessary by some • Clients will be forced to seek alternative venues during redevelopment which could be problematic • Hiring costs may increase.
Option B: Essential works done to the Centre to remain open for 8-10 years, before possible closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients remain uninterrupted in their proceedings and organisations face less risk of losing clientele • Costs for hire won't change • Clients' future is more perceived to be more secure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works not really worth the money • Seen as just applying a 'band aid' fix to a bigger problem • Opportunity will be lost to build a valuable community asset that is high quality
Option C: Closure within 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No benefit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of valuable community asset • Clients would be forced other venues that are perceived to not be as suitable



CLIENT CONCERNS

CONCERNS CENTRE AROUND THE FUTURE OF THEIR ORGANISATIONS, HIRING COSTS AND WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING REDEVELOPMENT

With preferences among clients being largely divided, there are some consistent concerns amongst all clients that it will be important for Council to address if it proceeds with **option A: Complete redevelopment**.

These consistent concerns involve:

- **What will happen to clients whilst the Centre is being redeveloped:** Where will they stage productions and where will they hold classes, meetings and gatherings?
- **What the costs for hire will be once the new Centre is completed:** Will they be higher? Will community groups still be subsidised?
- **Will current clients be guaranteed a spot once the new Centre is completed:** With a new Centre, will current clients be 'pushed out' by bigger players with more money?

"What do we do whilst the thing is being rebuilt? We need a venue and I don't have an answer to that."
(Theatre/ Performance)

"What do we do for two years whilst they do it? That could be the death knell of the local groups... You'd have to start from square one to get your audience back after two years."
(Theatre/ Performance)

IF OPTION A IS CHOSEN, A MAJOR CONCERN IS WHAT CLIENTS WILL DO WHILST THE CENTRE IS BEING REDEVELOPED

- **What will happen to clients whilst the Centre is being redeveloped:** Where will they stage productions and where will they hold classes, meetings and gatherings?

If option A was to go ahead, most of the clients we spoke with expressed concerns as to what will happen to their organisations whilst the Centre was being redeveloped. Many expressed that whilst Council has indicated that they will be assisted in seeking alternative venues, they still have no solid assurance that such venues will be attainable or suitable.

This is major cause of concern: for some organisations, the programs they run at the Whitehorse Centre are how they make a living and if they were forced to stop operations for a period of time, would struggle to survive.

Council needs to provide assurance to all clients that suitable venues will be secured obtained during any construction period.

"We have received no assurance from the Council as to where we will be accommodated even temporarily. Our biggest concern is where do we go if it is knocked down permanently. If it is going to be knocked down and rebuilt, where are we going to be located during that period?"

(Theatre/ Performance)

THE HIRING COSTS OF A REDEVELOPED CENTRE IS ALSO A MAJOR CONCERN

- **What the costs for hire will be once the new Centre is completed:** Will they be higher? Will community groups still be subsidised?

Many clients using the Centre are groups from within the Whitehorse community. Costs for these groups are subsidised by Council and would therefore struggle to continue if costs were to increase.

The assumption amongst both the general community and clients is that with a redeveloped Centre comes increases in costs for use. This is particularly worrying for the majority of clients as most are operating on very small margins and increases in hiring costs has the potential to significantly effect their ability to operate.

If option A is to proceed, it is important that Council communicates with clients any potential changes to hiring costs so that clients have adequate time to adjust to changes.

“How long will the Centre not be in use? Will it have a great impact in our costs month-to-month?”

(Events/ Meetings)

“The cost of \$78 million, that would have to put all our costs up.”
(Events/ Meetings)

WHILST MANY CLIENTS ARE CONCERNED FOR THE FUTURE AND ARE SEEKING REASSURANCE FROM COUNCIL

- **Will current clients be guaranteed a spot once the new Centre is completed:** With a new Centre, will current clients be 'pushed out' by bigger players with more money?

A major concern for clients, especially those involved in theatre and performance, is the possibility that they will not have a place at a redeveloped Centre and may be pushed out by bigger organisations with more money at their disposal.

With the options being considered, clients are primarily concerned for their future. If redevelopment is to go ahead, clients are seeking reassurance from Council that their place will be guaranteed before works begin.

It is imperative that Council communicates with clients regarding it's plans for future usage of the Whitehorse Centre, if option A is put into effect. This will serve to quell the main cause for concern for clients and potentially boost support for redevelopment.

"They say they are well-aware of the local people, want to support the local people and all that sort of stuff but it's not really evident."
(Theatre/ Performance)

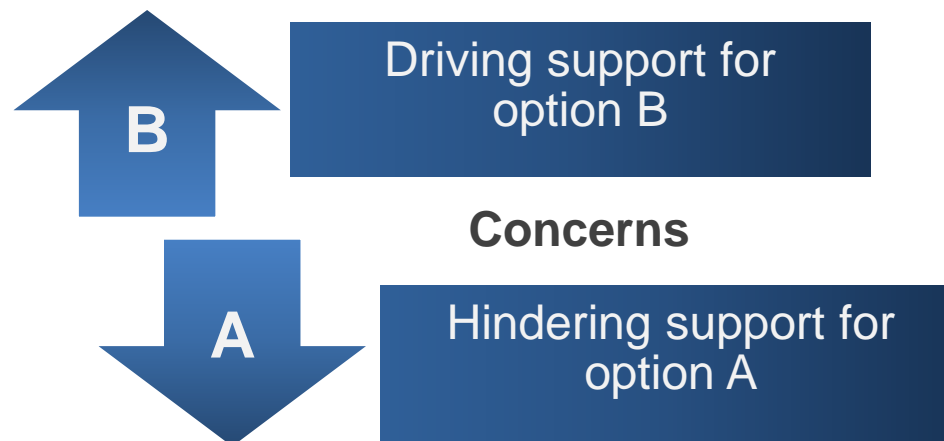
"I think that could possibly happen, if they redeveloped a room like the one we've got they could easily push out and then where do we go?"
(Events/ Meetings)

THESE CONCERNS ARE DRIVING SUPPORT FOR OPTION B AND HINDERING SUPPORT FOR OPTION A

Whilst the extent to which clients are affected by the concerns outlined previously, it is clear that these concerns play a major part in forming opinions on which option is preferred.

Ultimately, support for option A is *hindered* by these primary concerns and this has the paradoxical effect of *driving* support for option B. Clients who feel that their future may be compromised or are highly concerned about what will happen to their organisation whilst construction is taking place are more likely to support option B as these concerns are too prominent to ignore.

If Council decides to proceed with redevelopment, it is imperative that the previously mentioned concerns are addressed and communicated to that clients are engaged and communicated with on a consistent basis through out the process



A satellite night map of South Australia, showing the state's coastline and major cities illuminated by city lights. The map is dark, with the landmass in a deep brown color and the surrounding ocean in a dark blue. The lights from Adelaide, Perth, and other major cities are visible as bright yellow and white clusters.

QUALITATIVE KEY FINDINGS

123 PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS

DETAILED FINDINGS

SUBMISSION STRUCTURE AND MATRIX

Findings from written submissions have been divided and reported in three sections:



- **Businesses and organisations** – any business or organisational group that utilises or has involvement with the Whitehorse Centre or is part of the Whitehorse community



- **Regular attendees to the Whitehorse Centre**



- **General community and occasional users of the Whitehorse Centre**

We received **n=123** written submissions from the community

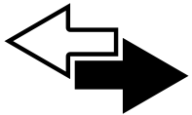
KEY FINDINGS



In-line with the rest of the research program written submissions indicate that, option C: potential closure within 2 years, is generally not supported amongst the community. The Centre is highly valued by many and only a few residents would be happy with this solution.



This effectively makes it a decision between option A: Complete redevelopment; and option B: Essential works. From the written submissions, there is largely a divide between option A and option B, with businesses/ organisations and regular attendees more in favour of option A and the general community/ occasional users more evenly split in their views.



Drivers of support and opposition for redevelopment differ amongst the cohorts:

Key drivers of support include:

- Extended community usage
- Centre seen as a critical community asset
- New Centre important to servicing growing needs of community

Key drivers of opposition include:

- Current usage is not high and most come from outside of Whitehorse municipality
- Cost is too high
- Costs will be passed onto community groups and audiences
- Need for a new Centre is not pressing

COHORT SUMMARIES

Group	Summary of position	Drivers of support/ opposition
Business/ Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally more in support for option A • Some support for option B • No support for option C 	<p>Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for expanded community use • Increased capacity to meet community needs • Grow audience base and broaden performances • Potential for increase in revenue <p>Opposition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Centre won't remain affordable for community groups • Lack of certainty for groups currently using Centre • Increase in costs will be passed onto audiences • Most usage is from people outside of Whitehorse
Regular attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most are in support of option A • Relatively small support for option B • No support for option C 	<p>Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option B is short sighted • New Centre can attract younger audiences • Identified of short comings of the current Centre • Theatre critical to community – extremely valuable asset <p>Opposition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed redevelopment seen as grandiose • Cost of carpark is dubious • Need for new Centre isn't urgent

COHORT SUMMARIES

Group	Summary of position	Drivers of support/ opposition
General community/ Occasional users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally split between option A and option B • Slightly more support for option B • Relatively very little support for option C 	<p>Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value arts and cultural services – need to fund as much as sport • Important aspects of Centre seen to be in need of upgrade • Important to servicing growing needs of the community • Important to lives of elderly population • Option B just a ‘band aid’ solution <p>Opposition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost is too high • Amateur theatre will not cope with increases in costs • No consideration for alternative redevelopment options • Usage is not high and mainly from outside municipality • Concern that rates will increase



SECTION ONE: BUSINESSES AND ORGANISATIONS

THERE IS MORE SUPPORT FOR OPTION A AMONGST BUSINESSES AND ORGANISATIONS

- The written submissions indicate that from an organisational/ business perspective, there is generally more support for option A, with some support for option B: essential works. This tends to revolve around the notion that a redeveloped Centre has the potential to benefit these groups significantly as some organisations understand the shortcoming of the venue and see immense value in redevelopment.
- Support for option B is driven by a sense of insecurity as to what will happen to businesses and organisations during and after any redevelopment.
- There is no support for option C amongst this group.

SUPPORT FOR REDEVELOPMENT IS DRIVEN BY THE POSSIBILITY OF EXPANDED CENTRE USAGE

Support for option A is generally driven by the potential community value that a redeveloped Whitehorse Centre could have. Businesses and organisations point to the possibility of expanded uses of a redeveloped Centre and the potential for a more profound engagement with the Centre amongst the community.

Furthermore, submissions from these types of groups reflect an understanding of how a new Whitehorse Centre could be a valuable asset well into the future. This type of thinking is a common driver of support throughout submissions from this cohort.

Organisations that utilise the Whitehorse Centre articulated the view that the Centre is constraining in its current state, both in size and technical capacity. These groups expressed the need for a Centre with increased capacity that would meet the needs of the community for now and well into the future. Furthermore, there is a perception that two theatres would allow for different types of shows, which would create appeal for a more widespread type of performances, and this will grow participation in the Arts through a wider audience base.

“Whitehorse Centre is constrained by the size of the current facility... Proposed redevelopment would afford the expansion of the Centre’s capabilities to meet standards and future community use. A 600 seat theatre and a further smaller 200 seat theatre would allow greater diversity of programming for patrons. These and further building developments offer the real opportunity to broaden the audience base, attract a wider range of performances... and through these two outcomes to increase engagement with the community and further grow participation in the Arts.”
(Business/ Organisation)

“Demands of the community are changing, with greater need to provide flexible spaces which offer the greatest opportunities for the broadest range of the community to engage in all forms of cultural activity.”
(Business/ Organisation)

CAPACITY FOR INCREASED REVENUE GENERATION IS ANOTHER DRIVER OF SUPPORT

Some submissions also identified the possibility for greater revenue that would result from increased business. This revenue could then be used to maintain the new Centre.

“It also would seem to demonstrate an understanding of the capacity of the venue to generate a greater business return from the improved conference and function facilities, which can utilised to provide greater investment in the ongoing activity and maintenance of the facilities overall.”

(Business/ Organisation)

One written submissions from this group also felt it was essential that those with a disability have the same level of access to all public areas that members of the Victorian community have.

“It is essential that people with disability should have access to public spaces and venues which is dignified and equal to that available to everyone else in the Victorian community.”

(Business/ Organisation)

CONCERNS THAT A NEW CENTRE WON'T REMAIN AFFORDABLE TO COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS IS DRIVING OPPOSITION

Opposition from these groups tends to revolve around concerns that a redeveloped Centre will not remain affordable to community groups and a 'lack of security' as to what will happen to any groups that are currently utilising the Centre during any potential redevelopment period. This perceived 'lack of security' is a major factor in driving support away from option A and towards option B. Businesses and organisations that are regular users of the Centre see how a redeveloped Whitehorse Centre could enable them to grow, but uncertainty over the future of their operations is proving to be a major hindrance in their capacity to support option A.

"Option B is the only option that would offer (us) and our current operations, immediate security. Should option A be adopted, we see so many ways that the existing programs of our (organisation) could be further developed and enhanced to capitalise on the proposed new theatres and studios. The absence of any accommodation plans for (organisation) during the construction period is the reason that this option does not offer any security."
(Business/ Organisation)

"As we have no idea what this proposal means for us in the short or long term it is difficult to feel confident about this option."
(Business/ Organisation)

ALONGSIDE THE POSSIBILITY OF HIGHER COSTS BEING FORWARDED ONTO AUDIENCES

In other instances, there is concern that increases in costs will be passed onto audiences which has the potential to make shows unappealing to a large part of the audience who are perceived to be seniors.

"If the Centre were redeveloped I feel that cost to the audience would probably increase. Presently the cost is affordable which is important to senior organisations."

(Business/ Organisation)

"Any new Centre would still need to remain affordable to not-for-profit groups."

(Business/ Organisation)

Furthermore, one written submissions was off the view that most of the people who use the Centre are from outside of the Whitehorse municipality and that it is unfair to expect ratepayers to pay for a Centre that doesn't have a majority patronage from within the Whitehorse council area.

"The majority of usage is by people from outside Whitehorse, and only a very small percentage of Whitehorse Residents actually use the Centre. The Business Case does not have the support of ratepayers and residents."

(Business/ Organisation)

THE CHANCE TO OFFER FEEDBACK IS WELCOMED BUT THERE IS A CONCERN THAT THE BUSINESS CASE MAY BE BIASED

Most from the business/ organisation community welcome the opportunity to provide feedback and views on the various options put forth by Council.

There is a view amongst some however, that the consultation process may have been biased, especially concerning the business case. This raises concerns that Council may have already made it's decision regarding the matter and is thus pushing option A too heavily.

"Unfortunately the Business Case is heavily tainted with bias."
(Business/ Organisation)

"We see current Whitehorse City Council impetus toward this project as unworthy of those employed and elected by the local community for the good of the local community and we charge Whitehorse City Council to desist from all advancement of this project and allow local residents to express their will for use of their funds held in trust by the Council."
(Business/ Organisation)



SECTION TWO: REGULAR ATTENDEES

REGULAR ATTENDEES TEND TO BE IN FAVOUR OF OPTION A, WITH SOME SUPPORTING OPTION B

- Most of the regular attendees from the received written submissions are in support of redevelopment, whilst some are in favour of option B: essential works.
- Support for redevelopment is driven by a perceived awareness of problems faced by the current Centre and a perception that option B doesn't solve long term problems.
- The few that lean towards option B are concerned that the redevelopment plan is too grandiose and that it is not a pressing issue that must be solved sooner rather than later.
- There is no support for option C amongst this group.

SUPPORT FOR OPTION A IS DRIVEN BY THE PERCEPTION THAT OPTION B IS TOO SHORT SIGHTED

Written submissions received from regular attendees that are in support of redevelopment see option B as a short sighted solution that will only solve a problem for an immediate period. These submissions commend the perceived forward-thinking of Council in considering option A and a possible redevelopment. In this sense, regular attendees tend to see no value in a more short term solution and are able to envision how a redeveloped Whitehorse could attract younger audiences.

"We do not want to see this facility lost to the community. Option B is but a stop gap measure; in 8 to 10 years the problem will be with us again."
(Regular attendee)

"If the calibre of productions were extended, more and younger people might be encouraged to use facilities."
(Regular attendee)

This group also tend to have an increased awareness of the short comings of the current Centre and understand how option A has the capacity to solve such problems.

"As an audience member and a performer, I am aware that the facilities fall short of an acceptable standard. The basics such as change rooms, orchestra pit, sound shell are sub standard and not worthy of refurbishment. ."
(Regular attendee)

THIS GROUP SEE THE WHITEHORSE CENTRE AS AN INVALUABLE COMMUNITY ASSET

This group place immense value on a theatre and the perceived critical role it plays in the community and ensuring a high quality of life. This is also a strong driver for support of redevelopment.

"A theatre is a critical part of life and if we have to break for a couple of years till you build a new one, so be it.."
(Regular attendee)

In this respect, the Whitehorse Centre is seen by this cohort as an extremely valuable asset that is worthy of the cost of a redevelopment as it would provide immense value to the Whitehorse population and others.

"This is a valued community asset, and is used by local and distant people. Option 3 is pointless. To deprive the community of a valued asset because of some obvious deficiencies and some questionable deficiencies is not justified."
(Regular attendee)

"Ten years will pass very quickly and you will be in the same place you are now only confronted by higher costs. Redevelop the Centre and promote it well to the entire Melbourne community. It's a treasure to be shared."
(Regular attendee)

SOME REGULAR ATTENDEES WHO OPPOSE REDEVELOPMENT SEE THE PLAN AS TOO AMBITIOUS

Opposition towards redevelopment from the regular attendee cohort is driven by a sense that the proposed redevelopment is too grandiose and not a necessity. The written submissions expressed an understanding that the current Centre is in need of some upgrades, but people voiced a will to implement an upgrade at a cheaper cost and one that possibly incorporates some of the existing Centre.

"I use the Centre and realise it needs upgrading/replacing. I would be happy for it to be totally redeveloped, but on a smaller scale with a smaller budget and no changes to car-parking. Unfortunately, this is not one of the options given. It really should have been a fourth option."
(Regular attendee)

"As a regular attendee at the Whitehorse Centre I am appalled, considering the building has not been condemned, that no consideration has been given to a total upgrade incorporating some of the existing building... redesign and redevelop utilising some of what is there."
(Regular attendee)

Furthermore, the carpark is a dubious issue amongst regular attendees that are in opposition to redevelopment as there is scepticism as to whether a multi-storey carpark is a necessary inclusion.

"Car park usage certainly needs attention but whether to the extent of a multi-storied/ underground one is debatable."
(Regular attendee)

THERE IS A ALSO SOME COMMENT THAT THE NEED TO REDEVELOP IS *NOT* URGENT AND THAT SUCH PLANS CAN WAIT

In addition, there is concern amongst some that there isn't really a pressing need for redevelopment and that reassessing in later years is a more viable alternative.

"If possible we would like to see it upgraded with the (7 million) and review it again – say in 10 years. I would hate to see it demolished as it brings so much pleasure to us older persons who are unable to get to the city."

(Regular attendee)

"It strikes me that a new building altogether built onto and behind the council offices/library whilst the old building is still operative is another option but perhaps I have the wrong idea."

(Regular attendee)

REGULAR ATTENDEES HAVE MIXED VIEWS ON COUNCIL'S CONSULTATION PROCESS

Perceptions on the consultation process that Council followed are mixed with some viewing the process as proper and thus a reliable means for Council to make a meaningful and informed decision upon.

"I accept that Council will have sought proper advice. If council is confident of the information they have received is sound then they should have no fear in adopting the development identified in the business case."

(Regular attendee)

Others however, expressed concern over the cost of these processes and question whether such processes, which are perceived to be lengthy, are necessary.

"I am also concerned as to how much money the Council has also spent on the business case, plans etc. Whilst I understand the need for preliminary documentation etc., and for the survey to be done, I also realise this preliminary work is really expensive, and may end up being a total waste of money, as I don't have a lot of faith in the Council taking any notice of what the survey results are."

(Regular attendee)

"I not that there have already been two research projects at cost unknown to the general public but presumably expensive. And now a third. Do the Council have no faith in the people involved and will you believe any results from the third consultation?"

(Regular attendee)



SECTION THREE: GENERAL COMMUNITY AND OCCASIONAL USERS

SUBMISSIONS FROM THE GENERAL COMMUNITY AND OCCASIONAL USERS TEND TO BE LARGELY DIVIDED BETWEEN OPTION A AND OPTION B

- Written submissions from the general Whitehorse community and occasional users of the Centre differ from the previous two categories as there is a larger divide between option A and option B.
- Some received written submissions from this cohort did express a preference for option C, but mirroring the rest of the research program, this was the view of only a relatively few submissions.
- A number of people voiced a desire for an alternative option that is between option A and option B and felt that it was unfair of Council **not** to provide a choice that represented a middle ground between the two options

"Surely there can be some sort of compromise where the cost of the project can be reduced and the scale of the work can still satisfy the needs of the people in the community."
(General community/ Occasional user)

"I would have much preferred to see a suite of options, including a redevelopment at a more modest cost."
(General community/ Occasional user)

SOME IN SUPPORT OF REDEVELOPMENT VALUE THE ARTS AND WANT TO SEE BALANCED FUNDING ACROSS SERVICE AREAS

Many written submissions from the general community/occasional users of the Centre that are in support of redevelopment placed immense value on the Arts and expressed a need to fund this service area. Many submissions focussed on the need to balance funding across both artistic and sporting ventures and this is a key driver of support amongst this group

“Supporting ‘the Arts’ in our city is just as important as funding for all sports, roads etc. It is only fair to have equalisation and keep attending to the maintenance of the infrastructure in a well planned schedule so that the fund can be expended across all areas.”
(General community/ Occasional user)

“There is a great deal of money spent on sporting venues and there never seems to be much comment or complaint. I support all of these upgrades and moneys spent even though neither I nor anyone in my family attends any of them but I do believe that sporting venues are vital to community life. The arts are another extremely vital component of community life.”
(General community/ Occasional user)

“Sports and recreation have received large amounts of expenditure on capital works. This is important, but it is also important to balance that with suitable infrastructure to support culture and arts in our community.”
(General community/ Occasional user)

“As a regular participant in sport I understand the pressing demands from sporting clubs but they are one of many diverse interest groups in the community and it is important to strike a reasonable balance across all of those groups.”
(General community/ Occasional user)

OTHERS SEE HOW A REDEVELOPED CENTRE WILL CONTINUE TO SERVICE THE GROWING NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

Many of the written submissions also voice a desire to redevelop certain parts of the Centre such as parking and the foyer, which are seen as important aspects, as well as the need to increase seating capacity.

"We certainly do not want the Whitehorse Centre closed because it is one of the Cities most valuable and appreciated assets but it has outgrown its valuable use, by that I mean the seating arrangements in the auditorium must be increased."

(General community/ Occasional user)

These submissions highlight the benefit that the Centre brings to the local community and the value of bringing the Centre 'into the 21st century'. Redevelopment in this sense, is viewed as integral to servicing the growing and changing needs of the community.

"Only by thinking big, e.g. aiming to have a stage area large enough that it might attract major international ballet companies, will this Council be serving the future needs of this community. It is the future which must be the prime objective when it comes to such developments."

(General community/ Occasional user)

"It is vital that we keep the centre redeveloped to meet the needs of the growing number of people attending events at the centre."

(General community/ Occasional user)

SOME SUBMISSIONS HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORT ROLE THE CENTRE PLAYS IN LIVES OF OLDER RESIDENTS

Many of the written submissions from this cohort in support of the redevelopment express concern for the elderly population of Whitehorse and the wellbeing that the Centre brings to this demographic.

Older residents who frequent the Whitehorse Centre, no longer use other amenities that the City of Whitehorse has to offer such as sporting and recreational activities, making this a major driver of support.

"The Centre is a very valuable amenity to many residents of Whitehorse, especially the elderly who have difficulty accessing the type of entertainment usually offered and only available in the city of Melbourne. It would greatly enhance the culture and wellbeing of our community."

(General community/ Occasional user)

"It serves an essential part of us seniors' lives. As it is, many seniors are lonely and isolated and the many and varied shows you have there are a huge part of mine my friends lives."

(General community/ Occasional user)

These submissions frequently highlight the lack of accessibility to other performing arts venues in the area. This is particularly salient for the elderly, who may need extra assistance with journeying to venues in the city or other parts of Melbourne.

"We have to live with the fact that communities need facilities for lifestyle activities. Live theatre is one of these activities. Car parking is abysmal on days of shows. Apparently much of the car park is used by employees of the Council offices."

(General community/ Occasional user)

OTHERS SEE OPTION B AS A 'BAND AID' SOLUTION THAT WILL NOT SOLVE LONG TERM ISSUES

Support for option A amongst some in this group is also driven by the perception that option B does not solve the issue in the long term and in this respect, Council should be looking towards the future, rather than applying 'band aid' solutions to problems such those facing the Centre.

"Spending around \$7 million to keep it functioning for another 8-10 years doesn't appear to be, to our minds a good investment of rate payer funds. The main question under this option is, what will happen at the end of that time?"

(General community/ Occasional user)

Generally, it is clear from written submissions amongst the general community and occasional users, that the Whitehorse Centre is viewed as extremely valuable community asset that is not only worthy of keeping but upgrading to further enrich the lives of residents,

"We cannot become a City that is devoid of the arts. It seems that many local citizens are vocal about our sporting facilities and their importance – but the Arts are important too and the Whitehorse Theatre is frequented by throngs of people. Let's upgrade it to become a state of the art facility that caters for a range of needs and that other communities want to hire out."

(General community/ Occasional user)

"This would provide for the future entertainment and education of the City's residents and those of surrounding communities. The city possess an invaluable asset as of now, and its future development could do nothing but enhance the city's prospective future."

(General community/ Occasional user)

FOR THIS GROUP, THE COST OF THE PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT IS A MAJOR DRIVER OF OPPOSITION

The overwhelming critique of the option A amongst the community/ occasional users of the Centre, is the cost of the redevelopment. The most frequent concern was the perceived burden the redevelopment would place upon the finances of ratepayers. The figure of \$78 million is a source of apprehension, with many of the view that this is an excessive amount and would be better redirected to other services of the community.

"Our rates are already too high, and we don't agree with Council spending money they just haven't got, the facilities that are available are fine and a refurbishment would be preferable."
(General community/ Occasional user)

"Facilities 'screaming out' for a better slice of the capital works and recurrent budget include parks and open spaces, path networks and linkages and expenditure on improving active transport."
(General community/ Occasional user)

There was also concern that theatre and arts groups would struggle to cope with the increasing costs that the redevelopment would incur.

"It is my view that amateur theatre companies may struggle to survive in a larger complex."
(General community/ Occasional user)

SOME SUBMISSIONS WANTED TO SEE A SUITE OF OPTIONS WITH VARYING COSTS

Many written submissions from the general community and occasional users who are opposed to complete redevelopment expressed the wish for consideration of an option that costs less than the \$78 million proposed by Council. In this respect, redevelopment itself is not opposed, rather it is redevelopment at such a perceived high price that is the issue of concern for many in this group. To this end, these people are seeking alternative sources of funding that would reduce the cost to Whitehorse residents.

"Surely there can be some sort of compromise where the cost of the project can be reduced and the scale of the work can still satisfy the needs of the people in the community."
(General community/ Occasional user)

"Could a collaborative effort be achieved with regard to the Centre to ensure a really great auditorium into the future for the broader area with ratepayers of the three councils (and/or others as well) participating in the development of something significant."
(General community/ Occasional user)

"The parking issue could be managed progressively rather than simultaneously. A Melbourne University style underground carpark with parkland and trees on top is one option that might be considered given the shape of the land."
(General community/ Occasional user)

OTHERS PERCEIVED CENTRE USAGE TO BE LOW, WITH A LOT OF USERS COMING FROM OUTSIDE OF THE CITY OF WHITEHORSE

A key driver of opposition amongst this group is the perception that usage of the Centre is not adequate to warrant a large spend on redevelopment as it is perceived that many in the community are simply not interested in using the Centre and the demand is simply not present.

"There seems to be little demand for increased function rooms. Why come to the Whitehorse Centre for a function or business meeting when you have facilities in the business hubs of Box Hill and Ringwood. The current use of the Centre does not justify this huge development."

(General community/ Occasional user)

"Will it be justified – it appears the younger members of our community do not have time/desire to attend live theatre. I am not convinced that a rebuild will necessarily attract younger audiences in the coming years."

(General community/ Occasional user)

Some are also of the view that many users come from outside of the City of Whitehorse and that it is not reasonable to expect Whitehorse ratepayers to front the cost, when local usage is low.

"In all documentation I have read most of the users are from outside the City of Whitehorse."

(General community/ Occasional user)

"I see no need to spend ratepayers money on this building. Council should aim to live within its means as the residents of Whitehorse are struggling to do this themselves. I suggest building should be closed asap as only a very small percentage of residents use it."

(General community/ Occasional user)

THERE WAS CONCERN EXPRESSED THAT COUNCIL RATES WOULD RISE

In some submissions, there was a consistent call for more parklands in the City and areas that could be used for recreational purposes. There is an inherent fear that the carpark would eradicate a highly valued part of the community.

"Presently, the existing parkland provides the community with pleasant environment for walking, recreation and a monthly farmers' market. These things are highly valued by local residents."
(General community/ Occasional user)

"I have rarely used the Centre and value more parkland, closure is a genuine option from my perspective and will be quite happy if citizens indicate a preference for this option."
(General community/ Occasional user)

Another major concern that is consistent among some submissions is the perception that the redevelopment will cause Council rates to rise and this fear is driving opposition for option A.

"\$78 million is too big a sum to be spending at this point, on any grand new facilities, that appear to be quite adequate at present. I would expect also that such a large outlay of funds for this proposal would have a very heavy impact on our Council rates in the near future."
(General community/ Occasional user)

"The current rates are high enough. I would like to see rates reduced not unnecessarily increased. The focus should be on minimising rates not what is the maximum we can charge ratepayers."
(General community/ Occasional user)

THERE ARE MIXED VIEWS OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

Some written submissions from the general community and occasional users cohort are pleased with the consultation processes that Council has enacted and are thankful that Council is consulting with the wider community.

"The proposal for a complete redevelopment set out in the Business Case seems to me to be very reasonable and appropriate."
(General community/ Occasional user)

"I thank you most sincerely for giving me this opportunity to express my views on this very important project."
(General community/ Occasional user)

However, there are many written submissions that express the view that the consultation process itself has been a poor use of ratepayer money. In these instances, the process time is seen to be overly excessive, with several consultations and surveys occurring over an extended period of time. Three surveys is perceived to be excessive, leading to the belief that their views are not being properly considered in the process.

"Like many others, I had my say but the result evidently wasn't to Council's liking, and so it is spending more of our rates in trying to get the answer it wants- even to the extent of hiring consultants to help push this option."
(General community/ Occasional user)

"I note the three options. These are the result of expensive and ongoing consultations. The intention to extend the consultation process even further raises the very real question of validity of using more of the Whitehorse's financial resources."
(General community/ Occasional user)

MANY ARE CRITICAL OF COUNCIL FOR THE TIME AND MONEY SPENT ON CONSULTATION

Criticism has come from perceived lack of a range of options provided to the public to decide on for the proposal. Some in the general community expressed displeasure that the Council has only sought out one quote for the proposed redevelopment.

"It appears that only one architect has prepared a design, and only one quotation has been received for the building of the new Centre. Why is this so?"

(General community/ Occasional user)

"Yes, I do believe we have to do something to bring the Whitehorse Centre into the 21st Century and beyond, but I feel just the one quote was not sufficient. I always thought Local Government operations were expected to get 3 quotes?"

(General community/ Occasional user)

Furthermore, the consultation process was seen to be biased in favour of the redevelopment rather than considering the alternative proposals. Many in the public believe that the Council will erect a new centre regardless of the options given and therefore the process itself would be redundant.

"The business case seems skewed towards arguing for the redevelopment option rather than providing a dispassionate cost-benefit analysis of the whole suite of options... my main concern is that the consultation process is really a façade to promote the high-cost redevelopment option rather than a dispassionate appraisal of alternative options."

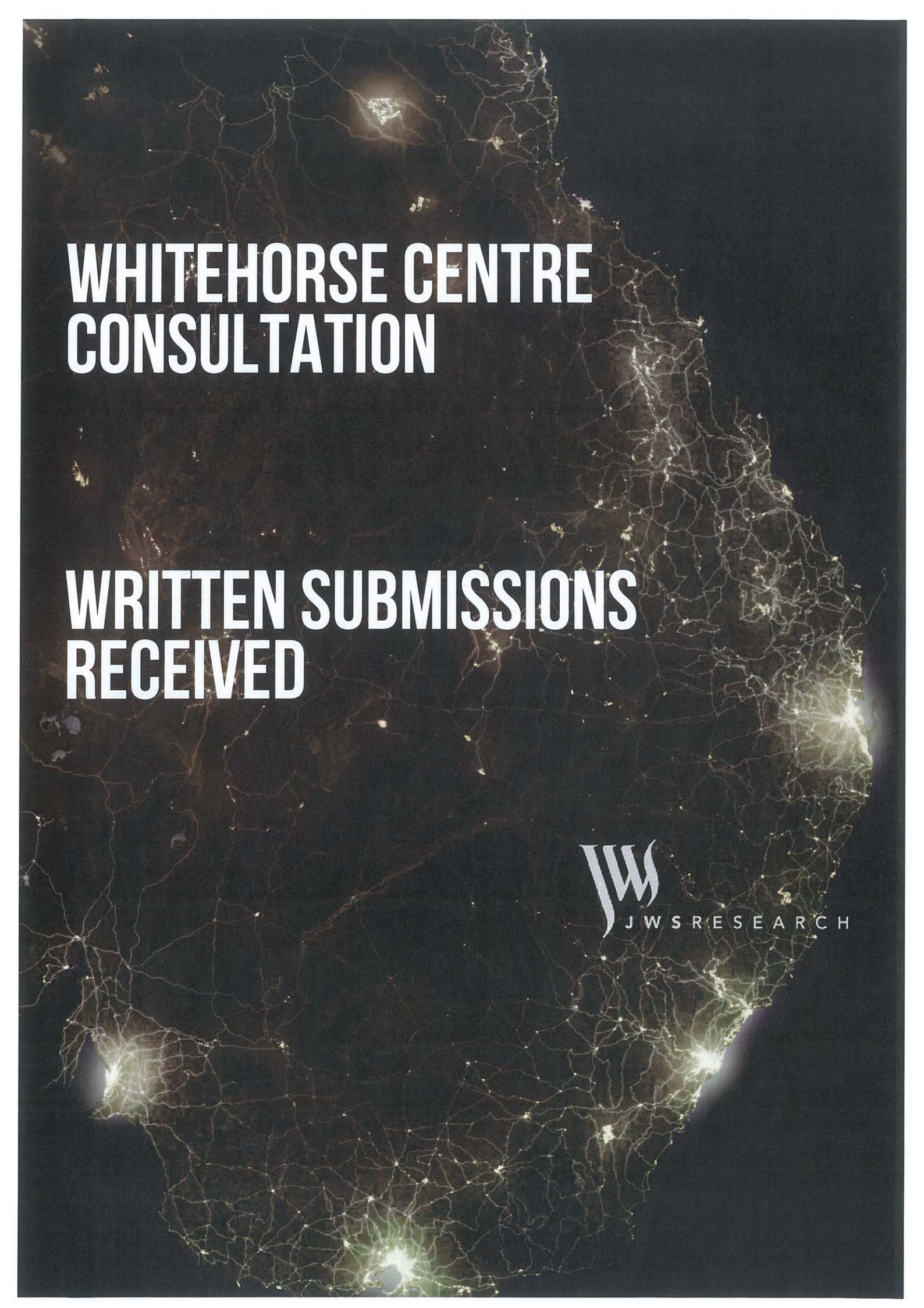
(General community/ Occasional user)

APPENDICES





APPENDIX: WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS



WHITEHORSE CENTRE CONSULTATION

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED



JWS RESEARCH

Please note that due to privacy requirements, the following pages have had identifiable information redacted. Only information that could potentially identify the writer has been redacted. All care has been taken to ensure that identities are protected.

Feedback:

Hi there

I want to thank the mayor for his letter to all of us explaining the situation with the centre redevelopment. I see that council has put a lot of effort and research in coming to its decision to spend \$78m on redevelopment and I can now see why.

My husband and I can afford to pay increased rates and we don't mind if it is for a specific objective and that objective is delivered with integrity and without wastefulness.

Option A: Obviously council prefer the redevelopment. I'm happy to accept this if citizens indicate that this is preferred however I'd like to point out that many of we citizens don't have the option to access more money than we earn if we want to renovate our home and improve disability access etc. As a council, you do. You take it from us.

Option B: The option of the weak minded. Not really an option at all.

Option C: As I have rarely used the centre and value more parkland, this is a genuine option from my perspective and will be quite happy if citizens indicate a preference for this option.

Thank-you again and for all the care that you put into managing the city of Whitehorse.

Happy Christmas to you all.

Feedback:

Over the last 34 years my husband and I have made many, many visits to the centre and feel sorry that the old lady is feeling the strains of old age, the same as ourselves. So I do not write as a would be attending of many years to come but if I may make a comment of the papers re development of the old building. I have read almost word for word of them dated December 17th 2015. It strikes me that a new building altogether built onto and behind the council offices/library whilst the old building is still operative is another option but perhaps I have the wrong idea. However we watch developments with keen interest and do hope that the final decision is successful and gives patrons etc. many years of interest and enjoyment. Happy Christmas and an eventful new year to all involved.

Feedback (sent to Cr Raylene Carr) :

Hi Raylene,

We spoke about the proposal to construct a replacement centre on the night of the professional theatre season launch.

Despite my best intentions I had not got around to communicating my sentiments to the local press ahead of the Council meeting this evening but I am a strong supporter of the redevelopment and am sceptical about the alleged community outrage against the project, especially when a local member of Parliament enters the fray and tells us that we should go to neighbouring facilities!

As a regular participant in sport I understand the pressing demands from sporting clubs but they are one of many diverse interest groups in the community and it is important to strike a reasonable balance across all of those groups – including the users of the centre.

I do hope that Council will press ahead with the development despite the vociferous naysayers, as it will be providing a first class facility for the ratepayers of the future and that is something of which it can be very proud.

Feedback:

I am concerned that Council continues to consider spending money on the performing arts centre. If there was a real need for such a centre in our private enterprise economy, one would be built by private enterprise, NOT with ratepayer dollars.

With an economy having to support an enormous community debt at all levels of government, this is not the time to subsidise small groups who should help themselves.

Feedback:

Hi,

We've been residents of Nunawading for some 34 years and have seen many changes (not all good, but you can't please everyone!). We have been to the Whitehorse Centre on a number of occasions, commencing with the annual Nunawading Primary School concerts to see our children perform. The last occasion was to view a play by an amateur theatrical group about three years ago. We noticed then that the Centre required to be "updated" after many years of use.

The recent letter from the Mayor indicated three possible options. Taking the options outlined, in the reverse order, firstly, we would not like to see the Centre close as we believe it is an important community asset. Secondly, spending around \$7 million to keep it functioning for another 8 – 10 years doesn't appear to be, to our minds, a good investment of rate payer funds. The main question under this option is, what will happen at the end of that time? We assume that it will have to be demolished and a new structure erected to replace it. We think that this would be quite costly and not palatable to the hard working Whitehorse rate payers. Thirdly, a major redevelopment. We understand and appreciate that the Centre requires a considerable refurbishment to meet updated regulations and standards. We believe that this can be achieved, but at a considerably lower cost than was proposed, with a less "grand" design. We would like to see any redevelopment be environmentally friendly and suggest grey water recycling and solar panels to help keep the running costs down (maybe even storage batteries latter, once the costs have come down).

We remain hopeful that JWS Research will come up with a less costly but just as effective redevelopment and look forward to learning about their proposal/s.

Feedback:

\$78 Million Cost for new Whitehorse Centre.

Good morning,

I would like to register my complaint over the proposal to build a new Whitehorse Centre.

The cost is absurd, it is a total waste of money. The cost should be \$3 - \$5 Million & if the Council has a supply of funds I would like to see it spent on proper Council responsibilities.

Upkeep of Roads & Parks should be paramount. Also buy more street sweeper, as the Councils policy of having various gum trees is creating a mess on our roads, gutters & gardens.

Also, the Council should follow the example of the Maroondah Council re their upgrading of Dorset Golf Course & apply it to Morack Golf Course.

The upgraded course is a pleasure to play & shows that if you spend money on a Golf Course, more people will play it & also pass on the message that it is a very good golf course.

Feedback:

Thank you for your notice of 17/12/2015: although we live in Glen Waverley, and not Ratepayers of Whitehorse City, we attend many functions at the Whitehorse Centre. The main reason is that there is no such venue here, and the city of Monash (Glen Waverley) is the worse for it.

Our impression is that the Whitehorse Centre is very sensibly used, with some excellent functions, which in their turn, promote great talent: also, the acoustics of the existing building are good: therefore it seems to us that your Option B may be the way to go.

Redevelopment would create chaos and much disruption: which would be unfortunate for existing talent and performers. Incidentally, you may have a word with Monash Council to provide a decent Community Centre here - far more appropriate than more apartment buildings. I did say to them at one point that, without a Community Centre, you do not have a Community. Obviously, I had no reply.

Feedback:

To the nominated Project Consultants re the rebuilding of the Whitehorse Centre.

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I fail to understand the stance taken by Council in their Resolution re the Whitehorse Centre. Never have I read such a negative approach for a solution.

Surely among our councillors there must be someone who can lead and negotiate a number of ways to put a recommendation without two of the three parts of the resolution recommending closure either now or later. What about some positive input?

Maybe we have to take a middle ground, but this has not been allowed for. It is either spend the recommended money or consider a shutdown. To me this is a childish approach by people who don't see the thousands of mainly Seniors in our community who come to the existing centre to enjoy themselves at wonderful theatrical performances each year.

Many claim that the centre is underutilised now and they don't know anyone who goes there. The same could be said for the swimming centre at which a great deal of money was spent on updating it recently. I don't know anyone who uses that facility either, but it surely is an important asset to the community. We have to live with the fact that communities need facilities for lifestyle activities. Live theatre is but one of these activities.

It seems that the survey undertaken of 500 people at random indicates that "only" 25% of these have attended the Whitehorse Centre. I wonder how the same 500 would have answered had they been asked "do they attend the Swimming Centre or the Council Golf Course" both of which must cost a great deal of money to maintain. It appears that 77% of all centre bookings are from Whitehorse clients.--

Also the Whitehorse centre is not only used for theatre (up to 400 seats), but also for regular group meetings such as Probus, ballet groups, Women Aglow and many more. There has been some comment that there are other centres close by. This I challenge. For instance anyone who has been to the nearby Karalyka Centre will know how terrible the seat spacing is.

The centre has been in operation from 1986 which is nearly 30 years of continuous use, surely an upgrade is not out of the question and is in need of making it meet more modern operating requirements. What that upgrade ends up being, we will be guided by the consultants as to the best way to spend our money, but closure even over 10 years as suggested by Councillors would be a community disaster.

Car parking is abysmal on days of shows. Apparently much of the car park is used by employees of the Council Offices. One only has to be slightly under the hour before the show to find there is no room for parking, with many elderly people having to walk considerable distances to the centre. The theatre itself lacks facilities for people with a disability having to climb stairs to access seats and only one toilet for those with a disability.

I believe there is no doubt that the centre needs a major upgrade to cater for the thousands of people and set the Municipality up for a really good centre looking forward to the next 30 years.

We are your very happy theatre goers.

Feedback:

Objection to Whitehorse Council expenditure on Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment

- I do not want the Centre to be completely redeveloped
- I see no need to spend ratepayers money on this building
- \$78 million is excessive
- \$7 million is also excessive
- Council should aim to live within its means just as the residents of Whitehorse are struggling to do this themselves
- I suggest the building should be closed asap as only a very small percentage of residents use it. I have lived in Whitehorse for 20 years and have had associations in Whitehorse most of my life as relatives have lived in Box Hill and I lived in Blackburn during my early teens, we have never used it nor even heard of it.
- Alternatively keep the building as it is now as a heritage building, you have opted for uglier older more derelict insignificant buildings to become heritage listed, why not this "significant" one.

Feedback:

I would be urging Council to "bite the bullet" and go for the full rebuild!!

Feedback:

I've just read your email regarding the Nunawading Business Case concerning the Whitehorse Arts Centre. I love that place and it's essential to keep it going for another 8-10 years if possible. It serves an essential part of us seniors' lives. I am a recent widow and a senior and the thought of the centre possibly closing would be unthinkable. As it is, many seniors are lonely and isolated and the many and varied shows you have there are a huge part of my and my friends lives. The class of the performers and performances are quite unique for a local arts centre, especially the last year's performances of the King & I and The Boy From Oz. The King & I was exceptional. The costumes and scenery were every bit as good as any city performance or indeed a West End of London show. Please don't close the centre but choose one of the alternatives to improve its function and/or building and/or performances. If I am directing my concern to the wrong department, kindly forward it on as my concern is very real and would change my life immensely if it were to close down completely. I love varied shows and can pick and choose my preferences without fear of missing out and look forward to them as part of my enjoyment of my life. The place is evidently so popular that to close it down completely would be such a sad loss to all citizens and people coming from near and far to enjoy your shows. I should add that in my younger life, I was a member of the Melbourne Chorus of Sweet Adelines and often performed there at the soundshell to the enjoyment of all of us in the chorus and we numbered quite a lot in those days in the 80's and 90's and of course our audiences alike. If you need any more support for keeping the place going, do not hesitate to contact me and I have many friends and citizens of Whitehorse that would gladly put their views to the powers that be to keep the centre going for as long as possible, in some new form or other.

Feedback:

I strongly favour an alternative to demolition and rebuild.

Feedback:

Lord Mayor Whitehorse Council,

I wish to strongly object to the proposed Redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre for an estimated cost of \$67 million dollars plus the Car Park cost of \$10.9 million.

As a retiree on an indexed linked pension based on discounted CPI increases I have continued to struggle with Whitehorse Council rate increases at least two to three times more than that rate of increase for several years and I have had enough of wanton expenditure waste.

Two examples of that waste being the tens of millions of our money building the Aqualink Centre and the continued fanciful upgrade of the Box Hill Shopping precinct walkways and footpaths.

I request that all council members reconsider their options and settle on either option B or C as being more responsible and affordable.

Further, I request that council consider only paying bonuses to Whitehorse Executive employees where they have demonstrated a cost saving across their area of responsibility of at least 10% or more for at least the last 2 years or more.

Feedback:

Hello,

Today I received a letter from Cr Philip Daw. Thank you for the update.

I am in full support of a redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre if it is required but I know there have been others who oppose the idea. Perhaps the Council could break down the costs for redevelopment over a 'per person' ratio for those in the City of Whitehorse. Then it may not seem so expensive to the rate payers.

I do believe we are incredibly fortunate to have the services available to us in the City of Whitehorse, whether they are ones that my family and I use or don't. But many ratepayers may like a breakdown so it doesn't seem so overwhelming.

Thank you for allowing ratepayers to give their feedback.

Kindest Regards

Feedback:

To the office of the Mayor

In reply to your proposed options for the Whitehorse Civic Centre we are most concerned with your demolishing option.

This Centre is a very valuable amenity to many residents of Whitehorse, especially the elderly who have difficulty accessing the type of entertainment usually offered and only available in the city of Melbourne.

As elderly ratepayers are unable to travel distances (for various reasons) it is most critical to retain this facility with so much on offer, particularly good parking with smooth level access to the venue.

We think the proposal to reconstruct the Centre would be an asset to our community and although it is a substantial investment we are sure it will be a significant and well patronised (by all ages) feature of our growing city. It would greatly enhance the culture and wellbeing of our community.

WE SUPPORT OPTION A.

(residents since 1972)

Feedback:

Hello

Thank you for your letter regarding the future of the Whitehorse Centre.

I look forward to receiving further updates and also being included in the survey and research on the proposed future of the Whitehorse Centre

I live out of the area and feel a venue like this is so valuable not only for the residents in this municipality but also to others.

Regards

Feedback (to Cr Andrew Munroe) :

Andrew,

So far as Whitehorse Centre is concerned GO FOR IT AND GO FOR IT IN A BIG WAY. I have only lived in Whitehorse for 3 years and any negative criticism I have of the Council is purely subjective and therefore not worthy of attention when it comes to as issue like this. Only by thinking big and e.g. aiming to have a stage area large enough that it might attract major international ballet companies, will this Council be serving the future needs of this community. It is the future which must be the prime objective when it comes to such developments.

That site is not close enough to the railway, so you are starting at a disadvantage, therefore everything else about it must be so impressive that it will attract both performers and audiences. It is difficult to forecast how people will travel in the future but seeing the train is out, access to the centre is as important as the facility itself.

My gut feeling is that the present concept (which I know nothing about) is not ambitious enough. IT MUST BE BIGGER AND BETTER THAN THE FINANCE PEOPLE THINK IS FEASIBLE. Go for it

Feedback :

Good morning Cr. Daw/Philip

Firstly, I apologise for being so lax in responding to your letters of 17th December and 12th February concerning the Whitehorse Centre. The details concerning this project were certainly more informative than anything else which I have read – again, thank you. Unfortunately it has raised a few questions, as follows:

1. I note that already two research projects have been undertaken in the past. What happened to the results of this research – why is it now necessary for this third research project? Already it appears a great deal of Ratepayers' money has been spent and to no avail.
2. My friend and I have been theatregoers for about a decade (there were 4 of us now there are only 2). We attend the plays on Friday night, Saturday afternoon or evening – surely the most popular times for patrons. I do not have statistics before me but feel positive that over the last 2/3 years attendances have been reduced and certainly the audience is mainly "grey power". In the future, even if the \$70m+ is spent on completely rebuilding this Centre, will it be justified – it appears the younger members of our community do not have time/desire to attend live theatre. Can't speak for the concerts and other types of entertainment offered. I am not convinced that a rebuild will necessarily attract younger audiences in the coming years. In your December letter you state a projection of community use would rise to 67% - in view of the facilities which would be offered I do not really think this is a very large projection.
3. I do agree that some of the new facilities on offer should the complex be re-built would/could entice more people to the Theatre. I do not have a crystal ball to say what the upcoming generations want in the years ahead. Many young people do not even know what they are doing in the forthcoming week, even with their electronic diaries etc.
4. The calibre of plays has not been as good as in the past – perhaps this is due to the unhealthy/unsafe/small facilities offered to the Producers/Actors. We do not necessarily go to see a play because a well-known actor is appearing – more because the story-line has appeal. Also we do not mind the play covering a controversial subject but at times the language leaves much to be desired.
5. You mention the Car Park – I agree something must be done about this factor because at times when visiting the Library or Council Offices there is no place to park the car. It has been said that mostly the spaces are taken up by the employees of the Council – even though there is a Staff Car Park provided. I put it to you that this problem is exacerbated by there being no time restrictions and commuters are parking there all day and walking to the Station.
6. I would hate to see the Whitehorse Centre close because of poor facilities etc. However, I am not convinced that provision of all components as set out in the Business Plan would make a new Centre more attractive to the residents. At this stage I really can only support Option B and even this is done with some reservation.

I think I have said all I can think of at present – rest assured my mind is not tightly closed but that doesn't mean that I can easily be persuaded to think otherwise. Clearly the Council has to make a decision and the issue of Rate-Capping has not made it any easier. Certainly I have not spoken to anyone who supports the \$70m+ expenditure.

Best Wishes

Feedback :

Dear Councillor Daw,

A belated response to your plea for feedback in regard to the proposed development of the Whitehorse Centre but not too late I hope.

As a regular theatre goer for at least the last 20 yrs, in company with friends for the same length of time, I would like to make some observations.

1. I note that there have already been two research projects at cost unknown (?) to the general public but presumably expensive. And now a third. Do the Council have no faith in the people involved and will you believe any results from the third consultation?

It is ratepayers money you are spending and I wonder just how responsibly this is being done. There could be the question of self-aggrandisement on the part of some councillors in making such important decisions on behalf of the ratepayers.

2. I agree that an up-date is needed to bring the theatre to required aesthetic as well as health and safety standards. This could attract a wider clientele, perhaps in a younger age group. Currently, the functions I attend seem to attract those who appear to be in the retired category.

3. If the calibre of productions were extended, more and younger people might be encouraged to use the facilities.

4. Car Park usage certainly needs attention but whether to the extent of a multi-storied / underground one is debatable. Despite your protestations to the contrary, I believe that much of the weekday parking is taken up by commuters who are parked all day. As one who is involved with Friends of the Library, I find it impossible to find a park in the main area when I arrive prior to 10.00am for book-sorting or meetings. I then have to find a limited time space in the library area but risk a parking fine because I need more than 1 hour or cross Whitehorse Rd. to commercial parking. Has the Council considered time limits for day-time parking ?

5. I would hate to see the Whitehorse Centre closed but having considered the options given, I can, with some reluctance , support Option B though that too is not ideal. Given the rates we pay, despite the issue of Rate Capping, I cannot support the proposed spending of \$70million++ .

Yours sincerely,

Feedback:

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to express my strongest support for the total redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre. It is much easier for the nay-sayers to be heard---they have only to say that "it is too expensive" (at \$78 million), and need give no further justification. On the other hand, those of us who support the redevelopment cannot simply state "it is not too expensive" and expect to be listened to. Therefore it is necessary to give some justification for so saying, and more than likely, this is the reason why there are more people apparently opposed to the redevelopment than in favour of it.

In the local press I have already expressed the view that whilst I never use the many sporting facilities in the municipality, I nonetheless support the use of ratepayer funds to provide such facilities, and therefore find it offensive that those who never use the Art Centre grudge the expenditure on it. Maybe, as part of the analysis, you could establish and publish the actual expenditure on capital and maintenance works for sporting facilities since the Whitehorse Centre was first constructed, for a comparison with the expenditure to date on Arts facilities. Further, estimates of capital and maintenance works on sporting facilities over the next 40 years could be included, and compared with the figure of \$78million on the Art Centre. This might go some way to appeasing the non-users of the Art Centre, when they see that their sporting facilities cost (as I expect) pretty much the same!

Unfortunately, much of the debate has been reduced to one of dollars. There has been very little said about the need, from an intellectual perspective, of a first class Performing Arts facility.

Since time immemorial, man has used performing and visual arts for entertainment, education, intellectual stimulation, for protesting, for preserving histories and a whole range of other purposes. One only needs to see the look of pride on parent's faces as they watch their children strut their stuff in the ballet school annual performances. Or to listen to the great belly laughs of an audience enjoying the Wharf Review satirising our politicians (something that would never be permitted in some countries not too far away!). Or feel the tension in the audience gripped by the recent brilliant production of Hamlet. All these are so necessary to a well-balanced society. Many in our community are aging, and it is unreasonable to expect people to travel to the City to see such brilliant productions. But to attract these events to our locality requires that we have the best of theatres in which the cast can perform. The days of expecting actors to perform in cramped, unsuitable venues are as outdated as expecting office and factory staff to work in Dickensian conditions. I have performed once at the existing centre, and frankly, I was appalled at the back-stage conditions there.

I will not comment on the failure of the building to comply with current regulations, as I am not qualified to do so. You will know that better than most. But it is quite clear to me that the existing foyer is far too small, even for the capacity of the current theatre. Trying to cross the existing foyer whilst holding a couple of glasses of wine prior to a performance, is fraught with difficulties. And whilst a drink is not essential, for many it is certainly a part of the whole social occasion of going to the theatre.

The proposal for a complete redevelopment set out in the Business Case seems to me to be very reasonable and appropriate. I look forward to the day when I can take a seat in the new Centre and enjoy a production that is every bit as essential to the soul, as sporting activities are for the body.

Thank you for all the work done so far. I hope that the outcome is the delivery of a very much needed facility.

Yours sincerely

Feedback :

I am unsure about the time line for a final decision on the proposed Whitehorse Centre, but I want to support the importance of continuing to have a facility that meets the needs of our community. As you have pointed out, sports and recreation have received large amounts of expenditure on capital works. This is important, but it is also important to balance that with suitable infrastructure to support culture and arts in our community.

Feedback:

Dear Councillor

I have just completed the online survey regarding the future of the Whitehorse Centre. As I felt it did not allow me to adequately express my opinion on the matter I thought I should communicate with you directly.

I strongly believe that the existing centre is more than adequate for the communities requirements well into the foreseeable future. Essential works should be undertaken, as they should have been done on an ongoing basis in the past, and financed by the council achieving a modest annual efficiency dividend of 2.5% per annum as most public and private enterprises have achieved over recent years. Based on the council's budget of \$173 million for year 2015/16 it would generate \$4 million plus on an ongoing basis that would be more than enough to maintain the centre for the foreseeable future. Thanking you for your continuing good work for the community.

Yours sincerely

Feedback:

To Whom it May Concern

I just wanted to quickly send an email in support of the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre.

It would be such a sad loss to see the Whitehorse Centre close. Many patrons already use and enjoy this facility and pay to do so. (Surely the funds would eventually be recuperated anyway from ticket payments and hirings.) The Whitehorse Centre is an important meeting (and social) place, a place for celebrating the arts, a space to hire out and a community hub. We cannot become a City that is devoid of the Arts. It seems that many local citizens are vocal about our sporting facilities and their importance - but the Arts are important too and the Whitehorse Theatre is frequented by throngs of people. It is a place where I am able to take my elderly relatives, my young children, my husband and also visitors. We need to invest in the future of our Arts and preserve our access to this important facility. Let's not just save the existing building, let's upgrade it to become a state of the art facility that caters for a range of needs and that other communities want to hire out.

The Future of the Whitehorse Centre should be a bright one, and it is well worth investing in!

Kind thanks,

Feedback:

I have been a regular patron of the Whitehorse Theatre for many years and would very much like to see it continue. Obviously if there is going to be major redevelopment works it will not be possible to use the centre whilst these are carried out. However, I do feel that is the best use of money, rather than doing something that will only have short term benefits. My preference therefore is for Option A. I definitely think there is a need for a theatre and performing arts centre in this area. I have recently attended the Frankston Arts Centre and was very impressed with the size and comfort of the theatre and would like to have something similar in the local area.

Feedback:

Good morning,

I have just completed the survey for you via your research company appointed to achieve some answers for you.

One of the disappointing features of the survey was the lack of opportunity for 'free comment' at the end.

Having worked for many years at the City of Whitehorse and Nunawading before it I have watched the Council grow through some interesting times.

Now I am visiting the Centre for pleasure I have also had the opportunity to communicate with other members of the public doing the same.

MANY OF THEM DON'T LIVE IN THE CITY OF WHITEHORSE. Depending on who is performing at the Centre, folk come from Pakenham, Frankston etc.

During my time working with the Council, and in the years after, collaborative initiatives have been set up with support from Maroondah and Manningham Councils in a three way partnership/funding effort.

I acknowledge not knowing how the financials were dealt with but the concept seems reasonable when, for example, one looks around the theatre at the Centre and sees it is *not full* every time I have gone together with being aware a popular booking has the opportunity to add an extra performance because of demand and a free timeslot either before the start of their season or at the end.

Could a collaborative effort be achieved with regard to the Centre to ensure a really great auditorium into the future for the broader area with ratepayers of the three councils (and/or others as well) participating in the development of something significant.

Makes sense to me if it can work.

Regards,

Feedback:

1. Why would you need to replace a 30 year old roof that normally lasts 60 years?
2. Why replace a boiler room when just maintenance is needed?
3. Why replace all carpet when just the walkway needs new carpet?
4. Why paint the walls and ceiling when paint still looks fine?
5. Why reupholster all seats when just a few front row seats need upholstering?
6. Kitchen works fine why upgrade? But if insisted upon cost would be peanuts.
7. Uneven pavers should not have occurred had standard of work been better supervised during construction, but again should not be too costly to rectify.
8. Lighting and audio system works fine for current centre.

Patrons should be prepared to put up with small inconveniences and not seek perfection. Melbourne city offers alternative venues if patrons are not pleased with what Ratepayers of Whitehorse have to offer.

Whitehorse Centre should be self- funded and adequate fees charged to cover all costs of maintenance etc..

Ratepayers are already struggling to pay for essential services.

Cheers

Feedback:

<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Years	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 Years
<input type="checkbox"/> 5 Years	<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent
<input type="checkbox"/> 40 Years	<input type="checkbox"/> Attachments
<input type="checkbox"/> ARC	

The Future of the Whitehorse Centre

I love my Whitehorse Centre & have attended much entertainment there over the last 30 years. I live in the area & it is great to be able to enjoy a variety of good shows locally instead of going into Town.

Options B & C really have no future!

Therefore I vote for A Redevelopment even though the cost seems prohibitive. How many years of "no Centre" will that be during the building process?

If you do go ahead I have three suggestions:-

1) Make sure there is comfortable leg room for each seat.

2) Put in a central aisle for convenience. Yes, I know it is out of favour these days due to loss of seating (& therefore revenue) but surely money grubbing could give way for once for easier access & comfort.

3) There should be at least three (3) entrance/exits to relieve the crush in the present Foyer, especially with the number of wheelchairs etc. An obvious safety measure I should have thought.

I enclose here an idea from the recent "Whitehorse Leader" — worth a try!

... you are happy.

Share upgrade costs

WE ARE long-term subscribers to the Whitehorse Theatre Season. The theatre is always full, but the average age of attendees would be over 60. Among this group there are questions of the need for such an extensive and costly "rebuild".

We wonder if the changing population and emerging technologies have been sufficiently evaluated in the new design.

Then, if these factors have been assessed in the business case, has the council considered cost sharing with neighbouring councils? This would provide a bigger pool of users, too. Statistics suggest that almost half the users of the centre come from beyond Whitehorse.

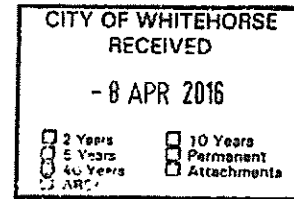
JUNE KAVANAGH and
ELIZABETH MEREDITH

Yours sincerely

Feedback

Wednesday 6th April 2016

Cr. Philip Daw
Mayor, City of Whitehorse
Council Offices, Locked Bag 2
Nunawading DC
Vic. 3131



Dear Sir,

Re: The Future of the Whitehorse Centre – Proposed Development
Options for Performing Arts Theatre and Functions Centre

Thank you for forwarding me the details of the proposed options regarding the above. I have forwarded the following submission to JWS Research.

I am against the "Redevelopment" (A) Building and Project, plus Car park costing \$77.9 m

I have lived in Box Hill South for over 20 years and the Council Rates on my property have increased in that time from \$443.30 per annum in 1998 to \$1,609.40 p.a. to February 2016. Taking into account the current increased Council Rates, I object to Proposal (A) as I know further Rate increases will ensue. It is the Rate payers who would be required to service this extortionate proposal and this is unfair to many, who are also struggling to live in Box Hill at this time.

If "Essential Works" (B) are an absolute necessity and would allow the Centre to continue to operate at an estimated cost of \$7 million for 8 to 10 years, this is my choice.

The Whitehorse Councillors would know that there are numerous places scattered around the City of Whitehorse which need urgent attention. Just one in mind is the state of the Council property beside the Box Hill Neighbourhood House at 47 Kitchener Street, Box Hill South which is a derelict, unused and boarded-up house. This is a Health and Safety problem as well as being an eye-sore. The fact that it is in the famous Robert McCubbin area, where one of Australia's most famous painters worked, is a disgrace. If the Councillors wish to "put their names on the map" with a suitable project for the people of the City of Whitehorse, regarding Arts and Recreation, they need look no further than making that precinct in Box Hill South better suited to public use. It would not cost a fraction of the \$77 million and would be well used by local and surrounding residents (Ratepayers). It would also eliminate the need for local residents to travel to Nunawading for Arts and Recreation, and would remove the inconvenience of having to negotiate major re-construction over a long period.

I understand that this submission is for Research and analysis. I trust this process will be carried out in consideration of those residents of the City of Whitehorse who, in the end and whether or not they can afford to, will be asked to pay the cost of any project that may be undertaken.

Yours sincerely,

Feedback:

11th April 2016

The Mayor & Councillors

City Of Whitehorse

Ladies & Gentlemen

My sincere apologies for not having responded to your
Letter of 14th March with respect to the future of the Whitehorse Centre.

It occurs to me that perhaps the future of the Centre could be considered with the
Future of the old Nunawading Primary School on Springvale Rd, with the two developments
Taking place at the same time & incorporating U3A & a new theatre complex on the same
Site?

If this is not feasible, I would certainly vote for Option A, the potential redevelopment
Of the Centre on its present site, or perhaps a little larger site than at present. This would
Provide for the future entertainment & education of the City's residents & those of
Surrounding communities.

The City possesses an invaluable asset as of now, and its future development could do
Nothing but enhance the City's prospective future.

I thank you most sincerely for giving me this opportunity to express my views on this
Very important project.

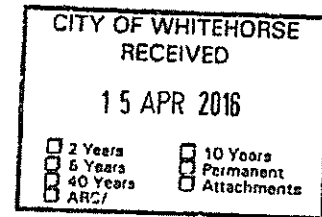
Yours Sincerely

Handwritten signature and initials, possibly 'D'.

Feedback:

April 12th. 2016

CR. Philip Daw
Whitehorse City Council
Locked Bag 2
Nunawading DC 3131
DX13209 Mitcham



Greetings Philip.

Many thanks for your continued correspondence regarding the proposed re-build of the Whitehorse Centre.

It is patently obvious that the council is going to erect a NEW Centre, regardless of what the ratepayers vote for. Since the previous survey, where the majority of ratepayers voted against building a new centre, the council has now engaged a re-research consultant, and is conducting a prolonged advertising campaign in conjunction with another survey.

It appears that only one architect has prepared a design, and only one quotation has been received for the building of the new Centre. Why is this so ? When building a new house, one would normally consider several designs and have several firms quote for the erection of the building.

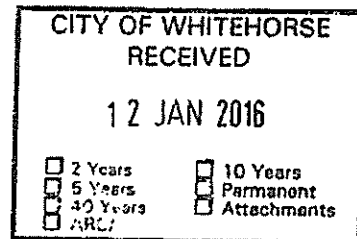
If you have been reading the Whitehorse Leader, there are more letters against the proposal to build a new Centre, than what are in favour of proceeding. One can only assume that the Councillors are not listening to their constituents !

Again by reading the Leader, one can only assume that most of the Councillors are living in "Cuckoo Land". The decision to reduce the number of car spaces for new multi story buildings, and now to sell off a car parking area, (presumably to find funds for the new centre) is beyond belief.

Feedback:

10 January 2016

Cr Philip Daw
Mayor
Whitehorse City Council
379 - 397 Whitehorse Rd
Locked Bag 2
Nunawading VIC 3131



Dear Mayor Daw

Thank you for your letter outlining the Council Resolution on the Whitehorse Centre. As I understand the proposals, there are three possibilities — Option A that recommends the redevelopment of the Centre; Option B that suggests essential works that ensure it remains open for the next decade and Option C that warns of closure within two years.

As you can see from my postal address, I am not part of your jurisdiction. However, I appreciate your reaching out to me as a Centre user to garner my feedback.

As our record will show, my husband and I attended numerous performances at the Whitehorse Arts Centre over the years. We enjoyed mainly theatrical performances. The fair ticket pricing and easy parking attracted us. Also the friendly atmosphere generated by the staff lent a welcoming quality.

Some years ago, when my husband was in the throes of fighting his terminal multiple myeloma (cancer of the bone marrow), I recall being terribly distracted. We had tickets to a show and did not want to 'waste' them, so I grabbed them and took our son. When we got to the Arts Centre, we discovered that they were for the previous evening. I explained what was happening and the box office and ushers were very gentle with us. They had some spare seats and we got to see the show. My memory of that incident is cushioned by the aura of welcome we experienced.

As far as I am concerned the Arts Centre is a gem. Please do not program it for closure. If you do decide to keep it alive, then may I suggest that Whitehorse City Council's efforts are foresighted and not short term. Ten years will pass very quickly and you will be in the same place you are now only confronted with higher costs. My vote is for Option A — redevelop the centre and promote it well to the entire Melbourne community. It's a treasure to be shared.

Yours truly

Feedback:

6	RECEIVED 26 APR 2018 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Years <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Years <input type="checkbox"/> 10 Years <input type="checkbox"/> Permanent <input type="checkbox"/> 10 Years <input type="checkbox"/> Permanent <input type="checkbox"/> Attachments	P1 of 5
<u>Arts and Recreation Development</u> <u>Whitehorse City Council</u> <u>379-397 Whitehorse Rd.</u> <u>Munawading, 3131.</u> <u>20 April 2016</u>		
<u>To whom it may concern,</u>		
<u>Re: Submission on Whitehorse Centre Project</u>		
<u>OPTION A: REDEVELOPMENT</u>		
<p>If the condition of the existing Whitehorse Centre building is as bad as regularly described in the Whitehorse News, why is this so ???</p> <p>It seems that "the ageing [30 year old] Centre is incurring increasingly expensive maintenance costs and does not comply with today's building codes, particularly in regard to disability access".</p> <p>In fact that sounds somewhat similar to my home:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ageing [60 years old]• incurring increasingly expensive maintenance costs• (likely) would not comply with all of today's building codes• would not comply with disability access codes <p>Re.</p> <p>Would I do with my home ?? what Council is proposing for the Whitehorse Centre (Option A)? - NEVER !!!</p> <p>Unfortunately, Council is adopting a "build and forget" policy minded with one of its most important assets,</p>		

[but don't worry, the ratepayers will pay for it]!!
Shame on Council!!

What would Council do if this was the Civic Centre??, or the Box Hill Town Hall?? Are they "build and forget" policies too?? [I'm sure they are not].

Council needs to bring its funding and maintenance policies for the Whitehorse Centre into line with its policies for the Civic Centre and the Box Hill Town Hall [i.e. fund and upgrade the asset progressively and appropriately] and Council end up with another Heritage building (1980's) that they will be proud of [as well as the ratepayers].

It's a simple policy that Council obviously uses "elsewhere", why not "everywhere"?? Be proud of our heritage (stay away from the "developers' moonscaping" attitudes etc...), and show the ratepayers you do care about their dollar input.

OPTION B: ESSENTIAL WORKS

Shame again on our Council for not providing disability access (as all other public infrastructure bodies have done over the past two decades at least).

It "build and forget" policy by Council cannot be expected to be supported by ratepayers of the City, particularly when 49% of tickets sold in 2014 were to non-residents of the City, and 45% (of the very small survey of 559) did not support the proposal!!

What is required for Option B is the funding and maintenance arrangements as set out in Option A (above), once the initial dollar input (\$7 million+) has been

promulgated, with an extra cost allowance incorporated for provision of disability access.

I would therefore believe \$10 million max. cost estimate for Option B would be feasible.

We do not need to enlarge theatre or production capacity, but I do believe the Waratah room does need some enlargement for better operation. The race to being "the best in the 'burbs" is not necessary or viable and commits future generations to "living outside their means", a practice for the foolhardy only.

OPTION C: CLOSURE AND DEMOLITION

Absolutely not necessary. Again, this is the mindset of developers. We need to maintain a thriving, prominent Whitehorse Arts community/Centre.

CAR PARK (linked to Option A)

Whilst I do not support Option A, I do believe there is a need for more car park space in the Civic/Whitehorse Centre vicinity/precinct. I would therefore (if Option B was chosen for "essential works" etc.) be supportive of the construction of a smaller capacity car park than that proposed for Option A. I therefore would support expenditure up to (say) \$6 million on a "staged" development, whereby it was designed and constructed with the possibility of adding further levels (providing the need arose) in the future.

If such further extension was to arise in the future, it should not exceed the original height limits proposed, or as agreed to between Council and the community.

GENERAL SUMMATION

Why is it that Whitehorse Council persists in not consulting with the wider community of Whitehorse pre the issuing of draft (and sometimes final) documents etc. on matters of significant importance to the wider community? in this case the Whitehorse Centre Project / viability (which I would believe to be the largest public expense it has ever proposed)? Is it a tactic (viable??) for Council to "blindly" proceed its own agenda whilst "demanding" payment by ratepayers for projects not as yet "encouraged / sanctioned" by the wider community. I believe there is no excuse for Council's "arrogance" on this matter.

Having been involved in the Design and Construction industry most of my working career I cannot understand how Council's policy of "build and forget" (in this case) can be justified:

- if the roof is as bad as reported, how did this occur??
- if the disability access is as bad as reported, heads should go!!
- to demolish this 30 year old building ^{to} a waste upon previous ratepayers financial input, and "suggests" incompetence by Council
- Council must carry out the necessary maintenance works as and when required on all standing Council infrastructure; and if that is not possible then we must question the construction of that building in the first instance. Council must learn to "live within its means."

Needless to say both my wife and myself support

Option B "Essential Works", and for the Centre to come under for better maintenance into the future.

We must have the continuation of Arts and Culture etc., just as we have the continuation of Sports and Recreation, Social Services etc..

If we cannot afford it all, we must share what resources we have around equally and remain "living within our means". We are not like the Government of Victoria that must support Arts and Culture on the grand scale (for all of us). We are the Local Government of Whitehorse that must support Arts and Culture in our own jurisdiction (i.e. on a local scale) without all the "bells and whistles".

We understand we have been very critical in this submission, but we felt it very necessary in this case.

Yours Sincerely,

CR Philip Daw
Mayor
Whitehorse City Council
Locked Bag 2
Nunawading Delivery Centre
VIC 3131

5.4.16

Re The Future of the Whitehorse Centre

Dear Philip

Our company has been regularly mounting seasons of our works at the Whitehorse Centre for over fifteen years. In that time we have built up a loyal audience from your community. Our touring goals are derived from the Company's mission to make accessible to Australians, wherever they may live. Since its the Company has worked hard to provide a meaningful connection to the , with contemporary designs and costuming together with a range of add-on activities – the aim being to ensure the works on stage resonate in today's society. The Whitehorse Centre plays an integral part in fulfilling our stated mission in that your community is given the opportunity to see the same production with the exact same high quality cast that our audiences at the Sydney Opera House or the Arts Centre Melbourne can see. And I might add at a much more affordable price.

In our view it is essential that option A "Redevelopment" is carried out. All buildings come to an end of their useful life and must be renewed. Option A would enable us to mount our works with the best possible production values in an efficient and timely manner. The additional rehearsal spaces and 200 seat studio would also give us the opportunity to undertake our very popular free Shakespeare workshops for your local schools community.

We strongly support the full redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre so that our audiences in your community continue to enjoy the greatest works ever written!!

Kind regards

We have no objection to the public having access to this submission.

Dear Cr Daw,

I am the [redacted], Australia's leading and longest running [redacted]
I would like to express my support for the full redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre as outlined in the Whitehorse Centre Business Case.

[redacted] have performed at the Whitehorse Centre twice in recent years, as part of our National Tour [redacted] in [redacted] (We [redacted]
[redacted] and again as part of our [redacted]
[redacted] will return to the Whitehorse Centre again in 2016 as part of our [redacted]
[redacted] tells the story of the 1881 Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry when the men and women of the [redacted]
Reserve went head-to-head with the Aboriginal Protection Board. Led by visionary Wurundjeri Elder William [redacted]
Barak their goal was both simple and revolutionary, to be allowed to continue their brilliant experiment in self-
determination. As such this story holds a particular significance for the First Peoples of the area now know as
Whitehorse.

Our work has always been enthusiastically embraced by audiences at the Whitehorse Centre and it is clear that
this is a venue at the heart of a engaged community who are passionate about quality arts and cultural
experiences and hearing new stories, including those of [redacted]. The [redacted]
redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre will ensure that residents of the City of Whitehorse will continue to have
access to the best of Australian theatre and performing arts into the future.

Our productions are often technically complex combining multiple storytelling elements including spoken word,
projection and live music. The technical team at the Whitehorse Centre are second-to-none and work tirelessly
to accommodate the technical requirements of professional touring productions. Unfortunately their job is made
more difficult by the limited technical capacity of an older theatre space. The proposed redevelopment will
ensure that the Whitehorse Centre has the technical capabilities to continue showcasing the work of Australian
artists in a professional way.

Theatre and the performing arts are unique artforms as they allow for a live interaction between artist and
audience. We are excited about the potential that the new auxiliary spaces in a redeveloped Whitehorse Centre
could provide in extending and strengthening opportunities for engagement with our work. Last year we
launched our [redacted] with the aim of bridging the divide between the [redacted]
classroom and [redacted]. New studio spaces at a redeveloped Whitehorse Centre would provide space
for local schools and young people to engage in [redacted] workshops with our artists
[redacted]. As [redacted] makers it is this level of engaged learning through live experiences that we
see as the key to increasing the understanding between future generations of
Australians.

I respectfully request that you and your fellow Councillors give the proposal to redevelop the Whitehorse Centre
your serious consideration and am happy for my response to be made publicly available.

Yours sincerely,

22nd April 2016

Dear Mayor Daw

Re: The Future of the Whitehorse Centre

In my capacity as a leading Australian _____ including more than _____, I write strongly in support of option a) Potential redevelopment as identified in the Business Case.

In comparing the three options I strongly believe that this **option a) is the one which is in the best interests of both the Council and the community it serves.** Although it comes with the highest price tag, the information provided indicates a sensible Business Case that is clearly underwritten by additional revenue from conferencing alongside the other sources and Council's investment.

Alternatively, option b) would require what is still a significant investment from Council with a rather limited return, being not only a limited extension of the Centre's lifespan, but no real enhancement of the service being provided to the community. Option c) would be a very poor outcome, being a \$2 million expenditure and a loss of service and asset altogether. This would significantly impoverish the cultural life of the municipality and such a loss would not be easily recovered in the future.

My _____ is recognised as the Premier's _____ 'operating in Australia today. We have been touring productions to the Whitehorse Centre since _____ When we first staged _____ and since that time have performed _____ productions there with productions ranging from _____ and _____ to _____ and _____ both of _____ We have come to know this Centre as a vibrant Arts hub with an enviable arts following managed by an astute leadership team and staff.

The Centre has provided the opportunity for _____ such as the aforementioned to perform for your community and significant employment opportunities for actors, crew, playwrights, creatives and arts workers over the many years. The Centre is a well respected venue of the Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres (VAPAC) network and is an important touring venue for many significant Australian producers. The Centre has also provided an economic flow on effect in the municipality as touring companies use facilities in the area (eg accommodation providers) and patrons frequent nearby restaurants pre/post show.

My experience _____ of shows right across Australia enables me to see that the Whitehorse Centre is an extremely well utilised facility. 120,000 people through the building across a calendar year is well above that seen in many of the venues _____ to and the sales leading to many sell out seasons points to a strong potential for growth in this area. I can also categorically state that today, the Whitehorse Centre is constrained by the size of the current facility. The existing market for the venue clearly exhibits demand for more seats than the current capacity of 408 allows.

The Centre is also constrained by its technical facilities too as producers require advances in these areas and facilities such as your dressing rooms (currently no separate dressing rooms for principal actors or a green room) to be improved/ upgraded. All these would be addressed with the proposed redevelopment, affording an expansion of the Centre's capabilities to meet standards and future community use. The redevelopment will further offer rehearsal spaces which would offer an attractive opportunity for commercial producers to have a streamlined process of being able to rehearse, production week and open their season/tour at the Whitehorse Centre.

I can attest to the management of the Whitehorse Centre being excellent programmers of product, catering superbly for their major demographic of 50 – 65 years who are loyal followers of the Centre. As we are delivering the style of productions (mainstream theatre productions by both Australian and international playwrights) that your community wants to see, demonstrated by the houses achieved and without the additional burden of having to leave the municipality to travel to the city.

On average, productions have consistently performed very well in the venue, selling out or going very close to it. These houses are indicative of the many strong houses that the Centre achieves. The 2016 subscription launch held late last year further demonstrates the popularity of the Centre. The auditorium was a sell out with spill over being required to watch the launch from a monitor set up in the function room.

Based on both my national expertise and direct experience of our productions being presented at the Whitehorse Centre, I can confirm that a 600 seat theatre and a further smaller 200 seat theatre would allow greater diversity of programming for patrons. These and further building developments outlined in option a) offer the real opportunity to broaden the audience base, attract a wider range of performances, including those which are more viable on a smaller scale and productions needing to sell more than 400 seats to cover costs and through these two outcomes to increase engagement with the community and further grow participation in the Arts.

Rebuilding, rebranding and repositioning the venue will also enable it to attract new audiences, hirers and presenters. Other demographics within the municipality would also be attracted if the new facility is suitably programmed and marketed. The potential redevelopment recognises the need to continue and indeed expand on the current service and provide further opportunities for entertainment, community connection and cultural development for your residents.

Alternatively, without the Whitehorse Centre many of your aged demographic would not have the opportunity to connect with the Arts. It would be impossible due to physical access or mobility or financial issues for them to travel to the CBD to see theatre and would therefore diminish their quality of life, and lead to marginalisation. Touring companies such as [redacted] would also lose a key venue in the national network.

In closing I would also like to mention that another one of [redacted] key touring venues, the Sutherland Entertainment Centre, on the southern fringes of Sydney, went through a similar decision making process in the past few years. The Sutherland Shire Council undertook extensive stakeholder consultation and determined to proceed with the decision to reinvest in the cultural future of its residents and is now working towards a plan to completely replace their popular but no longer adequate facility. I would strongly urge the Whitehorse municipality to do the same.

If you require any further information or clarification on the material contained in this letter I can be reached for your convenience on

Yours Sincerely

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Tuesday, 5 April 2016 8:27 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Regarding the Future of the Whitehorse Centre
Categories: Orange Category

When I arrived in Mitcham 43 years ago I considered the City of Nunawading as it was then called before amalgamation ,to be the cultural wasteland of the eastern suburbs.

The Whitehorse Centre over the past 30 years has slowly but surely become a much loved and well used facility in the life of so many residents and my opinion of the area has certainly changed.

So you can guess I would be appalled if this centre was allowed to disintegrate and fall into more disrepair and ultimately be closed and demolished.

However I do have several concerns .

The cost of the redevelopment. Were other architectural plans considered or compared?

If this plan goes ahead.....what specific assets will be sold to fund this redevelopment?

The cost of hire for use of these wonderful new facilities ...what increases have you costed to date? Will it price out some community based and non profit organisations or small groups ?

DISABILITY FOCUS.....I note that you are playing the "disability card " as being the top priority focus in your literature. If this is really a main focus and one of the major reasons for the redevelopmentWHO is has been involved in the disability access and user friendly plans for those with a disability.?

Have you canvassed widely and include carers...."grass root" workers/support people.....and not just for friendly wheelchair access ,but also for those slow walkers and users of mobility aids....the hearing impaired, the visually impaired and those with an intellectual disability who have multiple needs. Storage for their aids.

Are all venues user friendly for all those with some impairment or have some areas been overlooked. Is there space for their carers? Are there some "choice" seats for this group of citizens?

Have you thought of a separated quiet section (a multi purpose "crying room") for short term coughing, or retreat for those unable to cope with loud noise or are overcome with excitement themselves and have some noisy moments.And of course for mums and crying babes!

I must admit I have not looked at the details of this redevelopment ,so maybe some of my questions have been answered when I get time to study it properly...but while I had time and inclination I have sent it to you as it is a very important and very expensive project.

Yours faithfully,

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Wednesday, 6 April 2016 8:39 AM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: WHITEHORSE CENTRE PROJECT

Categories: Orange Category

Wednesday greetings,

Our first preference would be B, then A, and we would be very disappointed if the answer became C.

All wishes

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Wednesday, 6 April 2016 4:20 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Whitehorse Centre

Categories: Orange Category

I am a member of an organisation for seniors. I organize groups to visit the Whitehorse Centre, mainly to see and enjoy the wonderful live productions by Nova Music Theatre and Barbirra Music Theatre. My thoughts are that making the essential works to the Centre would suit my group's needs better, although the thought of the Centre closing is difficult to come to terms with. If the Centre were redeveloped I feel that the cost to the audiences would probably increase. Presently the cost is affordable which is important to senior organisations.

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From: ()
Sent: Wednesday, 6 April 2016 4:24 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Whitehorse Centre

Categories: Orange Category

Dear Sir/Madam,

Over many years I have attended the Whitehorse theatre. This is a valued community asset, and is used by local and distant people. I strongly support its retention.

My preferences are:

1. Option A A long term view is preferable.
2. Option B Several shortcomings can be rectified.

Option 3 seems pointless. To deprive the community of a valued asset because of some obvious deficiencies and some questionable deficiencies is not justified. I would happily tolerate a crowded foyer and other inconveniences rather than lose this asset.

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Thursday, 7 April 2016 12:07 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Whitehorse Centre

Categories: Orange Category

I would support Option A

For the long term use for the community Option A makes it the most viable for many years to come and many more people would have the advantage of using this very accessible centre.

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Thursday, 7 April 2016 12:46 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: The future of the Whitehorse Centre

Categories: Orange Category

To Whom It may Concern,

As a rate payer and long time user of the Whitehorse Centre, I have been studying the three options for the Centre. While Option A seems a costly enterprise overall, with the likely result that future program tickets will be more expensive, I think it is the **best Option**. Certainly, I am not in favour of Option C ; we do not want to see this facility lost to the community. We have been fortunate to have quality theatre at our doorstep at a very reasonable cost for many years and we do not want to see this ended. Option B is but a stop gap measure; in 8 to 10 years the problem would be with us again. Hence, I **favour Option A**. Those of us living in the Whitehorse region are extremely fortunate to have this facility; it would be a great pity if the Centre was demolished and returned to parkland!
Yours truly,

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Friday, 8 April 2016 3:21 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Cc: raylene.carr@whitehorse.vic.gov.au
Subject: The Whitehorse Centre.

Categories: Orange Category

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the options for the Whitehorse Centre.

We are opposed to alternative A, the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre at an estimated cost of \$77.9M as in our view this level of expenditure cannot be justified unless a substantial contribution is made from other levels of government.

The statement that 77% of funding is from non-rate sources may be correct but is misleading: this is still ratepayers money/ratepayers liability.

If the redevelopment is to proceed and rates are capped at CPI there will be little capacity for other important works.

Clearly the current centre has shortcomings, including lack of a central aisle and inadequate space for the severely disabled, but on the whole we find it good venue to attend.

Alternative B, Essential Works, will provide for an adequate facility for the foreseeable future.

The Prime Minister says that we must live within our means – so must the City of Whitehorse.

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Saturday, 9 April 2016 2:10 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Whitehorse Centre feedback

Categories: Orange Category

Dear JWS Research,

I have just participated in the survey on the Whitehorse Centre.

Thank you for administering this survey.

The survey did not allow me to make two points about which I feel strongly so I ask you to represent these points to Whitehorse Council.

1. I do not believe that the 'essential works' will only extend the life of the Centre by another 8-10 years. The 'essential works' will surely give the Centre a much longer useable life than 8-10 years.
2. The proposed car park in the redevelopment option is planned to be built on existing parkland. This would severely diminish the amenity of the area for Nunawading residents. Presently, the existing parkland provides the community with pleasant environment for walking, recreation and a monthly farmers' market. These things are very highly valued by local residents.

Please put these views to Whitehorse Council.

Thank you for your work.

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Saturday, 9 April 2016 8:46 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Whitehorse Centre

Categories: Orange Category

A new site in the middle of the municipality should be chosen for a new performing arts centre.

Nunawading is not the right site for the performing arts centre.

It's way too far away from Box Hill and Mont Albert. We'll never go there. We've never been there.

I object to the Nunawading hijack of the City of Whitehorse facilities.

Major facilities should be located in the middle of the municipality for all to access.

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Sunday, 10 April 2016 1:26 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment

Categories: Orange Category

We are very much in favour of your plan to totally redevelop the Centre rather than either of your alternative suggestions.

It has been, and will continue to be, one of the principal performing arts venues in the Eastern suburbs. It would be a huge loss to the local community for it to close! Over the years we have attended more (wonderful!) shows there than at any other live theatre.

While the cost seems rather high, you appear to have assessed it to be viable, so we recommend: bite the bullet and go for it!!!

Thankyou for the opportunity to comment,

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Sunday, 10 April 2016 7:52 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Re: The Whitehorse centre

Categories: Orange Category

I would like to support the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre. It is a great venue for plays musicals staged at this Theatre. A venue that is easily accessible for the community specially for the growing ageing population. It is vital that we keep the centre redeveloped to meet the needs of the growing number of people attending events at the centre. It is easy access than going to the Arts Centre or MTC theatre with parking difficulties and cost involved. As we are facing growing number of the population experiencing depression, loneliness social isolation this venue has brought these people to enjoy the social contact and mood lifting entertainment. The tickets are reasonable price and parking access.

Please keep the centre open and keep the community happy and healthy.

I have enjoyed all the entertainment at the centre and was so glad to see the older citizens getting out of their home and enjoying the events. Young families also attending the events.

Yours sincerely

On Sun, Apr 10, 2016 at 7:38 PM,

> I would like to support the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre. It
> is a great venue for plays musicals staged at this Theatre. A venue
> that is easily accessible for the community specially for the growing
> ageing population. It is vital that we keep the centre redeveloped to
> meet the needs of the growing number of people attending events at
> the centre. It is easy access than going to the Arts Centre or MTC
> theatre with parking difficulties and cost involved.
> As we are facing growing number of the population experiencing
> depression, loneliness social isolation this venue has brought these
> people to enjoy the social contact and mood lifting entertainment. The
> tickets are reasonable price and parking access.
> Please keep the centre open and keep the community happy and healthy.
> I have enjoyed all the entertainment at the centre and was so glad to
> see the older citizens getting out of their home and enjoying the
> events. Young families also attending the events.
> Yours sincerely

From:
Sent: Monday, 11 April 2016 9:17 AM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Questions about the Whitehorse Centre

Categories: Orange Category

Hello,

I have some questions I would like answered, so I can make an informed decision –

1. Long term maintenance plan – All large buildings have a 10 year maintenance plan, is there one for the Whitehorse Centre and is it being followed?
2. 30yr old building – 30 years is not a long time in the life of a building, if the building has been maintained properly over this time, why is it to be demolished in 2 years?
3. Roof replacement – What is the basis for the decision that the roof needs to be replaced rather than repaired, again given the age of a the structure and presuming it has had proper and regular maintenance over this time, this needs to be properly justified.
4. Structural engineers report – For the structure to be deemed nearing its end of life, there should be a structural engineers report . This report needs to be made public, so the community is able to see for themselves the findings on the condition of the building.
5. Misleading cost attribution – The indication that the cost to rate payers is 21%, which is the rate based contribution to the project is misleading, there is also the long term loans contributing 31%, wouldn't the cost of servicing of the long term loans also fall on the rate payers, making the total cost burden to rate payers 52%.
6. Exhausting of reserves – If 46% of the cost is drawn from reserves and asset sales, this will mean that all other deserving projects well into the future will not be able to be supported as the council has consumed reserves on this one project.
7. Utilising rate rises over a 5year period – If each year's rate rise for a period of 5 years will be utilised on this one project, no department or other area will be able to get additional funding from the annual rate rises, effectively putting a freeze on the budget for all areas of council for 5years. Which will mean a reduction of services in all areas over time, as costs are rising, with a stagnant budget each department will be able to do less and less with the same bucket of money each year. How is this in the best interest of the community?
8. Future Staffing and Maintenance cost – There is no information on the future cost to rate payers to run the new enlarged Centre, with the need for additional staff and maintenance costs. We need to know what that will be, as that is also a cost burden to rate payers into the future.

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Monday, 11 April 2016 6:09 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Whitehorse Centre

Categories: Orange Category

I think option B to be best option

It is such a wonderful centre and the reason I really like it is because it is a simple friendly place to attendthere are enough grand places in the Citykeep it as it is please

Sent from my iPhone

It is important that the big step taken thirty years ago by the then Nunawading Council to create an Arts Precinct on its Nunawading land is validated by the extension of this vision to meet community expectations. No doubt the project had ratepayers screaming about the cost but the facility has served well and over time the cost would have been negligible. The Arts Precinct has proved its worth for both indoor and outdoor events by the thousands of people who have attended and with audiences getting bigger and bigger each year. Unfortunately the facility has aged and must be rebuilt and expanded for even greater community service for the next thirty or forty years.

Every community, suburban and urban, needs to be energised through arts and culture. What a barren city Whitehorse would be if the Whitehorse Centre closed its doors and became yet another "building for community use" because the squawkers wouldn't want it to be demolished. What would become of the local and highly successful music theatre groups Babirra and Nova, who have nurtured so much local talent and presented such great shows for nearly thirty years? What about all the dance students and aspiring theatre performers?

It's obvious when attending a sold out professional theatre performance that the foyer is far too small to accommodate the 400 people thronging in to the performance. Using one or two of the indoor event spaces to accommodate the overflow sort of works but takes away from the expectant hum of the theatre crowd before the doors open and reduces opportunities for kiosk sales. A larger foyer and main theatre with greater capacity would enable greater variety of programs whilst the proposed smaller theatre would be ideal for a myriad of local theatre groups and multi-cultural presentations which would enhance bonding of the various cultural groups within Whitehorse. How decadent it would be to sit with friends and sip coffee in the foyer before a show?

With so much angst regarding hours spent on devices such as Ipads and tablets, children should be encouraged not only to go outside and play sport but also to direct their energy to other activities such as dance and theatre performance. The availability of local high class facilities is vital for our future arts performers and other professionals who provide costumes, lighting and audio visual techniques and technology. We're training these people at Box Hill TAFE, how good would it be to further their training, which is done on a small scale now. Children have very little access to live performances of any kind so an outing to the Whitehorse Centre becomes an eye opener to every child. On the other extreme, the Arts Precinct is a vital destination for older residents and groups, including those with disabilities, for regular outings. A revamped facility would better cope with wheelchairs and wheeler devices making the Arts Precinct inclusive to everyone.

As a resident of _____ I've watched the proliferation of high density and medium density housing in all sectors of Whitehorse. Community facilities must be provided to enable these residents to broaden their cultural horizons and become part of a vital multi cultural community. Having a venue with multi facets, able to host a myriad of different events, will provide this type of facility into the future.

With the expansion of local businesses throughout Whitehorse, the proposed facility will be in great demand for exhibitions and seminars that only a precinct of this size can accommodate. This type of venue is lacking and would bring solid income to the Precinct. Similarly, a facility suited to hosting catered events of all types would reap its own rewards. The existing Waratah Room has little appeal as it has no windows and the commercial kitchen facilities are long out of date.

So, I urge Whitehorse Councillors to take a leap forward as their predecessors did thirty years ago and redevelop the Whitehorse Centre into a real Arts Precinct which will be an enormous asset to all residents and businesses. The cost, when considering the value of houses and buildings, is doable and the benefits, in dollar terms, unquantifiable.

Don't listen to the whiners who say they don't use the centre so close it. I don't use the sports ovals and some other Council facilities but I don't begrudge Council maintaining and enhancing them for others and they're there for me if I need them.

and, yes, a theatre subscriber since the inception of the professional theatre season yonks ago!

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Thursday, 14 April 2016 8:57 AM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Whitehorse Centre

Categories: Orange Category

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in the survey re the development of this centre.

I live in a municipality not blessed with such a wonderful facility. Consequently, many of us regularly attend performances in your very fine theatre.

I am a regular group booker and speak for all of my group in urging you to retain this theatre.

It offers excellent viewing from all seats and is acoustically very good.

With an ageing population across both of our municipalities, it is so important to offer opportunities to attend live theatre in a local suburban area where there is good parking.

I do hope that this theatre will be retained.

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Saturday, 16 April 2016 5:32 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Re: PROJECTED REDEVELOPMENT OF THE WHITEHORSE CENTRE
Categories: Orange Category

Dear Sirs,

I am a member of the board of management of [redacted] and I am also a long-time visitor to the Whitehorse Centre. I have just filled in your survey online, but I would like to further add to my answers.

There is a thriving highly professional non-professional theatre community in Melbourne, and especially in the Eastern Suburbs (I can name over 20 companies, not counting all the youth groups and fringe groups, and the Victorian Drama League has many more on its files). Out of all this community, very few have their own premises. Most, including ourselves, have to rely on finding our own, which we normally have to share with other users. There are not nearly enough forward-thinking councils such as Whitehorse, who realise that this is not just a city of diverse sporting activities, but one with a great deal of creative talent, whether it be in dance, musical theatre, choral singing, theatrical performance, live music, and art /craft. (I have seen some amazing art exhibitions at the Centre).

It would be very shortsighted of any council to opt for any alternatives other than Option A - the potential redevelopment of the centre. There is nothing like this in the area, and it would be a great asset into the future.

There is only one problem that I can envisage- the proposed car park size. If the plan is for a main theatre of 600 seats, and a studio of 200 seats, there is a possibility of both venues being used at once (I am assuming that the function room wouldn't be available at such times!). Assuming an average of 2 persons per car, this would require parking for 400 cars, and even if one venue was being used, a 600 seat theatre would need more like 300 car parking spaces rather than the 200 spaces planned. There would presumably be special extra parking for cast and crew, which for a musical theatre production could be considerable, especially as they have an orchestra to add as well! Parking is always a big problem for function centres, so to be viable into the future, it makes sense to make sure it is adequate from the start.

I am looking forward with interest to the results of your survey. Please keep me informed of developments.

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Sunday, 17 April 2016 11:09 AM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Whitehorse Centre Financial Modelling
Attachments: Whitehorse Centre Consultation, Financials and Future Consultation

Categories: Orange Category

Hi,

Having read all of the information that is publicly available I wish to strong oppose the Redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre at a cost of \$77.9M.

I wrote to the Council in February this year after having studied the financials and whilst I received a response I just cannot understand why the Whitehorse Council would proceed on such a large loss making venture. If this was a private business then common sense would prevail and the Centre would not go ahead.

This is the extract of the email I sent in February which clearly shows that the Centre would run at a loss for the first 5 years

Financial Impact

In the Business case prepared by Positive Solutions (September 2015) and I refer to Table 8 Profit and Loss on page 24. This table shows that the Whitehorse Centre will generate a Total Income of just \$10.7M in the first 5 years of operation, against an expenditure of \$18.06M.

Irrespective of depreciation this amounts to a cost to rate payers of \$7.3M over this period which the report describes as an "Operational Subsidy".

*My question to the Whitehorse City Council is. **Other than ratepayers funding this development, how does the council intend to fund the \$78M?***

Hence when we take the proposed costs of \$78M into account the business case just does not stack up.

Table 8 Projected Profit and Loss

	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22
5 year Profit and Loss - Summary			
Level of Activity	65%	75%	85%
Income	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Total Income	\$1,529,921	\$1,833,505	\$2,158,948
Expenditure	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Total Expenditure	\$3,297,982	\$3,421,085	\$3,599,730
Operational subsidy required BEFORE depreciation	\$1,768,061	\$1,587,580	\$1,440,782
Depreciation A	\$922,365	\$922,365	\$922,365
Depreciation B	\$515,297	\$515,297	\$515,297
Subsidy Required - combined operational and depreciation	\$3,205,723	\$3,025,242	\$2,878,444

In addition I have attached a copy of the email sent in February which also raises the question about community consultation. Again the Council has taken a less than pro-active approach.

Given the gravity of this I believe that the Whitehorse Council should put this to a vote of the ratepayers. Surveys are fine, however the Whitehorse Council could easily choose to ignore the surveys and the voice of their ratepayers and just proceed anyway.

I ask that my concerns are tabled and given the due consideration.

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Sunday, 7 February 2016 1:03 PM
To: whitehorse.centre@whitehorse.vic.gov.au
Subject: Whitehorse Centre Consultation, Financials and Future Consultation
Attachments: Letter to Whitehorse City Council 7 February 2016.pdf

Importance: High

Dear Whitehorse City Council,

I am writing in regards to the proposed "Whitehorse Centre" and would like the Whitehorse City Council to consider the points I have raised and what if any steps will be taken.

Consultation Process

I refer to the feasibility study of 2010-2012 and the consultation process in 2015.

The Council undertook a feasibility study in 2010-2012 and it was disappointing to see that the survey was done only with existing hirers, other local arts and cultural groups and local businesses. It appears that the Council and SGL Consulting have forgotten to ask the most important people, - the ratepayers, the people who are being asked to support and fund this development.

In May 2015 the report by Williams Ross indicates that 700 people were consulted in May 2015. When I researched the methodology adopted to gather this research it was not done openly and transparently to all Whitehorse ratepayers.

Nevertheless the number of people surveyed (700) is far too low as it only represents 0.42% of the Whitehorse ratepayers.

Of this number there were only 559 responses representing just 0.34% of Whitehorse ratepayers.

In addition only 26% of the respondents highly supported the development. This translates to 145 people out of the 163,697 Whitehorse ratepayers, or if you like 0.08% of the Whitehorse ratepayers.

I am strongly opposed to proceeding on the development on the basis of just 145 people saying they feel that this is an "Important Project for the City of Whitehorse".

Financial Impact

In the Business case prepared by Positive Solutions (September 2015) and I refer to Table 8 Profit and Loss on page 24. This table shows that the Whitehorse Centre will generate a Total Income of just \$10.7M in the first 5 years of operation, against an expenditure of \$18.06M.

Irrespective of depreciation this amounts to a cost to rate payers of \$7.3M over this period which the report describes as an "Operational Subsidy".

My question to the Whitehorse City Council is. **Other than ratepayers funding this development, how does the council intend to fund the \$78M?**

Hence when we take the proposed costs of \$78M into account the business case just does not stack up.

Future Consultation

We see that the Council has now started to consult with the Community, however I would suggest that a new consultation process be undertaken. This new process should be by way of a letter to each Whitehorse ratepayer and responses to be received via stamped self addressed envelope back to the council.

With this consultation I would also like to see a financial analysis be provided to enable rate payers to have a clear picture of what the costs are, how the council intends to fund it and what is being proposed.

I believe that the Whitehorse City Council needs to keep their rate payers fully informed of what is going on and it is disappointing to see that the information being provided now is only as a result of a number of ratepayers voicing their concerns to the local media.

I would now like to propose that the Council embark on a serious community consultation program (as I described above) with all Whitehorse residents and ratepayers and I welcome the opportunity to be part of this.

I look forward to hearing from the Whitehorse City Council in regards to the concerns raised above.

Kind regards

7th February 2016

Arts and Recreation Development Administration Officer
Whitehorse City Council
Locked Bag 2
Nunawading Delivery Centre
Vic 3131

Dear Whitehorse City Council,

WHITEHORSE CENTRE – BUSINESS CASE AND CONSULTATION

I am writing in regards to the proposed "Whitehorse Centre" and would like the Whitehorse City Council to consider the points I have raised and what if any steps will be taken.

Consultation Process

I refer to the feasibility study of 2010-2012 and the consultation process in 2015.

The Council undertook a feasibility study in 2010-2012 and it was disappointing to see that the survey was done only with existing hirers, other local arts and cultural groups and local businesses. It appears that the Council and SGL Consulting have forgotten to ask the most important people, - the ratepayers, the people who are being asked to support and fund this development.

In May 2015 the report by Williams Ross indicates that 700 people were consulted in May 2015. When I researched the methodology adopted to gather this research it was not done openly and transparently to all Whitehorse ratepayers.

Nevertheless the number of people surveyed (700) is far too low as it only represents 0.42% of the Whitehorse ratepayers.

Of this number there were only 559 responses representing just 0.34% of Whitehorse ratepayers.

In addition only 26% of the respondents highly supported the development. This translates to 145 people out of the 163,697 Whitehorse ratepayers, or if you like 0.08% of the Whitehorse ratepayers.

I am strongly opposed to proceeding on the development on the basis of just 145 people saying they feel that this is an "Important Project for the City of Whitehorse".

Financial Impact

In the Business case prepared by Positive Solutions (September 2015) and I refer to Table 8 Profit and Loss on page 24. This table shows that the Whitehorse Centre will generate a Total Income of just \$10.7M in the first 5 years of operation, against an expenditure of \$18.06M.

Irrespective of depreciation this amounts to a cost to rate payers of \$7.3M over this period which the report describes as an "Operational Subsidy".

My question to the Whitehorse City Council is. **Other than ratepayers funding this development, how does the Council intend to fund the \$78M?**

Hence when we take the proposed costs of \$78M into account the business case just does not stack up.

Future Consultation

We see that the Council has now started to consult with the Community, however I would suggest that a new consultation process be undertaken. This new process should be by way of a letter to each Whitehorse ratepayer and responses to be received via stamped self-addressed envelope back to the council.

With this consultation I would also like to see a financial analysis be provided to enable rate payers to have a clear picture of what the costs are, how the council intends to fund it and what is being proposed.

I believe that the Whitehorse City Council needs to keep their rate payers fully informed of what is going on and it is disappointing to see that the information being provided now is only as a result of a number of ratepayers voicing their concerns to the local media.

I would now like to propose that the Council embark on a serious community consultation program (as I described above) with all Whitehorse residents and ratepayers and I welcome the opportunity to be part of this.

I look forward to hearing from the Whitehorse City Council in regards to the concerns raised above.

Kind regards

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Sunday, 17 April 2016 8:00 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Cc: hcag@iinet.net.au
Subject: Whitehorse Centre

Categories: Orange Category

I am responding to the request for community feedback regarding the Whitehorse Centre, I represent members of the _____ at our most recent meeting we discussed the options available and on a unanimous vote decided that the investment of \$67 million dollars plus a further \$11 million for Car parking is far too expensive for the rate-payers to bear.

We support option B, the 'Essential Works' option of repairs and maintenance, \$7million which would extend the Centre's use for 8-10 years.

Yours sincerely,

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Sunday, 17 April 2016 9:05 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Whitehorse Centre Proposal

Categories: Orange Category

I believe the council have been soft in not providing leadership on the proposals and alternatives they have offered the ratepayers

There is only 1 option – that is a new centre

As an audience member & a performer, I am aware that the facilities fall short of an acceptable standard

The basics such a change rooms, orchestra pit , sound shell are sub standard and not worthy of refurbishment

If they were I would be happy to endorse a refurbishment as a suitable alternative

The only issue is the scale of the redevelopment seating capacities and the like

I accept that council will have sought proper advice

If council is confident of the information they have received is sound the they should have no fear in adopting the

Development identified in the business case

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Monday, 18 April 2016 7:15 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Whitehorse Centre plan feedback

Categories: Orange Category

I have just done the online survey.

Where was the question that allowed me to suggest a different option from the 3 Council ones?? **Not having this makes the consultation a sham.** Basically the Council says "these are your choices, based on one Report to the Council – by Williams Ross Architects". At least the previous survey gave a 'Don't support' option. The survey reported in the WRA summary document says 45% of those 559 surveyed earlier did not support the proposal.

The question is, does the City of Whitehorse need to double the size of the Centre? The survey does not canvas options not listed by WRA, so can't be relied on.

The report also says that a huge 49% of theatre tickets sold in 2014 were to non-residents. These users would not bear much cost of any redevelopment, not being ratepayers unless the price of tickets went up significantly to help fund the project - which I can see happening. This could lead to reduced attendances.

One wonders how much the Council spent on the 'business case' for the proposed new Whitehorse Centre. This should be publicised. At "550 pages plus attachments", Williams Ross Architects must have thought the Council were paying for it by weight. If you want a house built you get at least 2 or 3 quotes... but it seems the Council just got one concept design and one estimate of cost. Has any councillor or council staff a vested interest in WRA?

WRA clearly have a vested interest in justifying the spending of \$67 million to knock down and replace a solid building that is only 30 years old (plus, by the way, spending \$10 million on a multi-tier car park). Another report must be sought, or better, the whole concept dropped.

Submission to JWS Research

Whitehorse Centre Project, PO Box 2575, Caulfield Junction, 3161

18 April 2016

**The City of Whitehorse Bi Centennial Leadlight Mural
at the Whitehorse Centre**

I am concerned about any re-development of the Whitehorse Centre and its affect on the Bi-centennial Leadlight Mural. the development and installation of this Mural in 1988-1989 from the start and for its eventual installation in the Centre and arranged for ten other local lead lighters, who had attended my Leadlight classes when I was instructing at the Nunawading Recreation Centre, (now Nunawading Community Centre}, to join the team. We were granted \$10,000 by the Bi-centennial Committee and coordinated with the City Manager in the oversight of the project.

Two Professional Art Class artists, were employed by the project group to guide us on the project and we received practical assistance from businesses in the district. We used a room at the Nunawading Recreation Centre to make the mural and as a group we each spent at least one day per week and one other day each week on the project in the following fifteen months.

I feel that with the time spent by the volunteers, the input from Local and Federal governments and business, some effort should be made to ensure the resulting mural is retained as a Community Gift to the Municipality to remember the Bi- centennial Year.

May I remind you that the mural depicts, looking from the inside to where the outside movements of the trees in the background enhances the view, on the right is the arrival of our indigenous Australians from about 40,000 years ago and on the left side the arrival of the white Australians, and down the centre shows the local development during the 20th Century. I feel it is important that we preserve this mural as it is a visual record of the history of the Municipality in a period of time.

My purpose is to recommend that care be taken to ensure the safety of the Mural if in any way a decision is made that would see it removed and that plans are made for it to be re-installed in a suitable location if any reconstruction or alteration is made to the Whitehorse Centre. It would be desirable for it to be included in any changes and in a prominent place.

Copy to

C E.O. Noelene Duff City of Whitehorse

Team Leader, Cultural Facilities' Program –

Crs Andrew Munro

Denise Massoud

Robert Chong A M

Helen Harris O A M

Raylene Carr

Bill Bennett

Sharon Ellis

Andrew Davenport

Philip Daw (Mayor)

Ben Stennett

Secretary, Whitehorse Historical Society

Feedback:

I would like to give my feedback in support of redeveloping the Whitehorse centre - option A.

The centre has great events and I would really appreciate being able to enjoy an enhanced space.

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Friday, 22 April 2016 10:25 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: 2 last important facts relevant to the Whitehorse Redevelopment
Categories: Red Category

To Whom It May Concern

In the 11th hour I would just like to add 2 points to our submission.

1. We have at least [redacted] who currently have
2. [redacted] had a long association with
This resulted in a number of cross cultural east /west [redacted] being
fully [redacted] that is also found
in other Asian cultures is an example is this. [redacted] a range of cross cultural Asian music was used
eg Respighi "The Birds" played on Gamalan, Vangelis "The China Album".

Below is the [redacted] that has already resulted in
Whitehorse Centre this year.

>
>
>
> I am responding, slightly belatedly (which I hope is OK) to your survey on the proposed redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre, on behalf of the
>
> Broadly speaking, we are in favour of the major redevelopment proposal. However, we feel that the proposed 200-seat theatre would be better if it included fixed raked seating. This would of course reduce the flexibility of the system, but we believe it would provide a more useful venue overall.
>
> Regards
>
> --
:
:

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Monday, 2 May 2016 6:29 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Whitehorse community centre redevelopment consultation

Categories: Red Category

We definitely need to Whitehorse center. It is an important community hub for a wide variety of arts presentations including local theatre groups. It needs to be good enough to continue to attract business. Whether it needs \$67 m I don't know. That is a lot of money but I don't know how much the council intends to recoup not only in monetary terms but also in the welfare of the community as a result of the facility.

The Lord Mayor, Councillor Philip Daw

Arts and Recreation Development
Whitehorse City Council
379-397 Whitehorse Road
Nunawading
VIC 3131

Monday 9 May 2016

Dear Councillor Daw,

The Future of the Whitehorse Centre

I write in response to Council's call for submissions as part of the public consultation on the future of the Whitehorse Centre.

has been a major force in presenting work across venues in Sydney and on tour throughout Australia and internationally. We work with renowned artists and companies from across the globe, as well as supporting the next generation of emerging and developing artists.

Having enjoyed a relationship with the Whitehorse Centre across many years, we wish to make the following comments in support of the future life of the Centre:

- has toured our productions on a number of occasions to the Whitehorse Centre and always been met with great demand and support for our work from local audiences.
- The loss of any arts institution should always be cause for great concern, and especially where it plays such a crucial role at the heart of a local community.

- We understand all too keenly the benefits of being able to plan securely for the future and encourage all efforts to provide stability and security
- We applaud the Whitehorse Centre's ambition to be technically proficient, flexible, economically and environmentally sustainable, suitably equipped for its disabled clients and staff, and to continue providing a valuable service to its users.

We hope that the Whitehorse Centre will have a long and prosperous future and look forward to the opportunity to bring our productions to Whitehorse audiences for many years to come.

Kind regards,

Feedback:

Afternoon Mayor and Councillors,

I have just visited the Whitehorse Council precinct in Nunawading and confirmed that the Nunawading Police Station is closed.

I am a regular attendee at the current theatre.

My question is, has the Council considered purchasing the Police Station property?

This site would be the perfect location for a brand new wonderful theatre development.

A multi level car park could be under the building along with around where appropriate.

What a spectacular building this would be on Whitehorse Road for all to see and appreciate. All the trees could remain and provide a wonderful setting.

The site would allow for access from four sides, allowing drop offs at the front, along with the staging lorries to easily access the back stage accesses.

Yes, the Police car garaging appears to be still on site and maybe some offices, but surely the Police Commissioner would love to move on this aged site.

I look forward to a positive outcome from this opportunity.

Yours

Feedback :

Dear Mr Mayor,

I write as a citizen of Whitehorse that has taken a keen interest in the proposed redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre. I have accessed the extensive documents regarding the proposal, and I made a submission to JWS Research (attached) on the proposal.

JWS Research have advised me that their brief does not anticipate them taking into account commentary such as mine, so I thought it best to refer my paper to you and your fellow Councillors for your consideration.

I fully recognise that you have a most difficult decision to make, and I do not envy you in that regard. The papers put before you are complex, the community issues are quite divisive, and the budgetary issues (capital and operational) appear to be subjective rather than robust and dependable. At no stage is the question of community access to the Centre (present or proposed) discussed, especially for those without a car. Nor is there any discussion on other community events in the immediate vicinity, such as the Whitehorse Farmer's Market, if the major development were to proceed.

In early March, my wife and I visited Albany in West Australia and, amongst other things, went to the recently (2010) constructed Albany Entertainment Centre. This striking building (it is worth looking at the web site) cost some \$70m, and probably had significant support from federal funds used to minimise the effects of the GFC. We were told that local amateur theatre productions don't use the new facility, instead they use the former Council building. The new complex is used to stage commercial touring productions. This usage is probably essential in a state where the local communities are located at some considerable distance from the main centre of population – Perth.

In Whitehorse's case we are located as part of the Melbourne metropolitan area, and the need to support professional theatre to the same extent does not exist. I raise this point because it is significant if the two principal amateur companies currently using the Whitehorse Centre could no longer afford to use it, then the Centre would be reliant on professional providers to fill the usage gap – thus competing with other commercial operations in Melbourne. Is this an acceptable risk for the ratepayers?

I, and I suspect many others, am confused by the advice that you are giving that the existing Centre, after expending \$7m would operate for "8 – 10 years before probable closure". There is no such discussion in the papers concerning the existing centre. Nor for that matter, was there any suggestion that the boiler and air conditioning needed to be replaced, or that there was a need for full roof replacement. Indeed, I could not but help think that some of the items under consideration were matters that should be the subject of ongoing maintenance expenditure and not capital works matters at all.

Be that as it may, I am grateful for the opportunity to express my opinion, and wish you good fortune with your deliberations.

Yours sincerely,

Attachment : "A Response to the Survey Documents – by XXXX"

WHITEHORSE CENTRE

A Response to the Survey Documents

Introduction

I wish to thank the Whitehorse City Council for making available documentation with respect to the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre and seeking the views of the community as to the preferred future action. This consultative process is much appreciated.

The writer offers these comments on the basis of his experiences as : i) a former cast member in productions at the Centre; ii) a representative of the Combined Rotary Clubs of Whitehorse
l) a regular
attender at Centre events; and iv) a former administrator with experience in operating under significant financial constraints, and extensive involvement with construction and re-development projects.

Discussion

The consultants have indicated three options with respect to the future of the Whitehorse Centre :

1. **Demolition of the existing facilities and construction of a new Theatre, Studio Theatre, and Function Rooms** together with ancillary elements – foyers, public toilets, changing rooms, rehearsal rooms etc. This is estimated to cost in the vicinity of \$64.3m. In addition it is proposed to build a multi storey carpark to hold 300 cars at a cost of \$11.6m. A total cost of \$75.9m.
2. **Retention and refurbishment** of the existing Whitehorse Centre at a cost of approximately \$7M. It is said that this will extend the life of the building by a further 8 - 10 years.
3. **Closure and demolition** of the existing Centre with no replacement within 2 years.

It is considered that the third option would not be in the interests of the people of Whitehorse and the Eastern Suburbs. It certainly does not meet Council's 2013 – 2033 vision. The Centre has been heavily patronised since its inception by theatre groups, ballet schools, and Whitehorse community functions etc. The loss of this facility would be substantial since it might well augur the demise of local amateur theatre and a respected ballet school in the Whitehorse area.

Given that item 3 is not acceptable the choice that is being presented lies between items 1 and 2 – replacement of the existing facility at a very large cost to the community of Whitehorse; or retention of the existing facility at a substantially lower cost albeit with a defined (but possibly contestable) shorter life span.

Comments with respect to Option 1 – Complete Replacement of the Existing Centre

- 1) An architect's concept design of how the potential theatre complex might look has been made widely available to the public. There has been no indication as to whether this design has been accepted in principle by Council, or whether Council intends to seek alternative designs from other architects against a brief defining what elements the Council wishes to include within the building.

If the Williams Ross concept design is adopted as proposed does the Council run the risks of :

- a) Substantial criticism that it has not provided for an open tendering process?
 - b) Not seeing alternative designs that might provide cheaper options, or a more attractive (or spectacular) building designs?
- 2) **Theatre** - The concept design provides for a 600 seat theatre against the present capacity of 408. This assumes that productions can sell around 600 seats per show, or that a theatre season is capable of being compressed to achieve the desired usage level.

From an amateur theatre point of view, this is likely to be a very difficult ask. As a member of a Rotary Club that stages one concert a year in the theatre (Naval Band concert in February) I think it is likely to be very difficult to achieve more than a 66% usage rate for some, possibly many shows.

It is true that public demand for 'blockbuster' type productions – Les Miserables; Cats etc do attract big audiences, but there are only a limited number of such shows. Less well known productions draw smaller crowds.

If an amateur company's season has to be reduced from, say, ten shows to six in order to fill the larger theatre, it is possible that some company members will be reluctant to spend several months rehearsing for a more limited exposure on the stage. It is a very delicate balance between finding an appropriate cast (and orchestra), making the sets, selling the seats, and breaking even. Time on the stage is important to actors, and full houses equally important.

In my view the amateur theatre companies may struggle to survive in a larger complex (without taking into account any changes the new Centre might make to theatre hiring charges).

It is noted that the current Whitehorse Centre has a number of commercial shows featuring professional actors, often for quite short seasons. It is possible that such shows will attract larger audiences. If the object of building a larger theatre is to attract more commercial shows then it is questionable why the Council should not seek to charge full operating costs rather than providing subsidised usage of the complex.

- 3) **Studio** - The proposed design offers little insight as to the expected usage of the Studio Theatre – by whom, how often, expected size of audiences? It appears to occupy about 10% of the building's space, so by inference it's capital value would be in the order of \$6.5m. This a very large expense for a facility with an uncertain usage level.
- 4) **Functions Room** – The functions room has been designed to accommodate 300 people for a sit down meal, an increase of 120 individuals (66.6% increase). It is projected to occupy 904 sq. mt. – 13.57% of the total projected area, or effectively cost around \$8.73m of the total construction expense. There is no advice as to why this facility is necessary. The Whitehorse Council already has a facility – the former Box Hill Town Hall - which has substantially greater capacity for seating guests at a banquet. Why are they considering extending this capacity?

On the face of it, the size of this part of the development is unnecessary.

The question can be asked – is it the responsibility of Council to be providing functions facilities; shouldn't this be a commercial operation?

- 5) **Foyer & Public Toilets** – There is no doubt that the present foyer is cramped and could do with more space, it does work, but it is less than perfect. The present public toilets are also

difficult to access, especially for handicapped patrons. (Note : these toilets are also accessed by patrons attending the Farmer's Market on the second Sunday of the month. If they are not available to the Market then it may have to close.)

- 6) **Sound Shell Stage** – I have no comments to make on this facility, other than to note the provision of nominated dressing rooms and toilet facilities. Surely all that is required is to use the theatre dressing rooms and toilets as they currently do.
- 7) **300 space Car Park** – is this to be only available to theatre/studio/function room patrons, or will it be used by Council staff and visitors? Will it be free of charge, or sufficient charge that its costs will be recovered over time? If it is to be charged at commercial rates will the community use it? There is substantial public parking on the south side of Whitehorse Road.

The proposed location of the carpark would suggest that the highly popular **Whitehorse Farmer's Market** (which draws around 2000 patrons each month, and raises in the order of \$70,000 annually to support Whitehorse charitable and educational institutions) would have to cease operations.

There does not appear to be any similar location in Whitehorse providing essential facilities (vendor's sites, toilets, office space) and on site car parking, which is readily accessible to the community. It is suggested that this would be a substantial loss to the community if the car park proposal went ahead.

- 8) **Depreciation** – the **Business Case Part A** (Sn 6.2 p24) identifies two elements of depreciation –A & B - but does not describe what either applies to. If one were to apply a minimalist depreciation cost of 2.5% for the building (equating to a 40 year life span) and 25 years for the car park (4%) then the depreciation applying to the project would be in the order of \$1,625,000 for the Centre and \$466,800 for the carpark, a total of \$2,091,800. This sum is significantly greater than that shown in the table - \$1,437,662. Frankly, I think it would be more realistic to anticipate a twenty-year time frame for both buildings (5% depreciation rate) in view of the uncertainty surrounding the economic future of Australia.
- 9) **Operating Costs** – The documentation is 'light on' in terms of establishing the costs of operating the new facility. How many additional staff (cleaning, clerical, management, catering, maintenance, electrical, front of house etc.) would need to be employed? What would the electrical and heating/cooling costs be? I don't believe this element has been worked out thoroughly.

If Council is not in possession of detailed and accurate estimates of operating costs for this facility it could be making a very difficult problem for itself financially, which in the end event would have to be born by the ratepayers, or at the expense of other Council activities.

- 10) **Funding the Option 1** - There has been very little information about how the Council intends to fund the cost of the proposed Centre. The latest information sheet (March 2016) suggests that:
- i) 46% would be drawn from existing reserves and funds from asset sales. Surely the expenditure of around \$35m of ratepayer owned funds deserves greater explanation than this!
 - ii) 31% (\$23.56m) would be obtained from long term loans. What terms? What rates?
 - iii) 21% (\$15.96m.) over a five-year period within forecast rate rises. This means that local ratepayers will be paying in the order of \$3m a year in their rates for this facility over the five year period. I do not believe that ratepayers already struggling to meet their rate payments will be happy with this advice.

- iv) 2% (\$1.52m.) is to be sought through grants.
- v) It seems incredible that it is only at this very late stage of community consultation that the Council should provide such information – in a rather ambiguous fashion so that few people would be able to convert percentage allocations to actual costs. It does the Council no credit that it appears to have hidden material facts from the community until such a late stage of the consultation period.

Comments with respect to Option 2 – Retention and Refurbishment of the Existing Centre.

- 1) **Existing Building – General Construction** – the report by Kersulting suggests that the existing building is in “generally sound shape”. Marshall Day advise that the Centre is “in reasonable condition for its age.” They also suggest that “facilities maintenance and infrastructure up grades are required for the venue to continue to operate effectively and to comply with code and legislative requirements.” Given that the building is now thirty years old such comments are to be expected.

Perhaps one might ask why progressive upgrades and repairs as part of normal annual maintenance by the Council are not in evidence.

- 2) **Detailed Comments by Marshall Day –**
 - Box Office – is small, but well located – Agree.
 - Foyer – too small and needs lighting, and electrical upgrades – Agree.
 - Waratah & Studio - spaces are viable - Agree.
 - Sound Shell - of an appropriate size - Agree
 - Theatre – size small for type of community venue – from information provided the 408 seats appears to be average.
 - Orchestra Pit – limited space – Agree
 - Stage Area – consistent with others, but preferably larger – Agree
 - Stage Lighting/Dimmers – need upgrading – Agree
 - Sound System – need upgrade – Agree, but theatre acoustics appear to be excellent.

It is noted that Marshall Day suggest a budget of \$696,000 to upgrade lighting, sound etc. In the scheme of things this is a modest amount.
- 3) **Extended Life Span** – It is noted that in Council Newsletters and promotions it anticipates that the expenditure of approximately \$7m will extend the life of the building for another 8 – 10 years. This suggestion seems barely credible. We are told the building is structurally sound, although there are concerns regarding the roof. The building needs a comparatively modest expenditure on lighting and sound systems. Some creative building modifications could surely result in expansion of the foyer (and possibly toilet facilities), the theatre seats are wearing – agree, but the ones in the Princess Theatre are worse!
- 4) **Essential Repair Works** – The most recent newsletter from Council (March 2016 – The Future of Whitehorse Centre) provides some clarification as to works described as essential, these are :
 - i) Full roof replacement – this seems to be an extraordinary suggestion. The Kersulting report noted that the roof “generally appeared to be near the end of service life”. It did not say it has to be replaced at this time. There is certainly a requirement to attend the areas where penetrations exist, or anchor bolts need to be replaced.
 - ii) Replacement of boiler and air conditioning system – There is no indication of this in the consultants report. A cynic might suggest that the costs involved in replacing the boiler and air conditioning systems have been introduced to bump up the cost of

- maintaining the existing building and thus make the replacement option look to be a more attractive financial alternative.
- iii) Replace carpets and paint internally – again there is no mention of this in the consultants report. These should be costs attributable to the normal maintenance program of the Centre. Progressive refurbishing may be appropriate, rather than a complete, one-off replacement.
 - iv) Upgrade kitchen and some bathroom facilities – again these are part of a facilities normal maintenance programs.
 - v) Re-upholster 30 year old seats – certainly some seats need attention, many don't. This again is normal maintenance, particularly in a theatre setting.
 - vi) Replace uneven pavers at the entrance and improve drainage. Surely this should have been the responsibility of the Council's Engineering Department and not something that has been suddenly found. It is normal maintenance and a Council responsibility.
 - vii) Upgrade Centre lighting and audio system – agree.

5) **The Estimated Building Life of the Refurbished Centre** – the latest Council newsletter advises that "the essential works will allow the Centre to operate "..... for 8 – 10 years before probable closure." Where is the evidence for such a forthright statement regarding closure? It would appear to be designed to encourage the community to accept replacement of the Centre with the more expensive alternative. Remodelled or renovated facilities can go on for many years; some are given a new lease of life by comparatively modest changes.

As a comparative; when the Box Hill Hospital was remodelled in the 1980's¹ for the comparatively modest sum of around \$10m, the building was able to operate for another 30 years. I see no reason why this could not apply.

- 6) **Funding** - There is no indication of where the funds for this work would come from. Presumably this would come from the Council's budget allocation of \$3m. per annum over 3 years, as in the Option 1 budget. Are the renovations being made to fit the budget or to resolve actual needs?

Other Observations - relating to Patronage and Location

- i) Many of the patrons of the amateur stage shows in recent years are elderly. They are going to see the musicals and plays they saw in previous times. There are few young people in the audience. This might signal that when that present generation of theatregoers passes away that a completely new dynamic will apply to the theatre usage. It is possible the wider community will not be theatregoers at all, with dire consequences for the theatre element of the Centre. If this observation is correct then a delay of some years in a major redevelopment of the Centre might be very prudent.
- ii) The Business case is heavily dependent on the usage by the two main amateur theatre groups Babirra and Nova. These two groups hire the theatre for two seasons, each of (generally) two weeks a year with, as a rule, ten performances per season. This usage rate equates to around 16320 seat sales. If, perchance, one of the companies was to fold due to a lack of suitable performers, or poor ticket sales resulting in the company becoming insolvent, then the situation would impact adversely on the Centre's budget.

¹ This included rebuilding the 180 bed ward block & provision of en-suite toilet facilities; constructing a coronary care unit; constructing new operating theatres; & day surgery provision; building a new kitchen; replacing lifts. The Hospital was required by government to raise \$1m by public donation towards the first \$3m stage of the project.

This is not to suggest that such a problem is imminent, but it can and does happen, and as such is a risk the Centre managers should recognise. The impacts of substantial increases in hire rates by the Centre, or unsuccessful efforts to fill the seats in a larger theatre, are also threats to the survival of the two companies.

- iii) The Centre is located conveniently to the main Council offices, but is not central to its main community hubs of Box Hill or Mitcham. The principal hub is Box Hill which is experiencing a major 'growth spurt' as a consequence of the construction of many flat dwellings. If there is a determination to proceed with a major theatre/convention centre facility (Option 1) then it seems to me that the Centre should be relocated to Box Hill. This is where the greatest density of population is, as well as the greatest conjunction of public transport. (Note: there is little direct public transport linking Box Hill with the existing Centre, so if a person doesn't have a car and lives in Box Hill, or other western/southern parts of Whitehorse. then they are unlikely to visit productions or functions at the Centre.)
- iv) The Box Hill Town Hall has an attractive façade which masks a hodge podge of offices, meeting rooms, and the major hall with poor acoustics. Why not give consideration to the construction of a new centre on the Town Hall site and if considered necessary, maintaining the façade? Further, there are a number of commercial car parks in the area, surely arrangements could be made for theatre goers to have access to modest after hours rates. This would immediately reduce the cost of the project by nearly \$12m.
- v) Another option worthy of consideration would be to locate a new Centre in the Box Hill Gardens area. This would also be readily accessible to the wider community and have the advantage of being on a "greenfields" site. It is recognised that this might draw and adverse community reaction.
- vi) The Box Hill Brickworks site is another "greenfields" site which could also be considered when the area has completed its rehabilitation. This could enable consolidation of administrative , engineering and cleaning services of both the Centre and the adjacent Council owned Aqualink.
- vii) If it is determined to proceed with Option 1 then it would be appreciated if consideration could be given to the continuation of the **Whitehorse Farmers Market**. This market is now part of the fabric of Whitehorse life and it would be tragic to lose it. It would also impose difficulties for local organisations that are supported by the funds raised by Rotary at the markets.

Conclusion

On the basis of the foregoing I do not believe the Council should embark on the construction of a major theatre complex costing in excess of \$75m. I believe that it should adopt the prudent approach and refurbish the existing Centre with an expectation that it will last fifteen to twenty years if the Whitehorse Community so desire.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: WHITEHORSE CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT- Business Case Feedback.

rejects outright the Business Case for a total redevelopment. A Gold Plated redevelopment has not been proven as the optimal solution for Whitehorse.

The majority of usage is by people from outside Whitehorse, and only a very small percentage of Whitehorse Residents actually use the Centre.

Until all options are on the table, and each is appropriately evaluated, then the direction of Council can only be viewed as a wilful, incompetent and egotistical waste of Ratepayer Funds.

The Business Case does not have the support of

would support continued operations whilst logical decision making based on facts, not egos or emotion, are progressed.

A number of comments specifically focused on the published Business Case document are attached.

Unfortunately the Business Case is heavily tainted with bias, and only reflects the view of those other than ratepayers.

Feedback:

Councillor Phillip Daw
City of Whitehorse
397 Maroondah Hwy
Nunawading 3131

15/4/2016

Dear Councillor Daw

Re the Future of the Whitehorse Centre

I write to you on behalf of the
to express our opinion on the proposals for the future of Whitehorse
Centre. ~

Is a membership organization representing
throughout Victoria and Tasmania and we have a network of 62 venues representing
small (Portland Arts Centre) to very large centres (Arts Centre Melbourne). We
provide professional development services and industry support to our network and
the performing arts sector at large. We also provide benchmarking to support and
undertaking redevelopment projects through our
nationally recognized document,

We have recently reviewed our Strategic Business Plan for our organization and it
seems highly appropriate here to reiterate the key values that we see cultural
programs delivering all communities.

envisages a state where:

• **Participation in the arts is an essential part of everyday life**

- people of all cultures, abilities and backgrounds can interact and affirm themselves through the arts;
- all people have the opportunity to experience live performances;
- artists (professional and community) create and perform work that is innovative and leads in the development and exchange of ideas;

• **There is a sustainable network of cultural facilities to connect artists (community, emerging and professional) and their audiences;**

- cultural facilities are well designed, well managed, risk responsive, appropriately resourced and sustainable;
- cultural facilities provide a hub around which broader community cultural development activity can centre and which serve the needs of communities close-by, as well as those who may be more remote;

- public and private sectors support the creation, production and presentation of performing arts.

Our Values

- Performing arts are an essential part of community life and everyone should have access to arts experiences.
- Performing arts centres are integral to civic life, crucial to the social & economic well-being of communities, and indispensable to community cultural development.
- A network of well-managed, well-resourced and well-connected performing arts facilities is of critical importance, as are strong and effective relationships within the industry.

Whitehorse Centre is a valued and respected member of our network. We have kept up to date with the current discussions re the future of the Centre, and we are concerned as to the impact of the three options being considered; clearly from the community use of the venue over the past decades it is valued and actively utilized by the community. Also it is apparent that the community of the City Whitehorse is growing, ageing and changing in its vision for the council, so therefore any plans to redevelop the site would need to take into account the requirements of this changing population base.

Option C - Closure and Demolition

This option would seem to demonstrate a real lack of understanding by the City and its community of the value of the contribution this current facility makes to the health and well-being of the City and how strongly this is valued by those patrons participating in the sell-out subscriber seasons currently programmed at the venue.

Option B – Essential Works

This option would certainly address some of the basic needs to bring the venue up to a standard which would meet some of the patrons needs and deliver a more flexible space to deliver greater technical and patron flexibility. But the major flaw in this option is the lack of compliance to provide disability access which is a critical failure where it is already recognized that the local demographic is an older more dependent community

Option A- Redevelopment

This option would seem to be the only viable option to provide additional capacity for the venue to not only provide a far superior patron and producer experience, with substantially increased flexibility for productions, as well as increased opportunities for broader and deeper community engagement with the diverse range of facilities offered. It also would seem to demonstrate an understanding of the capacity of the venue to generate a greater business return from the improved conference and function facilities, which can be utilized to provide greater investment in the ongoing activity and maintenance of the facilities overall. Clearly it also offers a more sustainable model which should reduce the operational costs of the venue day to day. Car parking to service the additional facilities is a key component of this option, as well as the provision of facilities to attract and service the youth of the community who are the future patrons of the cultural activities. We understand that Whitehorse currently provides a range of large outdoor events for its multicultural community and the outdoor components of this option certainly offer great flexibility to deliver a safe and flexible space which enhance and support the activities offered so that the

community can enjoy the festivities with greater ability to see and hear the programs offered.

The demands of community cultural facilities are certainly changing, with greater need to provide flexible spaces which offer the greatest opportunities for the broadest range of the community to engage in all forms of cultural activity. Those venues that have recently been redeveloped or totally rebuilt recognizing this need are undoubtedly the most successful- The Cube in Wodonga was a totally new development incorporating flexible spaces, including an indoor/outdoor link for concerts and performances, plus opportunities for local community groups to access the meeting rooms and facilities without impacting on other performance spaces. This has taken what was a small regional facility to a first class active centre, much used by the whole town. Similarly the redevelopment of Lighthouse Theatre in Warrnambool which was reopened in 2014, has given this rural community a cultural and community hub which is utilized regularly for a vast range of activities to service the whole town.

We are happy to provide any additional information or support to assist in the complex decision making process the City of Whitehorse is undertaking and can only strongly encourage a long term view, recognizing the fundamental strength that a well- designed cultural facility brings to all forms of community activity, and the health and well- being that those activities deliver to the population.

Yours sincerely

Feedback:

I am annoyed,

As a ratepayer who relished the consultations that were had with council over the many years of residence I find this latest request a farce

I have read through the Whitehorse Business case and can sympathise with the various users of the centre

I acknowledge that upgrades are necessary to maintain the functionality and safety of all users
I cannot however acknowledge that \$68 million needs to be spent on a structure that will not necessarily increase the patronage of the facility.

My preferred option would be refurbishment - Essential works - giving another 8 - 10 years of usage

In all the documentation I have read most of the users are from outside the City of Whitehorse
The area would not be able to be utilised whilst total reconstruction would take place . the estimated time is around three years!!

Whilst the refurbishments/ reconstruction is taking place the regular paying businesses e.g.: Utassy Ballet / Film Society will have to find other accomodation

With a new facility, it is probable that the rents will be significantly increased to assist with the payment of long term loans????

I have found a survey that was conducted in May 2015 . It included approx 6000 residences within 300m of the centre and via email.

Of those contacted only 559 responded. Of those , 40% were absolutely against the proposed centre redevelopment, with 10% some what agreeing

To my knowledge the Whitehorse Centre has had an upgrade in the thirty years .

The Entrance Foyer was enlarged , the Waratah room painted and the kitchen facilities had been upgraded could, not the disabled compliance have been addressed then.

If a survey had been conducted one year ago why is it necessary to have another survey costing in the vicinity of \$100,000?

Did the survey not have absolute acceptance?

As for the surveys I found that only 600 residences would be surveyed. I fail to see that this would be a fair consideration , considering that there would be quite a substantial more residences in the city.

Heavens knows there are nearly two dwellings to every block these days so I fail to see how fair it would be to take a survey based on roughly 10% of residential land sites and not on residences built on those sites.

I have also found a flood survey conducted in September 2014. This shows significant problems in the likelihood of a torrential downpour especially down the East side of the Building towards the parkland at the rear and to the East of the parkland. It could impact the residential properties especially no 37 Cherrybrook Close as this is closest to the car parking area on the Eastern side of the complex.

Granted the worst case scenario would be an emergency exit on the other side of the complex if it

should be such that the patrons could not exit via the main entrance.

Why even consider building into this apparent flood prone section of the land if there is a distinct possibility of flooding.

Would the building be able to be insured for Flood damage? At what premium cost ???

There are other facilities within the city that are crying out for replacement and in fairness to all ratepayers would not the \$68 million for one facility

and 10 million for a multi level carpark (totally unnecessary, as it will only cater for another 200 car spaces) be better served to upgrade all.

As for all the other sporting / art facilities owned/maintained by council a lot are very derelict, have higher patronage per household and go for years without any refurbishment.

Surely Councils role is to serve the community equally without fear or favour

In serving the community the preservation of sporting grounds and clubrooms, community halls, footpaths, roadworks, health facilities, all should have a regular injection of funds to keep them compilable.

Money for all these to come from where??

Sell off assets?? playgrounds, car parks near shopping centres, some sporting grounds for.....housing??

Long term loans??

21% from ratepayers..... Hence our 6% rate rises were necessary to have reserves for such a fallacy instead of refurbishing other assets

2% from as yet unidentified grants or other income? What is unidentified grants??

What assets does theCity own....Artworks...!!

Was there a loan for the total refurbishment of the Box Hill and Nunawading Aqualink complexes and has this loan been paid?

There is also talk of spending approx \$28 m for the Community hub on the site of the old Nunawading Primary school. Is this to be another loan?

Conference facilities... There are enough empty commercial buildings along the Mega Mile that could be refurbished for such a use and not necessarily have to be run by the council.

If this facility is so necessary could it not be more viable to consult with neighbouring councils to deliver a function centre, central to all for all ratepayers of those municipalities

Like the Library with Manningham Council.

A number of schools have quite serviceable halls / theatres for hire, so why duplicate. I'm sure they didn't cost \$68m

Could the business across from the council have a reduced rate to enable cars to be parked in their empty car park after hours for the community functions like Australia Day, Fireworks and the Spring Festival

instead of having an eyesore of a multi level carpark at the entrance to the Centre.

As councillors aren't you custodians on behalf of the ratepayers and isn't it your position to ensure that local facilities are maintained in a safe and efficient manner.

However did this facility get to the point of needing total demolition/ rebuilding?

Some buildings in the city are 100's of years old and are still quite functional e.g. Princess theatre, Comedy theatre, Bank buildings ,museums etc, so I fail to see how a thirty year old building has to be totally demolished .

Feedback:

Thank you for the two letters sent to me re my thoughts on the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre. I sent my views on line. I want you to know I support the full redevelopment. Good luck.

Feedback:

I submit a request for consideration for this proposed redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre and any further redevelopment in the future.

Feedback:

To Whitehorse council,

Our family are writing regarding the proposed performing arts centre. We do not want this centre to be built. Our rates are already too high, and we don't agree with council spending money they just haven't got. The facilities that are available are fine and a refurbishment would be preferable.

We are very happy with the facilities around festival times, and do not see the need for such an expense.

The council needs to find ways to tighten their budget, financial plan, and put some money away. We have already had a lot of money spent on the swimming pool, which is now more expensive to attend, and our rates are unreasonably high.

Our family are happy with the current facility and do not need to this proposed building development.

Regards,

Feedback:

21st April, 2016

Mayor, Councillors and CEO
Whitehorse City Council
379 -397 Whitehorse Road
Nunawading, Vic., 3131

Dear Mayor Daw, councillors, and CEO,

Re: Proposed rebuilding of Whitehorse Centre.

Re: Redevelopment of Whitehorse Centre.

We, the _____, express our concern that Whitehorse City Council is hastily pushing its ambition to commit the ratepayers of Whitehorse to huge debt while at the same time devouring the significant financial asset Ratepayers have provided over many years, against the will of local residents as expressed in a survey undertaken by Whitehorse City Council in which 90% of respondents indicated opposition to redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre.

We put on notice that we are committed to the good of the Whitehorse community and the will of local residents and we strenuously object to any plan to advance the Whitehorse Centre development without genuine majority support from the ratepayers who must fund any such development.

We see current Whitehorse City Council impetus toward this project as unworthy of those employed and elected by the local community for the good of the local community and we charge Whitehorse City Council to desist from all advancement of this project and allow _____ to express their will for use of _____ funds held in trust by the Council.

_____ Intends to initiate community consultation to determine community will for use of significant existing ratepayer funds held in trust by council and we see any attempt to consume those funds without such consultation as cynical and in contempt of the local residents.

We appreciate Whitehorse City Council and desire to proactively work with you, _____ by _____ for the greater good of all _____ Please do not betray the trust of _____ hastily advancing a project not supported by _____

We invite Whitehorse City Council to engage with us and with the wider community in continued dialogue

about the most fitting way to make good use of ratepayers' funds now held in trust by Whitehorse City Council.

Thank you for respecting our wishes.

We look forward to assisting you as you serve the local community.

Signed for and on behalf of the members by:

Yours sincerely,

Feedback:

Greetings! Attempt to complete online Q was declined.
this field.

not represented in

This is _____ with huge performances planned, requiring audiences of 600+ to pay for them. We are in favour of a new or at least improved performance space because CoW is unable to accommodate patrons nor mount concert sufficient to support costs for _____ and a large orchestra . We greatly appreciate the support we receive from CoW and participate in Spring Festival and other Community events with scaled down accompaniment.

Australia-wide, _____ are currently undergoing a massive resurgence.

_____ must offer varied and exciting programs to retain _____ for more than a year. It's called 'poaching' ! We have great opportunities offered us from _____ Consequently in a year we can

_____ . These and other collaborations provide a greater business model to meet costs. When combine, audience income is shared along with costs. A far superior experience can be achieved for both

While we can see by reading the published discussion material how frequently our present CoW facilities are used, the consultants might consider how many times in a year the space might have been filled. In addition, how many user groups have gone elsewhere because

1. The space was booked out 2 yrs in advance. 2. The space was not large enough for their needs.

We have stated in writing and at forums previously that while a new space might be created, it would still need to be affordable for 'not for profit' groups such as ourselves, who position their membership subscriptions within reach of all members.

Best regards for your deliberations.

Feedback:

Thank you XXXX for your detail response.

The extracted information below is the crux of your response relating to my enquiry.

I look forward to seeing this in the MASTER PLAN, if the community support the rebuild, as I hope is done.

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Tuesday, 29 March 2016 5:02 PM
To: whitehorse.centre@whitehorse.vic.gov.au; www.whitehorse@jwsresearch.com; JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Whitehorse Centre
Categories: Orange Category

To Whom it May Concern,

I just wanted to quickly send an email in support of the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre.

It would be such a sad loss to see the Whitehorse Centre close. Many patrons already use and enjoy this facility and pay to do so. (Surely the funds would eventually be recuperated anyway from ticket payments and hirings.) The Whitehorse Centre is an important meeting (and social) place, a place for celebrating the arts, a space to hire out and a community hub. We cannot become a City that is devoid of the Arts. It seems that many local citizens are vocal about our sporting facilities and their importance - but the Arts are important too and the Whitehorse Theatre is frequented by throngs of people. It is a place where I am able to take my elderly relatives, my young children, my husband and also visitors. We need to invest in the future of our Arts and preserve our access to this important facility. Let's not just save the existing building, let's upgrade it to become a state of the art facility that caters for a range of needs and that other communities want to hire out.

The Future of the Whitehorse Centre should be a bright one, and it is well worth investing in!

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Saturday, 2 April 2016 12:11 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Cc: Carole Jean
Subject: Additional comments to the Survey

Categories: Orange Category

Hi,

There are a couple of additional comments I would like to make regarding the future of the Whitehorse Centre. Your survey did not allow for "any further comments" as such, but I'd like them to be considered.

I use the Centre and realise it needs upgrading/replacing. I would be happy for it to be totally redeveloped, but on a smaller scale with a smaller budget and no changes to car-parking. Unfortunately this is not one of the 3 options given. It really should have been a fourth option.

This would mean the Centre facilities would be up to standard, there would be less disruption and no issues with the building of an expensive multi-level carpark (which is completely out of character for the area).

I am also concerned as to how much money the Council has also spent on the business case, plans etc. Whilst I understand the need for preliminary documentation etc, and for the survey to be done, I also realise this preliminary work is really expensive, and may end up being a total waste of money, as I don't have a lot of faith in the Council taking any notice of what the survey results are... especially if they generally negative. I feel the Council will go ahead with the redevelopment regardless of community views (which I suspect are generally against complete redevelopment as proposed)

I admit to not having read the 550 plus page report, it's ridiculous to expect members of the public to do so, although I did read the overview.

Will the Council make public the costs of all of the preliminary work i.e. the above report, the cost of the survey/community consultation?

Regards,

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Saturday, 2 April 2016 4:44 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: On-line survey re: Redevelopment of Whitehorse Centre

Categories: Orange Category

To Whom it may Concern,

I have just completed the on-line survey and am frustrated by the omission of a space to comment. The options are loaded to complete redevelopment OR closure, sooner or later.

As a regular attendee at The Whitehorse Centre I am appalled, considering the building has not been **condemned**, that no consideration has been given to a total **upgrade incorporating** some of the existing building.

This could be achieved if there was a will to do so. Yes, the result may not quite be the grand scale building proposed, but while further plans would be necessary, and there may be some limitation, I firmly believe a savings could be made and spent on other worthwhile ventures I see no reason why the proposed intentions to cater for purposes currently being turned away would not be met by so doing.

REDESIGN and REDEVELOP utilising some of what is there.

Please include in future surveys a place for comments!

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Saturday, 2 April 2016 5:05 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: whitehorse centre

Categories: Orange Category

To Whom It Concerns,

My submission is thus:-

My concern is that the ratepayers have not been considered when the cost of the new centre has been considered.

Many of us are on very low incomes, and the constant increase in our rates is starting to bite, severely.

People on pensions do not have the ability to absorb constant increases.

I am in favour of a new complex, but I feel the cost of the new centre that has been quoted is absolutely excessive.

So HOW ABOUT GETTING SOME MORE QUOTES. How many were organised in the first place?

That's it for me. I do hope sense prevails, and the ratepayers are given more consideration, financially.

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Saturday, 2 April 2016 7:36 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Whitehorse Centre File No. SF13/301

Categories: Orange Category

To whom it may concern,

I have been involved with the Whitehorse Centre for the past 5 years and have found it to be a very valuable space for performance in our area.

I support option (A) the 'potential redevelopment' of the site. Supporting and encouraging the arts for future generations.

Regards,

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Sunday, 3 April 2016 10:38 AM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Future of Whitehorse Centre

Categories: Orange Category

Hi,

I was disappointed that the survey didn't incorporate an ability to provide written feedback to help justify the comments made. Anyway, these are my brief thoughts:

- Agree that a redevelopment is needed.
- Do not agree with the funding arrangements for the rebuild – I see that the redevelopment should be delayed until there are alternative funding arrangements in place. I would like to see funds provided by state and federal governments making up a proportion of the funds as the benefits of the Centre also accrue to users outside the City of Whitehorse (both directly and indirectly e.g. without this Centre, other centres in other municipalities would be placed under greater user pressures). Of course I see the council needing to provide a substantial proportion of the funds e.g. 50% of the redevelopment costs plus the costs of the carpark (i.e. the car park will benefit other users in addition to Whitehorse Centre users).
- Cannot see how the Council can realistically afford the cost of this redevelopment without additional funding from non-Council sources. At an estimated cost of \$78 million (including car park) it is anticipated to be over twice the cost of the redevelopment of aquaLINK Box Hill which the City of Whitehorse Annual Report for 2013-14 (the most recent I could find) said "was Whitehorse City Council's largest capital works project ever conducted". Using the figures from that Annual Report, this project would be over 40% of the Council's entire budget. Even a relatively small cost overrun on the estimated costs would put the Council and its ratepayers in an invidious position.
- As a stop-gap measure it may be necessary to undertake essential works to keep the existing centre functioning.
- Was very disappointed to read in the local paper earlier on in the debate about the centre that one of the justifications for the need to redevelop was that the centre needs to be raised 1 metre due to the potential for flooding. What an absolute load of codswallop. If the existing centre, near the top of a ridge and way higher than most of the municipality, is prone to flooding of any kind then I think we need to forget about any redevelopment of the centre and consider using those funds to help relocate all of the City of Whitehorse to the top of Mt Baw Baw. There might be all sorts of reasons for redevelopment but the existing centre being flood prone is not one of them and calls into question the whole Business Case.
- In a quick comparison with another municipal performing arts project (Cairns Performing Arts Centre) it seems that the Whitehorse Centre will be smaller for a greater cost. I would have thought that costs of building in Far North Queensland would be higher than in Victoria so what gives. Seems that we are looking to pay top dollar. It may be an unfair comparison but we should look at the costs as they do seem rather high.

Regards

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Sunday, 3 April 2016 10:48 AM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Future of the Whitehorse centre

Categories: Orange Category

I think the answer is --

B. Undertake essential works to keep the centre open for another 8 - 10 years before possible closure.

It is still an extremely popular place to go for enjoyment and marvellous shows. There are not many places people can go for superb entertainment and easy parking and have a most enjoyable time.

I think a large community would be very sad if it was closed, as it is an icon.

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Monday, 4 April 2016 9:29 AM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: White horse centre

Categories: Orange Category

Feedback: I think Plan B is best. Plan A might be a bit too ambitious.

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Tuesday, 5 April 2016 8:55 AM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Whitehorse Centre redevelopment

Categories: Orange Category

Hello,

I have just completed the survey for the proposed \$78 million redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre.

I would just like to take the opportunity to elaborate further on what I have selected and why.

I have selected the option to do essential works and then close in the next 8-10 years, although it was a bit of a toss-up between this and immediate closure.

I support the arts and have two school-age children learning musical instruments. I expect at least one of them to continue this well well into High School as both will be (one already is) at Blackburn High School where this is emphasised. I regularly attend art exhibitions, museums, art galleries, photographic works, etc. I am excited by architecture, sculpture, movies and music.

I would note the use of the photo in the Whitehorse News of cute little kiddies doing ballet practice at the Whitehorse Centre, and want to support kiddies and adults in all their endeavours - be this sporting, artistic, whatever. I note that Whitehorse Council provides support (as do all layers of Govt) to a variety of pursuits such as sports (through sporting grounds, netball etc), bicycle paths, libraries, arts locations, neighbourhood houses, etc etc. I believe arts and performing arts should be part of the mix.

However, there is a difference between having essential services in every neighbourhood (i.e. libraries should service the whole community, there should be garbage collection everywhere, there should be maintained footpaths everywhere, there should be bike paths everywhere, there should be childcare services everywhere) and "one-off" type services that don't need to be in every suburb (eg Zoos, Aquariums, mountaintop revolving restaurants, Arts Centres with spires, National art galleries, Formula One GP race tracks, airports, shipping ports, Country Music Hall of Fame).

So whilst I support little kiddies doing ballet, I think they can probably find somewhere to do this that needn't cost the ratepayer \$78 million. I note that there are a range of commercial providers in Whitehorse who support Rock Climbing (Hard Rock, Varman Court Nunawading), Gymnastics (Clarice Avenue Box Hill), and trapeze artistry (north of Morton Park). These are not provided council support - why shouldn't Whitehorse build a 'Whitehorse Rock Climbing and Trapeze Art Centre' for \$78 million?

Council appear to have decided we need a performing arts complex, without considering the issues raised in the business case about why we need to spend \$78 million. When I go to the shops to buy a banana, I expect to spend under \$1 on that purchase. If I find the banana costs \$5 (as was the case after the cyclone the other year) I will just not buy a banana. So I am prepared to spent maybe \$10 or \$15 million on a lovely Performing Arts Centre in a wonderful location if the business case is made. But not \$78 million.

Additionally, council does not seem to be providing basic services to a great deal of Whitehorse:

- * There is no footpath on the south side of Central Road, Nunawading. Why?

- * There is no footpath connection from Joyce Street Nunawading to the north side of Central Road, Nunawading. Why?

- * There is no bike path going north-south in Whitehorse despite years and years of debate about the need for this, along the Notting Hill - Mitcham pipe track. Why?

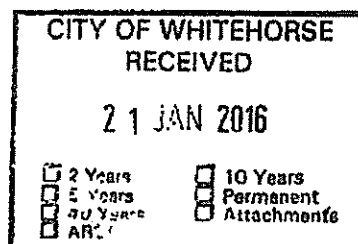
What options have we explored to:

- * Team up with neighbouring councils to build a centre (eg maybe in Ringwood, Camberwell, Box Hill, Doncaster or Glen Waverley?)
- * Team up with a developer to build such a centre as part of a broader redevelopment of the Box Hill centre?
- * Repurpose existing facilities. Eg the old Box Hill Town Hall has a large exhibition space that would be perfect for kids learning ballet.
- * Incorporate some of this into the new Nunawading Community Hub on the site of the old primary school.
- * Team up with local schools, such as Blackburn High, to better use their existing facilities
- * Consider siting any centre somewhere central so transport is already provided - eg, near or at Box Hill, Blackburn or Nunawading stations?

I am happy to take part in further research on this matter.

Kind regards,

Councillor Phillip Daw
Mayor
Whitehorse City Council
379-397 Whitehorse Road
NUNAWADING VIC 3131



Dear Councillor Daw

Thank you for your letter of 17 December 2015 regarding Council's resolution on the Whitehorse Centre.

I am not sure of the context in which this letter was sent to
although I note the intended recipient was _____ our
who is currently or

In any event, your letter advises that Council passed a resolution on 14 December 2015, to make publicly available the Whitehorse Centre Business Case, including 3 possible options for the future of the Centre. In doing so, Council has been advised that the Centre

As _____ representing
providers, supports a 'whole of Victorian government, whole of community' approach
to delivering _____ As part of this approach, _____ supports the expansion of a
program of works, announced in July 2015 by the Victorian Government, to build more
inclusive and accessible public spaces and facilities. We argue that this should include a
requirement that State and Local Governments only issue planning approvals for new
developments that meet contemporary Australian standards _____ This view is
informed by our organisational position that people _____ should have access to
public spaces and venues _____ that is available to everyone else in
the Victorian community. We also argue that the Victorian Government should also actively
support and expand upon initiatives such as the _____ toilets
program, to ensure that social, recreational and community activities are more accessible
for Victorians

I would be grateful if the above views could be taken into account by Council in the course of additional consultations on the Whitehorse Centre, with a view to ensuring that, in the future, the Centre provides equal access to people as members of our community.

Yours sincerely

Feedback:

To:- Whitehorse Council.
Nunawading.

To Whomever concerned.

Recently, we received a letter
proposing changes to the
Whitehorse Centre.

Save the Whitehorse Centre!

What a wonderful local cultural
resource for the Eastern suburbs.
Easy to access and with free
parking.

Over the years - nearly twenty years
we have enjoyed its resources.

We have enjoyed many concerts,
Babina Players. Musicals of such
high calibre.

Recently, we have enjoyed concerts
to support "The Eastern Emergency
Relief Network".

Our

will be

represented at the "Whitehorse
Festival" this year.

Our Probosc Group - the "

Support the productions at
the Whitehorse Centre!

This is a suitable venue for our
age group. A local venue - easy
to access. We need this theatre!

Yours sincerely;

Feedback x 2

WHITEHORSE CENTRE ALTERNATIVE

Council are to be congratulated on addressing the cultural needs of its citizens resulting in the proposal for a 600 seat venue at a cost of \$78 million on the present site, part of the Council complex on Whitehorse Rd, Nunawading.

Now that the business plan for the WHITEHORSE CENTRE has been completed and costs and other data are available it is appropriate to review whether the size, location and amount to be invested are in ratepayer's best interests.

Ratepayers will be asked to vote on three options to replace the current 400 seat theatre and complex with a 600 seat facility on the current site.

There has been no objective study to determine the size theatre required to replace the current ageing facility. The recommendation for a 600 seat venue at a cost of \$78 million comes principally from out of date subjective opinions and vested interests. There has been no relevant consultation with the people who are expected to pay for it; the Ratepayers. The ratepayers may well prefer other capital works of much more of benefit to them and their children.

SIZE

A more rationale method of determining the size required is to compare the current attendance, size and population with the forecast population in 2036 and thus determine the basic seating capacity for the new complex.

Attendances overall at the centre and the theatre are slowly reducing viz:

Overall 2010/11 131,572 attendees

2014/15 120,865 attendees

THEATRE

Council advise as follows;

The True Overall House Capacity: the Whitehorse Centre has 408 theatre seats and 6 accessible spaces in the theatre totalling a house capacity of 414 per performance. Forty-nine performances multiplied by the house capacity (414) equals a total capacity of 20,286 seats/spaces. With 15,919 of these seats/spaces occupied during the period, the average attendance was 78%.

The 15,919 compares with 16,603 attendees in the previous year.

The simple facts are these:-

1. The theatre is not fully utilised; for example in 2014/15 average professional theatre attendances were 325 against a capacity of 408 seats.
2. Based on the forecast population growth between 2014 and 2036 an average attendance of 364 might be expected in 2036.
3. The increased total attendance forecast of 163,195 by the consultants for 2023/4 is unsustainable. Attendances over the past four years have stabilised in the low 120 thousands. Based on population increase a total attendance of 135,000 is far more realistic than the 163,195 forecast.
4. To achieve 163,195 attendees an increase of 20% in attendance rates is needed.
5. As alerted to by the consultants the site is very poor being located on landfill within a floodplain and thus will attract extra construction costs.
6. The site is poorly served by public transport.

ALTERNATIVE SITE – CAMBRIDGE ST, BOX HILL

It is a given that a showpiece facility such as that proposed should be located at the hub of the municipality. There is no doubt that the 7,700 sqm Council owned carpark at the corner of Station St Box Hill fulfils that requirement; it is very well served by public transport and, subject to testing, located on a sound site.

Council is about to consider Expressions of Interest for the site. I would suggest that in negotiations with potential purchasers Council invite them to have their offer include provision for the "Whitehorse Centre" to be operated by the Council. There could considerable advantages, financial and otherwise, to both the developer and the Council.

COST ADVANTAGES-CAMBRIDGE ST

Foundations – extra not required-\$2million

Car Parking – already incorporated not required- \$11 million

Reduction to 500 capacity theatre - \$7 million minimum.

Given these factors a far better solution is a 500 seat theatre located on a physically sound site well served by public transport. Cambridge St lends itself to a multi storied development incorporating a "Whitehorse Centre" as part of a joint enterprise with private investment and maximising Council's equity.

*Yes, replace the ageing centre but with a 500 seat theatre, on a more suitable site, close to public transport and reducing disruption to existing tenants.

I strongly urge Council to carefully evaluate the Cambridge St proposal in the interests of providing the best outcome for the ratepayers whom they represent.

The drive for a 600 seat venue comes principally from the subjective opinions and vested interests of users and patrons. There is no objective evidence to show that a larger theatre is required, nor has there been any relevant consultation with the people who are expected to pay for it; the Ratepayers.

In reaching the conclusion that a larger theatre was required the consultants relied in part on outdated, naturally biased and subjective data .

Feedback:



Art & Recreation Development
Administration Officer
Whitehorse City Council

To Council of Whitehorse

2 MARCH 2016
5 AM

Your letter dated FRIDAY 12 FEB 2016

Your Council is on my mind

(C) ???

NOT SPORT PEOPLE WITH CAREER
WHO WIN SINCE RELAX

Have you EVER seen how good
FRANKSTON Art Centre constantly
WORKS full time

I can't drive home from FRANKSTON my daughter to FRANKSTON.
WE HAVE BEEN COMING TO WHITEHORSE SHOWS FOR 20^{PLUS} ⁵⁵/₁₀
years - well - since new opera sign out from
Grease was on. NOVA. Birra Birra - plus - other Shows
These groups have been so good for my daughter like

The Cost of Shows at Whitehorse compared
to City theatres

So Great Differences

The Pension doesn't go far - ^{etc.}

Keep to Victorian Australian not overseas trips better
to go to theatre

PLEASE DO NOT close - your mind

Keep Australians in WORK.

CITY OF WHITEHORSE
RECEIVED

Feedback:

7mm Feb. 25th 2016
Aid Administration
Office

Dear Members of Whitehorse City Council

Thank you for your letter:
from the office of the Mayor.

My name is
I have been living at this address for
2 1/2 years.
Sinds I came here I go nearly every month
on a Wednesday to the Whitehorse Centre
to see a show.

I enjoy going there: and find it
very well run.

Most people have a cuppa and a chat.
They open the doors to the theatre about
3/4 before the show and there is no
pushing or shuffling. We are all seated
at hand.

I can quite understand that the Council
would have to be able to say,

We build this new Whitehorse Centre, your
names would be on the plaque.

But I don't think the time is ripe for
this.

Why? We live at the moment in a very
unsure world.

The dollar is dropping, the whole world
is in turmoil.

The Victorian Government has no money
the Federal Government have their own
worries and for sure no money for a
new Whitehorse Centre.

If the Council would have 3/4 (that is
75%) of the cost of the new building
I would say, yes, if the construction goes
quick you may be able to do it.

Because the interest rate is very low
but the way you are talking I think that is
not the case.

I am
I. You are the only parent, who still increased their rates.

II. The Whitehouse Centre building is still as far as I can see it, in good order.

III. I agree the interior inside could be a bit updated.

may be take a wall out to make one big room. May be some electric work and a bit of paint.

IV. I personally think \$7 million for an update is also a bit much. Unless you have 75% in cash,

my family have been in Business for many years. since the 1700.

I came to this country in 1959. My husband and I were here in business too, but we always worked on making sure there was 75%.

I don't think you should close the Centre in 2 years. it won't be necessary.

Thank you for reading my letter.

Feedback:

4-3-16

To Sir / Madam,

I'm just writing to add a different perspective to the closing Whitehorse Centre than just local residents. My sister lives in Footscray and I in F/Gully, so we have enjoyed "meeting in the middle" and seen quite a few great musicals at the Whitehorse Centre. We found the standard very professional, though at reasonable ticket prices, and the convenience of seeing the performances at a suburban centre.

There would be many people like us who are living out of the area who use the centre, though wouldn't write in.

Please do your utmost to keep the centre renovated and open as there aren't many theatre complexes in the 5th eastern side of Melbourne all.

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Wednesday, 20 April 2016 9:35 AM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Feedback on Whitehorse Centre proposal
Categories: Orange Category

Dear Surveyor,

I do not support this proposal.

In the past I have checked out events held at this centre and simply cannot afford the prices charged.

I presume that any new facility would be managed in the same way so why should I pay for a facility that I have to pay for again to use if I could afford it.

I am a retiree. The current rates are high enough. I would like to see the rates reduced not unnecessarily increased. The focus should be on minimising rates not what is the maximum we can charge ratepayers.

Why should the City of Whitehorse provide a cultural centre for the eastern suburbs to use. It makes no sense to me.

We have fantastic rapid transport to the city. The state government should provide facilities in the CBD that all suburbs can use. The transport is not used at nights and weekend when such facilities are often used. It makes a lot more sense to me. As the current Prime Minister has said "We have to learn to live within our means".

If we are to build any car parks then priority should be at railway stations to encourage people to use trains like they do in all other major cities in the world. We simply cannot go on widening the Tullamarine Freeway or the Monash, removing level crossings or think building another tunnel will solve long term transport problems. It is clearly lunacy. There is unlimited free space over railway lines just waiting to be developed into car parking near probably every station. Local people have to pay to park their car at Box Hill to buy basic food to eat at the market because of the lack of car parking.

The biggest need in our neighbourhood is the lack of parks. We simply do not have enough. The current leader of the Federal Opposition Shorten was recently reported as having said that if elected his party would contributed to a feasibility study to turn Box Hill into a CBD. Without more parks the residents will stress out and go crazy. Clearly parks for people are a higher priority than parks for cars. If the Federal Government and the State Government makes deliberate decision to increase population in the City of Whitehorse then clearly they should be providing the funds to support their decision. Why should we? I cannot see any benefits in it for me or any other existing residents by turning Box Hill into another Hong Kong or Manhattan. Developers and their shareholders who don't live here are the only beneficiaries.

As an aside, why is New Hope Baptist church building its new building as a community use building and the City of Whitehorse want to build a facility with similar characteristics. Surely the 2 bodies can work together?

In summary I think the current proposal is very short sighted. Rather than the leaders in the City of Whitehorse thinking in a myopic way and allowing the State and Federal Governments to have their way they should be joining with all other Melbourne municipalities and putting a proposal to the State govt to utilise the existing asset that we have ie rail lines to the CBD and build both car parks at stations and cultural facilities in the CBD for all Melbournians to enjoy. This approach would be a win, win win.

Thank you for consulting with the existing residents in the City of Whitehorse on this issue.

Regards _____

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Wednesday, 20 April 2016 10:26 AM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Whitehorse Centre redevelopment
Categories: Orange Category

Morning

There are a number of points I wish to raise in relation to the redeployment options for the Whitehorse Centre. The three options provided do not allow for an option to rebuild the centre with a proscenium theatre only. They jump from spending \$10m to \$87m - surely there is an option in between.

I have provided some feedback on the business case below:

There seems to be little or no demand for a black box theatre other than a couple of producers. My daughters school (Sion) in Boxhill has just built a black box theatre. Maybe the producers can hire that one.

There also seems to be little demand for increased function rooms. Why come to the Whitehorse centre for a function or business meeting when you have facilities in the business hubs of Boxhill and Ringwood.

The current use of the Whitehorse Centre does not justify this huge development. The theatre is used 216 days per year - 100 days currently free and you want to add another theatre!

The basis of the design has come from the minimum standards from VAPAC. They are an organisation that is made up of producers, performing companies and performing arts centres that have a vested interest. They are only guidelines and in the case of Whitehorse should be used with caution.

If the scope of the project is reduced then there would be no need for additional car parking and loss of open space. I will not support a project that takes away open space - council opened up the space between the civic centre and Walker park some years ago which was a fantastic move and now they want to take it away!!

Finally the cost to operate it is unbelievable -\$1.2m operating subsidy. If the centre was to be redeveloped in any form then this needs to be looked at. Maybe the operation of the centre should be managed externally from Council? The financial figures do not include the interest on any borrowing for the Centre. This is likely to be in the millions as well. Combine this with depreciation and what do you have - a heavy long term burden on the community that will never make any money.

Council - rethink your plans. Look at a reduced scope.

Planned Expenditure of \$76 Million on the Refurbishment of the Whitehorse Centre

The authors of this submission, _____ are equivocal about a costly, major refurbishment of the Whitehorse Centre, particularly given the popular perception amongst many Whitehorse residents that 'big ticket' capital works in Whitehorse and active sporting pursuits/facilities (e.g. Aqualink Box Hill at \$45M) have always taken precedence in budgetary allocations over unstructured recreational pursuits and associated facilities. Facilities 'screaming out' for a better slice of the capital works and recurrent budget include parks and open spaces, path networks and linkages and expenditure on improving active transport i.e. walking and cycling infrastructure and connectivity throughout Whitehorse.

This is of particular relevance when resident survey results strongly demonstrate the importance of unstructured recreational pursuits including walking. Whitehorse has a very high proportion of its population who nominate walking as their preferred recreational pursuit.

The following questions need to be adequately answered and communicated to the community before any major refurbishment of the Whitehorse Centre is decided:

- Is there an element of 'empire building' in the rush to commit \$76,000,000 to this project?
- What proportion of the Whitehorse population use these facilities now?
- Are Whitehorse residents, who pay for the facility, being subsidized by Council for using the facility compared with the large numbers of non-Whitehorse people who also use the facility?
- When were the well-advanced, detailed plans for the major refurbishment of these facilities developed, given that no firm decision has been made as to whether the project will proceed?
- What is Council's decision-making methodology on major projects? For example has a strong business case in favour of a major refurbishment been established? If yes, has the business case been made available for ratepayer scrutiny?
- What is the reason for apparent haste in commissioning the Whitehorse Refurbishment Project?
- Is there a demonstrated need for such grandiose refurbishment for these facilities? For example are the facilities functioning at maximum capacity currently?
- Isn't the cost excessive (\$76M over 6 years) particularly given that Council will still have \$10.82M in borrowings at 30 June 2016 for the Aqualink Box Hill and Sportlink refurbishments?
- Is the method of payment fair to ratepayers? That is significant borrowings and a 2% one-off ratepayer levy in addition to the proposed 5.6% general rate increase proposed for 2015/16?

JWS Research
Whitehorse Centre Project
PO Box 2575, Caulfield Junction, 3161

via email: whitehorse@jwsresearch.com

20 April 2016

RE: Whitehorse Centre Project

This submission relates to the Whitehorse Centre Project. I thank the Councillors for agreeing to make various documents public and providing the opportunity to make a submission. I would also especially like to thank [redacted] and [redacted] for their informative tour, which made it clear that the centre is functional but has shortcomings. Given the importance of the facility to the community, it seems appropriate to have a discussion about upgrading the centre. My main concerns are firstly, the high cost of the proposed new centre relative to the Whitehorse annual budget, and secondly, the strong bias of the business case towards favouring the high-cost redevelopment option.

At a capital cost of 45% of the annual budget, the cost burden on ratepayers seems high, regardless of whether the funding is coming from recurrent expenditure or not - there is clearly an opportunity cost. I wonder whether an appropriate process has been followed to specify a redevelopment within a proposed budget. I understand that a performing arts centre is more complex technically and architecturally than generic building types, however, it is not obvious that the budget was a key input to the project brief. Were other less costly options considered?

Secondly, the business case seems skewed towards arguing for the redevelopment option rather than providing a dispassionate cost-benefit analysis of the whole suite of options. The costings for the two alternative options seem inflated, and I wonder whether some of these costs would have been more accurately identified as discretionary. The maintenance report seems to suggest much less urgency than suggested by Council. The most obvious, and usually default option for aging buildings, is a policy of 'graceful decay', which has not been offered as an option. 28 years is not usually considered an 'old' building, and many people would be horrified of the idea of scrapping buildings of this age. The business case cites improved energy efficiency in favour of the redevelopment option, but premature scrapping of functional assets can be the worst outcome from a sustainability perspective. For depreciation purposes, it is common to assign a default useful life of 50 years.

In relation to maintenance costs, Kersulting, 2015, pg. 18 notes -

"Following our inspection and observations as noted above we conclude that the existing structural condition is generally sound. There were elements of the building fabric including external cladding, roof sheet, gutters/downpipes which have shown wear these were generally non-structural"

and (pg. 19) -

"Following our review of the existing conditions we anticipate that the building condition can be maintained through regular general maintenance. We do not expect that major structural works will be required to the structural frame and or footings in the short term life of the building."

From the Forecast Building Renewal & Reactive Maintenance Works, roof maintenance is costed at \$405,000, which appears to be the only essential building work. Much of the other building renewal work would improve the facility, and as a Whitehorse ratepayer, I am happy to see modest expenditures to upgrade and maintain aging assets and equipment. However, aging assets are just a fact-of-life that we make the best of. There is no detail on some of the additional expenditure. Have the renewal costs been subject to proper review? I call attention to the boiler and air conditioning plant and wonder whether a circa \$1M renewal is justified. Is Council applying 'new' standards to aging plant? Has the complete plant reached the end of its useful life? Project management is costed at \$903,000. Is Council getting value for money or been content to accept inflated estimates in order to justify the redevelopment option?

Overall, my conclusion is that the facility is not ideal, but nonetheless serviceable for many years to come. and made a good case that the many design features are not optimal and reduce the utility of the facility. I appreciate that certain features can't be retrofitted. Nonetheless, I would have much preferred to see a suite of options, including a redevelopment at a more modest cost. My main concern is that the consultation process is really a façade to promote the high-cost redevelopment option rather than a dispassionate appraisal of alternative options. Perhaps a full redevelopment should be put on the back-burner and revisited, perhaps in the 2020's, with a more modest development.

Yours faithfully

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Wednesday, 20 April 2016 12:56 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment

Categories: Orange Category

This afternoon I have just completed the online survey for the Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment project. I have to say that I found the survey unsatisfactory in terms of "accurately assessing residents' attitudes and opinions" which was listed in the Council documents as the purpose of the survey. I wanted to give my attitude and opinion but was only able to agree or disagree with the three options. I wanted to say that I am a supporter of the Arts and that I have been a frequent visitor to the Whitehorse Centre. I want it to continue into the future, but I am not in favour of the options given. Surely there can be some sort of compromise where the cost of the project can be reduced and the scale of the work can still satisfy the needs of the people in the community. There was no provision in the survey to voice this attitude or opinion. I feel now that my voice has been skewed through my responses .

Submission

firmly believes that the City of Whitehorse should continue to provide and develop facilities and opportunities for the ongoing provision of within the municipality.

Our Choice

Of the three options presented, we feel that the B option (Essential work) is most sensible for us. It is the only option that would offer and its current operations, immediate security. With Option B over the next 10 years we would be able to continue supporting the City of Whitehorse in achieving the Arts and Cultural Strategy's Vision:

**"WE ASPIRE TO BE A CREATIVE COMMUNITY
THAT IS VIBRANT
DIVERSE AND ENGAGED
THROUGH OUR ARTS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE"**

We consider that the facts and figures listed in the Appendices substantiate how the already exemplifies word by word, this vision.

Should Option A be adopted (Full redevelopment), we see so many ways that the existing programs could be further developed and enhanced (such as the that has brought approximately 18,000

to the Whitehorse Centre) to capitalize on the proposed new theatres and studios. The absence of any accommodation plans for during the construction period is the reason that this option does not offer any security.

Our Needs should Option A be adopted

- **Space to operate** while the new construction takes place
- **2 sprung floor studios to duplicate the Soundshell and the Banksia Room**
 - The
 - The studios need dressing rooms for males and females that can be accessed independently (meaning students do not go through the teaching space to get to their dressing rooms)
 - **Preferably the studios need to be adjoining, but definitely access from one to the other needs to happen internally (at present students have to go outside to get from one to the other)**
 - The studios need mirrors – some of these were supplied by the at the opening of the Whitehorse Centre in 1986
 - Up to date sound systems in each studio so when other groups are using the centre they are not using our systems
 - Non slip Tarkett flooring that is suitable for all styles of dance – currently the Soundshell has our Tarkett laid as the one owned by the centre is slippery. This is often used by other bookings

- A warm-up, VCE Dance practice space (duplicating the wooded end of the workshop in the current building)
- Internet Wi-Fi access
- Provision for the _____ - please separate submission from _____
- Provision for the _____ - please see separate _____
- Wider Stage dimension (12M by 9M usable onstage space) in the main theatre
- Increased wing space on both Prompt and Opposite Prompt
- Symmetrical legs and borders (there is not a proper centre in the current theatre)
- Raked seating so all audience can see (in current theatre our kindergarten children in the audience have trouble seeing the whole stage)
- Orchestra pit that can take a larger number of players - we had to take the Nicholas Orchestra to Burrinja theatre to accommodate the 37 piece orchestra for _____
- Fly tower (as current theatre) which is a huge advantage however our productions can work around theatres that do not have a fly tower
- **Adequate dressing rooms so all areas of the new proposed building can operate simultaneously**

Our Needs should Option B be adopted

As above and then as below

Our Needs should Option C be adopted

The _____ will close or we would find alternative premises

Appendix 1

Historical Fact

- The _____ this year
- _____ was one of the _____ of the Mitcham Memorial Hall until it was pulled down in 1986
- _____ has been the _____ in the Whitehorse Centre since it opened
- _____ has had an consistent enrolment of _____ students for _____
- _____ initiated the _____ that exists and flourishes today
- Former Artistic Director of the _____
- _____ death
- _____ has had up to _____ enrolled every year for _____
- _____ trialed their _____ with the opening of the Whitehorse Centre (formerly Nunawading Arts Centre)
- _____ VCE _____ from 1993 then VCE _____ from 2007 till today

- – lighting designer Australian began designing in
- has original Victoria costumes costumes and also costumes from
- – A full evening dinnerdance and floorshow which included comedians, singers, Dancers and Usherettes
This event was repeated as a mayoral function at the request of Councillor Bruce Atkinson who was mayor at the time.

Appendix 2

Educational Facts

- It is the
- One of accompanying together each year with educates and introduces theatre to and
- written by Original edition featured on the cover (this picture was taken by a parent at the Mitcham Memorial Hall)
- The Box Hill TAFE Teaching and Management Course content was based on the book of , and was trialed at the Whitehorse Centre in
- VCE students have performed both in VCE and VCE (highest scorers in all VCE performing arts) and received a Premier's Award
- Whitehorse Spring Festival - has performed at the Whitehorse Spring Festival The mass movement of the young towards the Soundshell stage substantiated the gravitational pull of this classic tale for young children.
- Due to VCE and other we have made contact with Argentinian, Spanish, Irish, Russian, Ukrainian, Armenian, African and ethnic groups and on stage within our presentations.

Appendix 3

Artistic Facts

- together with was invited to present a 2 week holiday season in at the - this collaboration continued for las an
- has worked on 3 occasions with the Nicholas Chamber Orchestra – twice with Derek Guille narrating
- produced and financed for a holiday season at the Whitehorse Centre - the production included musicians, choirs, acrobatics and of course dance
- All are fully produced and designed including costume, set and lighting designs
- won the prestigious
- has had specially written for include
- has produced

teacher of character at the Australian
famed graphic artist whose
works are in the and who was a member of the famous

Appendix 4

Amazing Facts

- [redacted] has contributed approximately \$1.6 Million over [redacted] to the Whitehorse Council
 - Some kindergartens such as [redacted] have attended [redacted]
 - On the strength of approximately 40 emails, [redacted] has 1100 bookings for this year's [redacted] six month before the season
 - [redacted] does not yet have a website
 - [redacted] is the only [redacted] except the [redacted] to have performed in the Playhouse – The Arts Centre
 - [redacted] is the [redacted] to have toured their entire [redacted] to Burrinja to perform a totally [redacted] (permission granted from the [redacted] and [redacted] to be accompanied by [redacted] This original adaptation for [redacted] was a world premiere in [redacted]
 - Possibly more [redacted] have become [redacted]
- [redacted] And [redacted], and currently [redacted] still [redacted]
- Artists [redacted] to name a few [redacted]
 - [redacted] have donated their professional skills to [redacted]
 - [redacted] has galvanized scores of [redacted] via the [redacted] to contribute endlessly of their time and expertise. The legacy the [redacted] leave is for [redacted] and future generations
 - [redacted] has been consulted 4 times over our needs for the future of the Whitehorse Centre and has participated in sessions on the proposed redevelopment
 - When the Whitehorse Centre management abandoned their idea to run weddings at the Whitehorse Centre, [redacted] converted all the [redacted] and [redacted] that was used to [redacted] into [redacted] the fully produced [redacted]
 - [redacted] in their [redacted] audience have not only attracted audiences from within the Whitehorse area but have [redacted] from afar – eg [redacted]
 - [redacted] collaborated with, and actually contributed to further income for the Whitehorse Centre by sharing the space - [redacted] and the [redacted]

Appendix 5

From our 2005 submission

Positive aspects of the centre at present:

- ◆ Two large teaching spaces
- ◆ Fully equipped theatre backing on to the soundshell area
- ◆ Pleasant gardens and grassed area surrounding the centre
- ◆ Centre staff who are committed to a professional standard both in their operations and ours
- ◆ Space to _____ underneath the centre
- ◆ Car parking – mostly adequate only occasionally when all venues are operating simultaneously is there some congestion
- ◆ The availability of rehearsals rooms and theatre is rare – the only others I can think of are _____ and the _____
- ◆ A workshop area available for the construction of sets and props
- ◆ The availability for _____ at times to have _____ for general familiarity
- ◆ The general setting and comfort in the theatre for young children (specifically) and the elderly who have been attending our _____
- ◆ _____ underneath the centre

Negative aspects of the centre at present:

- ◆ The fact that there is no undercover or inside way of getting from the Soundshell to the Studio – should the 2 studios be adjoining?
- ◆ Inadequate dressing room areas when the Soundshell and the Theatre are in use simultaneously
- ◆ No dressing room area _____ – we have had up to _____ at times which is a trend that is _____
- ◆ One toilet – for the soundshell, but this is also used by _____ as well
- ◆ Lack of finish - unlined ceiling in the dressing room area (upstairs)
- ◆ Inadequate waiting area _____ outside Soundshell and the Studio
- ◆ Floor surfaces that are not suitable _____ – the Studio has a tarkett belonging to the _____ on it at present, the Soundshell tarkett is suitable for _____ but not _____

Priorities for the future

- ◆ To reverse the negatives listed above
- ◆ To provide a comfortable, safe environment eg. A green room for the young (possibly 11-21) which will engender creativity by allowing them to socialise and share ideas
- ◆ Sound system in the Soundshell
- ◆ Larger side stage area in the theatre
- ◆ Improved theatre curtaining – legs and borders

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Friday, 22 April 2016 5:42 AM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Whitehorse Centre

Categories: Orange Category

Hello.

I'm writing to give my strongest encouragement for you to build the new Whitehorse Centre. There is little point in trying to renovate it and having to do it all again in a few year days and to close it totally is just not an option.

I have lived in the local area all my life and have attended the Whitehorse Centre very regularly - both as an audience member and working on shows backstage. It is a vital part of our community and I have seen countless people enjoying being there, watching shows, gathering in the foyer with friends or at the Christmas carols.

It is certainly in need of an upgrade and our community is certainly in need of an arts centre.

My local pool (Balwyn Baths) is currently undergoing another upgrade. The cost of this is reported as around \$13 million. This is third or fourth upgrade to this facility so the costs of this sporting facility are substantial to the community. The local oval is also undergoing works and that has happened often over the years.

My point to this is that there is a great deal of money spent on sporting venues and there never seems to be much comment or complaint. I support all of these upgrades and moneys spent even though neither I nor anyone in my family attends any of them but I do believe that sporting venues are vital to community life.

The arts are another extremely vital component of community life and while this upgrade to the Whitehorse Centre is expensive, there hasn't been much work done for the arts over the the years and there wouldn't be more money required to be spent for decades to come.

I understand people arguing that they don't want that amount of money spent because they 'don't use the venue' but I can assure you that there are a great many people who do use the venue and know that an upgrade is needed. The new carpark is also needed.

Thanks for your time.

Sent from my iPad

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Friday, 22 April 2016 12:23 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Whitehorse Centre -Proposed Options - Response

Categories: Red Category

Dear JWS Research,

I am a long term resident of the municipality having spent much of my childhood in Nunawading Municipality. I returned some reasonably short time to the current Whitehorse living in three different locations over the period. Before the Whitehorse Centre was built when it was City of Nunawading, there was a clear need for a "town hall" style building for cultural and various assemblies like Box Hill always had. Whitehorse centre has filled the gap pretty well. Acknowledging it is in need of refurbishment I am in favour of Option B with some additional minor works.

- * Lift the Sound Stage up 2 metres so people at outdoor concerts can actually see the stage from half way back to the rear. Couldn't see Marina Prior apart from odd glimpse on Australia Day.
- * Extend stage forward on Sound Shell and cover it in to become a dual purpose practice room and small performing room.
- * Extend the foyer out to the portico where "Whitehorse Centre" name is and a bit further north to give a bigger foyer.
- * Make some gravel or bitumen car parking below the north western half forward flank at Walker Park that can be accessed by Whitehorse Centre users when bigger events are on at the Centre.
- * Forget 600 plus auditorium. There are big enough auditoria at Deakin, Mt Scopus, & Sion in Whitehorse with Whitehorse based schools often opting to use Aquinas, George Wood (about 850 seating) anyway.

Essential works plus the above would make it all much more usable for performers and spectators and be cost efficient at about \$10m.

Submission to Whitehorse City Council

Regarding Options Proposed for the Development of the Whitehorse Centre

Preamble

The _____ is a not for profit community group formed to support the _____ with production and general function. Formed in _____ it has operated successfully _____ with the _____ from the Whitehorse Centre.

We have prepared a submission for consideration of our wishes to the Whitehorse City Council in response to the Options Proposed for the Development of the Whitehorse Centre, Nunawading.

What _____ wants in the new plans and for the future

Essentially we want a secure permanent home that will allow for another _____ community connection for our _____ and families in the _____ Whitehorse area.

response to Options Proposed for the Development of the Whitehorse Centre

Proposal 1 - Complete redevelopment of Whitehorse Centre

There is plenty to like about this option – new updated studio spaces, two theatres including a small one which would suit many _____ adequate toilet facilities and internal access between studios.

However, despite approaching the management for an indication of possible venues for _____ during construction, or even the reassurance that our return is planned for, there has been no response given.

As we have no idea what this proposal means for us in the short or long term it is difficult to feel confident about this option. Also, there is no space allocated in the plans to replace

Proposal 2 - Undertake essential works and closure in 8-10 years - Our preferred option

Assuming that _____ and other utilized areas do not need to be moved and is kept accessible during the renovations, in the short term this is acceptable. In the long term we feel there is no security.

Proposal 3 - Closure in 2 years

Should this option be adopted we are looking at moving at great expense to another (as yet unsourced) venue. It has been disappointing to be disregarded in our requests for assistance to find a new home.

Concerns _____ has about these proposals

- Security of Venue – All 3 proposed options undermine the immediate confidence in the day to day running of
- We request communication of specific locations and/or buildings as possible options being considered should option A or B be implemented.

Positive aspects of the Whitehorse Centre at present:

- Two large studio spaces
- Fully equipped theatre backing on to the soundshell area
- Pleasant gardens and grassed area surrounding the centre

- Centre staff who are committed to a professional standard both in their operations and ours
- Space to underneath the centre
- Car parking - adequate for our needs
- The availability of rehearsals rooms with a theatre – benefit greatly from being involved in a vibrant, busy theatre space where they have contact with, and learn about, other groups who use the space from amateurs to professionals
- A workshop area available for the construction of sets and props
- The availability for at times to have for general stage familiarity
- The general setting and comfort in the theatre for young children (kindergarten specifically) and the elderly who have been attending our
- underneath the centre – to have off site means greater expense and time-consuming transportation

Who the is

- All are members of the also includes other interested parties who abide by the constitution.
- The objectives of the association are;
 - to promote an interest in
 - to support the where needed
 - to make such arrangements for the annual (and other) as required by the
 - to maintain , so that may be the , at a cost to the individual of only a nominal hire charge
- We have had over
- Most members are Whitehorse residents but we also have members travelling from a wide range of areas including Healesville, Woori Yallock, Seville, Olinda, Sassafras, Mulgrave, Glen Waverly, Box Hill, Camberwell, Templestowe, Doncaster and Warrandyte.
- The volunteer committee is drawn from these members and they undertake the task of supporting the At present the committee is a strong and vibrant group of 13 plus undertaking numerous secondary roles related to The underlying principles presented by the are highly valued by these members which is evident by the quality of support offered.

Why the members choose the

- The is a testament to the high standards that imbues across all of its teachings. In a society that is geared to “quick, fast and now” the opportunity to be involved with a group that has forged deep and strong community connections is highly valued. offers:
 - Artistic vision
 - The opportunity to many times over the year (the also lucky to have access to a stage for the experience of at other times owing to the unique position of being in the Whitehorse Centre).
 - All has been created in-house
 - Attention to – giving the cultural diversity and superior strength and coordination

- s (at present) – allowing for partnership and duet work - an advantage for both
- No exclusiveness about body types
- Opportunity to learn
- Theatre Safety and learning about the complete theatre experience
- Developing caring and cooperative attitudes to others
- VCE Both Year 11 and 12 are offered
- Unique and Diverse Holiday Programs exploring many facets of theatre, dance and the arts – both on stage and back stage exploration
- Exceptional technique instruction
- Generational influences – return with and
- Wonderful
- Some travel from further afield, attracted to all that offers.

How the Whitehorse Centre is used by the

- The workshop space is used at least once a week, but around the and) this increases up to 4-5 times per week.
- The workshop area is used to During the laundry and kitchen area is fully utilized.
- The committee meets on average once a month using the space above the Soundshell next to the dressing rooms.
- The located upstairs. It is operated by volunteers providing and – keeping costs down This is accessed 4-5 times per week.
- The is located in the basement of the Whitehorse Centre. Originally from both were stored together in this area.
- The currently insured is extensive, ranging from created in was created from scratch, back to historic from). Some predate the and have historical value as they associated closely to the evolution of in Australia.
- produced for the First Birthday celebration of The Whitehorse Centre. was commissioned by to to help to celebrate this event. The accompanied by the
- The space has existed and been utilized for the that the Whitehorse Centre has existed and is approximately 9 meters by 7 meters. The were installed by unique space.
- The : are stored in the sheds, sharing with

Contribution to the Whitehorse Centre

The has been involved in maintaining the spaces used.

- Painted the upstairs dressing areas
- Built the upstairs dressing room walls
- Installed the original carpets upstairs
- Created and installed the shelving in the

Historical Facts

- [redacted] initiated the not for profit [redacted] exists and flourishes today.
- The [redacted] was established to assist in the [redacted] generally. They offer [redacted] for [redacted] each year.
- [redacted] has been the [redacted] since it opened in 1987.
- The [redacted] was moved underneath the Whitehorse Centre in 1987, at the same time that [redacted] moved their [redacted] to the back bay.
- [redacted] was a founding member of the [redacted]
- [redacted] has supported the backstage coordination for countless Annual Performances and all [redacted]
- The [redacted] has original [redacted] and also [redacted]
- Social/Community Events
 - [redacted] – A full evening dinner dance and floorshow which included comedians, singers, dancers and usherettes [redacted] and built and painted the set for this event. This event was repeated as a mayoral function at the request of Councilor Bruce Atkinson (MLA...) who was mayor at the time.
 - One of [redacted] and introduces [redacted] to kindergarten and young school children
 - Whitehorse Spring Festival [redacted] has [redacted] the Whitehorse Spring Festival on [redacted] The mass movement of the young towards the Soundshell stage substantiated the gravitational pull of this classic tale for young children.

Economic Facts

- [redacted] is the only [redacted] to have toured their entire [redacted] and [redacted] to be accompanied by [redacted]. This original adaptation for [redacted] a world premiere. This production was fully financed by the [redacted] conceived and financed by [redacted] attracted record audiences.
- [redacted] is the only [redacted] (apart from the [redacted]) to have performed in the Playhouse, The Arts Centre. This event was supported fully [redacted]
- [redacted] have donated their professional skills to [redacted] of many years.
- Scores of [redacted] in addition to the committee and contribute endlessly of their time and expertise. The legacy the [redacted] leave is for [redacted] and future generations of [redacted] and the wider community.

Contacts

WHITEHORSE CENTRE ALTERNATIVE

Council are to be congratulated on addressing the cultural needs of its citizens resulting a proposal to replace the existing WHITEHORSE CENTRE with a new structure on the present site.

Now that the business plan for the WHITEHORSE CENTRE has been completed and costs and other data are available it is appropriate to review whether the size, location and amount to be invested are in ratepayer's best interests.

Ratepayers will be asked to vote on three options to replace the current 400 seat theatre and complex with a 600 seat facility on the current site.

There has been no objective study to determine the size theatre required to replace the current ageing facility. The recommendation for a 600 seat venue at a cost of \$78 million comes principally from out of date subjective opinions and vested interests. There has been no relevant consultation with the people who are expected to pay for it; the Ratepayers. The ratepayers may well prefer other capital works of much more of benefit to them and their children.

SIZE

A more rationale method of determining the size required is to compare the current attendance, size and population with the forecast population in 2036 and thus determine the basic seating capacity for the new complex.

Attendances overall at the centre and the theatre are slowly reducing viz:

Overall 2010/11 131,572 attendees

2014/15 120,865 attendees.

THEATRE

The Overall House Capacity of the Whitehorse Centre is 408 theatre seats and 6 accessible spaces in the theatre totalling a house capacity of 414 per performance. Forty-nine

performances multiplied by the house capacity (414) equals a total capacity of 20,286 seats/spaces. With 15,919 of these seats/spaces occupied during the period, the average attendance was 78%.

The 15,919 compares with 16,603 attendees in the previous year.

The simple facts are these:-

1. The theatre is not fully utilised; for example in 2014/15 average evening professional theatre attendances were 325 against a capacity of 414 seats.
2. Based on the forecast population growth between 2016 and 2036 an average attendance of 375 might be expected in 2036.
3. The increased total attendance forecast of 163,195 by the consultants for 2023/4 is unsustainable. Attendances over the past four years have stabilised in the low 120 thousands. Based on population increase a total attendance of 135,000 is far more realistic than the 163,195 forecast.
4. To achieve 163,195 attendees an increase of 20% in attendance rates is needed.
5. As alerted to by the consultants the site is very poor being located on landfill within a floodplain and thus will attract extra construction costs.
6. The site is poorly served by public transport.

The drive for a 600 seat venue comes principally from the subjective opinions and vested interests of users and patrons. There is no objective evidence to show that a larger theatre is required, nor has there been any relevant consultation with the people who are expected to pay for it; the Ratepayers.

In reaching the conclusion that a larger theatre was required the consultants relied in part on outdated, naturally biased and subjective data .

It is a given that a showpiece facility such as that proposed should be located at the hub of the municipality. There is no doubt that the 7,700 sqm Council owned carpark at

the corner of Station St Box Hill fulfils that requirement; it is very well served by public transport and, subject to testing, located on a sound site.

Council is about to consider Expressions of Interest for the site. I would suggest that in negotiations with potential purchasers Council invite them to have their offer include additional parking and provision for the "Whitehorse Centre" to be operated by the Council. There could considerable advantages, financial and otherwise, to both the developer and the Council

.
*Yes, replace the ageing centre but with a 450 maximum seat theatre, on a more suitable site. close to public transport and without disruption to existing tenants.

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Friday, 22 April 2016 2:57 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Whitehorse centre

Categories: Red Category

I would like to ask how much is the Box Hill Town Hall being used? Also I would like comment that

church and
community halls are still being used after 100 hundred years without redevelopment costs of more
than 70 million dollars. I realise that ambitious productions are not performed in those halls
however I believe Nunawading councillors are completely carried away with their idea of what
Nunawading needs and the enormous cost of those plans.

Yours Faithfully

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Friday, 22 April 2016 4:08 PM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment

Categories: Red Category

Dear JWS Research/ Whitehorse Council,

Thank-you for the opportunity to note my thoughts on the proposed redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre. I agree that the Whitehorse Centre is a valuable community resource that should be maintained for all to continue enjoying. I believe that the redevelopment of the Centre is necessary however I do have some concerns I would like to note

-That the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre should not lead –in cost recovery- to the amateur theatre groups such as Babirra and Nova and other modest professional productions being charged more to use the Centre which in turn would result in higher ticket prices making it a less affordable experience and negatively impact on those companies concerned.

-That funding the Whitehorse centre redevelopment should not take money from funding for parks, gardens and bushland reserves.

- That council should not sell public assets/land to fund the redevelopment without community consultation.

- I have concerns that the carpark will be an eyesore and believe it should be placed underground.

- That the stained glass in the foyer should be preserved as I believe was a community project when installed.

Many Thanks

Feedback:

Hi,

Having read all of the information that is publicly available I wish to strong oppose the Redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre at a cost of \$77.9M.

I wrote to the Council in February this year after having studied the financials and whilst I received a response I just cannot understand why the Whitehorse Council would proceed on such a large loss making venture. If this was a private business then common sense would prevail and the Centre would not go ahead.

This is the extract of the email I sent in February which clearly shows that the Centre would run at a loss for the first 5 years

Financial Impact

In the Business case prepared by Positive Solutions (September 2015) and I refer to Table 8 Profit and Loss on page 24. This table shows that the Whitehorse Centre will generate a Total Income of just \$10.7M in the first 5 years of operation, against an expenditure of \$18.06M.

Irrespective of depreciation this amounts to a cost to rate payers of \$7.3M over this period which the report describes as an "Operational Subsidy".

*My question to the Whitehorse City Council is. **Other than ratepayers funding this development, how does the council intend to fund the \$78M?***

Hence when we take the proposed costs of \$78M into account the business case just does not stack up.

Table 8 Projected Profit and Loss

5 year Profit and Loss - Summary	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23	2023/ 24
Level of Activity	65%	75%	85%	95%	100%
Income	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Total Income	\$1,529,921	\$1,833,505	\$2,158,948	\$2,507,511	\$2,743,928
Expenditure	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Total Expenditure	\$3,297,982	\$3,421,085	\$3,599,730	\$3,787,550	\$3,963,638
Operational subsidy required BEFORE depreciation	\$1,768,061	\$1,587,580	\$1,440,782	\$1,280,039	\$1,219,710
Depreciation A	\$922,365	\$922,365	\$922,365	\$922,365	\$922,365
Depreciation B	\$515,297	\$515,297	\$515,297	\$515,297	\$515,297
Subsidy Required - combined operational and depreciation	\$3,205,723	\$3,025,242	\$2,878,444	\$2,717,701	\$2,657,373

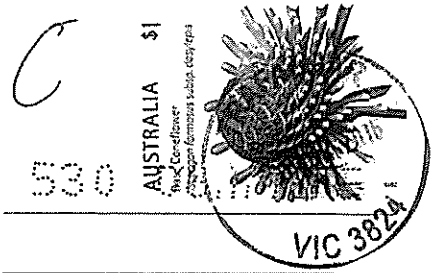
In addition I have attached a copy of the email sent in February which also raises the question about community consultation. Again the Council has taken a less than pro-active approach.

Given the gravity of this I believe that the Whitehorse Council should put this to a vote of the ratepayers. Surveys are fine, however the Whitehorse Council could easily choose to ignore the surveys and the voice of their ratepayers and just proceed anyway.

I ask that my concerns are tabled and given the due consideration.

Re: Whitehorse Centre

I support option C, while I have enjoyed seeing Scouts Australia's Whitehorse showtime at the Centre, near by local Government offer large Theatre's and the public transport at the area means people can access city venues



JWS Research

Whitehorse Centre Project

Po Box 2575

Caulfield Junction

Vic 3161

www.bawbawcountry.com.au

Tanjil Valley District (Willow Grove, Hill End, Tanjil South)
West Gippsland, Victoria, Australia

Baw Baw
Country



14.4.16

VWS Research
Whitehorse Centre Project
PO Box 2575,
Caulfield Junction.
Vic 3161

Dear Sir,

Concerning the future of the
Whitehorse Centre - as a resident of
Hornsea who enjoys a visit to the
Theatre I would like to suggest

Option a). Redevelopment as identified
in the Business Case.

Yours faithfully,

4/4/16

JWS Research
Whitehorse Centre Project
P.O. Box 2575
Caulfield Junction
3161

Dear Sir/Madam

I am in favour of option A, provided it does not harm the pensioners with too high a rate rise.

Sincerely

Feedback:

I have been a regular patron of the Whitehorse Theatre for many years and would very much like to see it continue. Obviously if there is going to be major redevelopment works it will not be possible to use the centre whilst these are carried out. However, I do feel that is the best use of money, rather than doing something that will only have short term benefits. My preference therefore is for Option A. I definitely think there is a need for a theatre and performing arts centre in this area. I have recently attended the Frankston Arts Centre and was very impressed with the size and comfort of the theatre and would like to have something similar in the local area.

17 April.

Mr. Philip Daw,

My friends, my husband & I have been frequent visitors to "Nunawading" theatre for many years and thoroughly enjoyed every performance. We have found it a charming venue, lovely surroundings and easy to get to from our home, all in all perfect for our needs. If possible we would like to see it upgraded with the (£7 million) and renew it again, - say in 10 years. I would hate to see it closed or demolished as it brings so much pleasure to us older persons who are unable to get to the city.

With thanks

JWS Research,
Whitehorse Centre Project,
PO Box 2575,
CAULFIELD JUNCTION, VIC. 3161

Dear Sirs,

In response to correspondence from Cr Philip Daw, Mayor of City of Whitehorse re the Future of the Whitehorse Centre, I fully support Option A for a total redevelopment of the whole site as per the Whitehorse Centre Business Case proposal.

Yours sincerely,

11.4.2016

JWS Research
Whitehorse Centre Project
PO Box 2575
Caulfield Junction
3161

Dear To whom it may concern,

As a regular attendee of the Wenawading Whitehorse Centre, at least 3 or 4 times a year, I am concerned about the future of the Centre.

Along with my daughters and friend who come to the shows with me, we love the current theatre. We enjoy the closeness the theatre provides, enabling you to easily see the stage no matter where you sit.

The smallness of the place engenders an atmosphere of friendliness and social inclusion, anticipated enjoyment and excitement.

However despite my loyalty to the current venue, I see no value in just maintaining a building which obviously is not coping with present day requirements and therefore would endorse redevelopment of the site which looks forward to the future.

Yours sincerely,

6-4-2016.

WHITE HORSE City Council.
5TH WHITE HORSE RD.
NOLA WADING.

RE WHITE HORSE THEATRE REDEVELOPMENT.

Morning to M^{rs} Daw - MAYOR.

I attend approx 20 theatre shows a year
used to be with my late wife Now I take & go
with friends to little theatres like 1812
I score melodramatic & larger ones like the
WHITE HORSE, DRUM & PRODUCTION CO in the
city.

you MUST have a theatre.

unfortunately my computer is sick &
is at the computer doctor so I cannot &
down load any thing & it is a bit far to
drive.

But a theatre is a critical part
of life & if we have to have brick
for a couple of years till you built a
new one so be it
now you have a beautiful
theatre & it does not look like it
is 30 years old

But what it does have & this must
be retained.

The distance from the orchestra pit
to the front row must be maintained &
the distance between rows of seats
must be also maintained or perhaps increased
a tad.

The Regent has the best seating
& the Drum the worst to steep too
close in fact quite dangerous.

So in conclusion the best
theatre at White Horse.

I am
yours Sincerely,

22nd April, 2016.

JWS Research
Whitehorse Centre Project
PO Box 2575
Caulfield Junction, VIC, 3161

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: WHITEHORSE CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT- Business Case Feedback.

rejects outright the Business Case for a total redevelopment. A Gold Plated redevelopment has not been proven as the optimal solution for Whitehorse.

The majority of usage is by people from outside Whitehorse, and only a very small percentage of Whitehorse Residents actually use the Centre.

Until all options are on the table, and each is appropriately evaluated, then the direction of Council can only be viewed as a wilful, incompetent and egotistical waste of Ratepayer Funds.

The Business Case does not have the support of Ratepayers and Residents.

Whitehorse Ratepayers and Residents Assn would support continued operations whilst logical decision making based on facts, not egos or emotion, are progressed.

A number of comments specifically focused on the published Business Case document are attached.

Unfortunately the Business Case is heavily tainted with bias, and only reflects the view of those other than Ratepayers.

Yours sincerely,

WHITEHORSE CENTRE BUSINESS CASE – October 2015

AQUIRING A HARD COPY OF THE BUSINESS CASE

It beggars belief that the hard copy package of the Business Case acquired at Council's Forest Hill Customer Service could be so incompetently jumbled. Not only did the Business Case package include multiple copies of the Project Overview, but it also included all the updated colour copies of the Council Minutes of 14/12/2016 intended to be changed over with black & white copies in other packages. (see Appendix 1 for the 'colour copy bundle' covering letter).

And the "correct" copies are yet to come???. And Council wonders why it is often said "they couldn't run a chook raffle".

Who paid for the waste of the unused colour copies including labour, paper, photocopier, transport, etc.???. Why the for this waste of course.

INSTRUCTIONS

It is extremely disappointing that the specific instructions and scope from Council to the Consultant to produce the Business Case have not been included in the Business Case.

This should have occurred but unfortunately hasn't. In genuine **unbiased** Business Cases the specific instructions are included. By way of example the following is an extract from VCAT Practice Note 2 (PNVCAT 2) – relating to Expert Evidence, it states in section 3.1 subsection 5) that:-

" The report of an expert **must** include the following matters.....**all instructions** that define the scope of the report (original or supplementary and whether in writing or oral),".

Neither the Tender Document nor the Contract for generation of the Business Case has been included in the Business Case, and neither have been made available to

And the Tender and Contract Documents are not available on Council's website. Similarly no inclusion has occurred of any verbal instructions.

Yes, we have the copy of Councils minutes from the Ordinary Council Meeting of 14th December, 2015. These identify under 'Research History' the approval for progression of a Business Case **Brief** yet to be developed around some fairly arbitrary guidelines. Then in Councils Meeting of 16th April, 2012, the Contract is approved for the Business Case.

So how biased is this Business Case?. Unfortunately the following discourse identifies that the Business Case errs towards being very biased.

Perhaps some assume that a Business Case, irrespective of content, is a magic wand approving a project, and perhaps that ethics and honesty don't come into it?. And why was this Redevelop option prioritised above all others?. And what are the other options?

WHITEHORSE CENTRE BUSINESS CASE – October 2015

GENERAL CONTENT

How the document can be called a Business Case is implausible. The content of the published "Business Case" does not follow even a rudimentary Business Case presentation format or content.

A Business Case is a Justification, but this one is more a scope of works.

There is no inclusion of instructions (as above).

There is no executive summary ("Bury with volumes and volumes of colourful ongoing detail – 26 pages of 'summary' – come on....").

There are no options mentioned or considered (only build a new gold plated centre, apart from the threat of "we'll take our bat and ball and go home", i.e. knock it down). So only the two extreme cases.

There is only one small section (Overview s5.1) and it knocks ANY option consideration of the existing facilities. A number of (Engineers) suggest there are very workable alternatives. And some of the Business Case's attached engineering reports don't reflect or support a "knock down" approach.

Where is the discussion relating to value for money for ALL, a Cost Benefit Analysis / ROI / ROR/ IRR/ Cash Flow/ Financing/ Payback Period/ NPV versus other options/ / etc.

What is Council's, and more importantly ability to pay for a redevelopment? And how will it be financed??

Where is the total region review of existing (and other potentially new) arts facilities and their appropriateness as an option and with or without relevant Partnerships??

The case is biased as it has very little, if any, consideration of input. It is simply and primarily a presentation of the gold plated wish list of the select non forums.

So this is looking more like a gold plate whitewash exercise due to this total lack of fundamental information.

A Business Case is supposed to be a decision making tool, with the Justified elimination of alternatives and the Justification and recommendation of one or more options.

This Business Case is lacking all the above, and is the worse for it.

WHITEHORSE CENTRE BUSINESS CASE – October 2015

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Unfortunately the historical information has been “cherry picked” for the few total redevelopment supportive parts, and input and the true usage statistics have been “swept under the carpet”, or given token status at best.

Highly relevant, BUT NOT MENTIONED, for example, are the data derived from “The Draft Whitehorse Centre Feasability Study June 2011” by SGL Group. (see Appendix I)

ONLY 1.7% OF WHITEHORSE RESIDENTS USE THE WHITEHORSE CENTRE !!

Further, the Study identified that –

59.1% OF USERS ARE FROM OUTSIDE WHITEHORSE !!

Why would want to spend \$78m with the bulk going to the benefit of users from outside Whitehorse who don't contribute financially to the redevelopment?. Why should they have a free ride?.

Why would all want to subsidise only 1.7% (or 2,852) of Residents and to the tune of some \$27,000 each???

Why should Council be into commercial ventures which will be heavily subsidised by when there are many alternatives not considered???

THE PROJECT OVERVIEW

The following are just some of the key points which stand out.

The Concept Design drawings are somewhat misleading. For example, in the cross section of the Foyer-Proscenium Theatre-Backstage indicative section, how many of the upstairs audience can see the front of the stage, let alone any of the stage? Pretty misleading.

In Section 1 it is interesting to read “*We aspire to be a healthy, vibrant, prosperous and sustainable community supported by strong leadership and community partnerships”.*

So where are the Public-Private Partnerships or Public-Public Partnerships for the redevelopment, or with existing venues, or other new venues, etc.?

“The Centre is heavily used....” Is a nonsense. Much of the activity included in original Council data included markets and other outdoor activities. i.e. items not dependant on the presence of a Centre, or at most needed an outdoor stage. A significant portion of usage is by high frequency users including dance classes which could very very easily be accommodated in another of Councils approximately 200 buildings. And the Business Case data further into the report does not appear to exclude the Civic Suite (- in the Centre numbers, but is physically located in the Council Offices and is only for Council Staff use).

WHITEHORSE CENTRE BUSINESS CASE – October 2015

Council has a fetish with New, New, New, New. But only in the last 2 or so years has started to realise Maintain, Maintain, Maintain, is a very viable and cost effective alternative. Council verbiage always has been that “it’s at the end of its life” without really knowing what it is saying.

In Section 2 statements have been made out of context. Using “actual data” would firmly highlight the relatively small number of _____ who actually participate in the Arts (excluding going to the pictures or disco’s, etc.) and the extremely small number of individual Residents who actually use the Centre.

So trying to provide a broader view of the benefits of all-inclusive definitions of arts and culture, and comparing that with what a redevelopment would offer, is like comparing chalk and cheese, and somewhat irresponsible.

The fact that 63% of performing arts centres across Australia are owned by Local Government is not a justification. Even this Business Case elsewhere identifies a more than adequate number of commercial venues in the local area which would effectively be used during a redevelopment. And with Rate Capping, and the current review of the Local Government Act, the delving of Councils’ into areas of locally active and very competitive commercial performing arts may well be on the decline. And this high risk has not been uniquely expressed in the Business Case Risk Assessment.

In Section 5.4 the priority is on the Whitehorse Centre to pay for all expanded parking facilities. Council has been asked, and committed, to provide details of numbers of Council Employees driving to work but Council has failed to follow through. Observations by _____ are that Council Employees have taken over the Whitehorse Centre car park. Certainly there is some data in the business case on parking. But observations by _____ identify that on days when there are no Whitehorse Centre events the car park is still overwhelmed. So currently it really appears to be a problem created by Council’s ever growing (non-alternative transport) workforce on the Civic Centre side, not the Whitehorse Centre side.

In Section 8 the bias expressed in this section is beyond belief. For example, “10% somewhat supported the proposal” can equally be interpreted as “10% somewhat did not support the proposal” **in which case a majority rejected the redevelopment !!!** Such bias in what is purported to be a professional and important document.

In Section 9 the only option to a total redevelopment is to throw in the fear option of total destruction. Totally inappropriate and unprofessional!. Tours of the Centre by _____ have identified that many of the so called problems are more of a “wouldn’t it be nice” item – yes, gold plating. Further, many of the so called problems could easily be solved and for much much less than the proposed redevelopment expenditure. Are we looking for ego boosts and naming rites on brass plaques, or are we looking for genuine functionality, viability, and support of the Whitehorse Community??

WHITEHORSE CENTRE BUSINESS CASE – October 2015

THE BUSINESS CASE PART A – Business Plan

In Attendance it is claimed that “overall the data is showing a 5% increase in the number of tickets sold (per performance) from 2010-2014.”. What absolute nonsense. This is an out and out lie and untruth. An attempt by the authors to interpret and influence via a trend which isn't there. Any basic statistical test, using even very loose confidence limits, identifies there is absolutely no significant change over time for the data presented.

Following the author's logic in the above quoted statement one could equally propose that there has been a **decrease** in attendance per session comparing 2011 and 2012 with 2014. What an absolutely delusional and biased mindset. “We have to justify a redevelopment at any cost, even if it costs ethics”. It is this approach which reminds one of the statement “Pay a Consultant enough and you will get exactly what you ask for”.

And one could continue. Items which caught the eye were –

Page 15 – “Whitehorse Centre is well regarded by hirers and the arts industry generally”. So why are we redeveloping in total???

Page 22 & 23 – and in the redeveloped financial scenario, what are the current equivalent attendances versus the projections?????. And where are the projection graphs or tabled data for year on year and with the current Whitehorse Centre configuration as the base???. (Keep the figures in the dark and they won't be able to critique!!). And on what are the projected usage figures based??. With the bias in other areas of this Business Case one could well expect unreal and unfounded optimism.

Page 42 – The Whitehorse version of the Survey versus the more widely accepted State Government version, is Whitehorse's undoing. Whitehorse has, since 2000, beat its chest at how high its satisfaction rating is with regard to Metropolitan Council's. In recent years Whitehorse used the State Survey for one year and the satisfaction level was trashed. It came in near the bottom truly compared with Metropolitan Councils. Very much a reality check. But Council immediately jumped back to its own survey. It couldn't stand the truth.

APPENDIX I

ATTENTION CUSTOMER SERVICE STAFF AT BOX HILL/FOREST HILL

WHITEHORSE CENTRE DOCUMENTS

Five sets of the Whitehorse Centre Business Case documents were delivered to Service Centres on Tuesday 15 December via internal courier

Each set of documents had an extract of the Council Minutes of the meeting held Monday 14 December 2015 – item 9.3.1 Whitehorse Centre (printed in black and white).

The 14 December 2015 minutes extract has been reproduced and printed in colour and is attached here.

Please replace the black and white version of the minutes extract with the colour version on each of the five sets of documents.

(Do not worry if any sets have already been given out to the public.)

P.S. a further five complete sets of the Whitehorse Centre documents delivered Wednesday 16 December via internal courier, these 5 documents contain the correct version of the minutes extract.

Apologies I hope this is not too confusing, please feel free to ring me!

Many thanks

APPENDIX 2

WHITEHORSE CENTRE - USAGE BY WHITEHORSE RESIDENTS CALCULATIONS

A. BASIC VISITOR INFORMATION

USER SURVEY ANALYSIS(i)		Total Visits per Year per 100 People Surveyed
Frequency of Visits	% of Survey Group	
Daily	0.9	329
2-3 times per week (ii)	3.7	481
4-6 times per week	1.8	468
Weekly	1.8	94
Fortnightly	7.3	190
Monthly	24.8	298
Less than monthly (iii)	35.8	72
T =		1930

(i) = Section 4.1(iv) of "The DRAFT Whitehorse Centre Feasibility Study June 2011".

(ii) = assumed to be 2.5 times per week

(iii) = assumed to be every 6 months

B. NUMBER OF UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS ACTUALLY VISITING

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Usage(v)} \text{ or Total Number of Visits for } 2009/10 &= N = 1945/0 \\ \text{So, the number of individuals involved in visiting} &= \frac{N \times 100}{T} = \frac{6972}{100} = 69.72 \approx X \end{aligned}$$

(v) = Table 2.1 of "The DRAFT Whitehorse Centre Feasibility Study June 2011", and excluding use of the Civic Suite.

C. USAGE BY WHITEHORSE RESIDENTS ONLY

$$\begin{aligned} \% \text{ of Users Surveyed who lived outside Whitehorse (vi)} &= 59.1 = Y \\ \text{So number of Whitehorse Residents who use the Centre} &= \frac{X \times (100 - Y)}{100} = \frac{2852}{100} = 28.52 \approx Z \\ \text{(vi)} &= \text{Table 4.1 of "The DRAFT Whitehorse Centre Feasibility Study June 2011".} \end{aligned}$$

D. PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS USING THE CENTRE

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Number of Residents in Whitehorse (vii)} &= U = 163697 \\ \text{So the percentage of Whitehorse Residents who use the Centre} &= \frac{Z \times 100}{U} = \frac{2852}{163697} \times 100 = 1.7\% \end{aligned}$$

(vii) A35 - RP 2014 v. a Whitehorse Council Website/ About Council/ About Whitehorse.
<http://profiles.d.com.au/whitehorse/home>

C. Carter 30/11/2015

2nd April 2016

J. H. I. Research

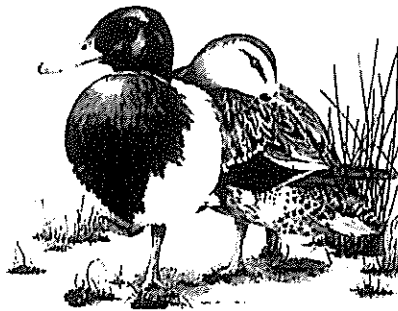
Since I have been invited to "Have
My Say" regarding the Whitehouse Centre
may I say how much I enjoy the
Theatre, and sincerely hope it continues
to provide a much needed venue.
Therefore my preference is b) undertake
essential works etc"

To see & hear the "buzz" in the Foyer
prior to the Doors Open Announcement
explains, everyone waiting, pleasurable
anticipation.

I do sincerely hope that The Whitehouse
Centre stays, it is much needed.

Thank you

Sincerely



April 13th
2016.

Dear Sir, Madam:

I would go for Development ^B
the Essential Works \pm 7 million
the Council seems to have only
46% of the total cost.

Far too little. Specially this
time. The Federal Gov. seems too
struggle. Victorian Government
is short of money etc. etc.
And to be quite honest, the building
is not too bad, yes it needs
improvements.

So I vote for B.
Yours





Whitehorse City Council
379-397 Whitehorse Road
Nunawading VIC 3131
Locked Bag 2 Nunawading DC VIC 3131
DX13209 MITCHAM

ABN: 39 549 568 822

Telephone: (03) 9262 6333
Fax: (03) 9262 6490
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TIS: 131 450

customer.service@whitehorse.vic.gov.au
www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au

Thursday 24 March 2016



File no: SF13/301

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Dear

On behalf of Council, JWS Research will be conducting public consultation on the future of the Whitehorse Centre that will commence on **Wednesday 30 March and close on Friday 22 April**. Council is asking you to consider the following three options:

- a) Potential redevelopment as identified in the Business Case
- ✓ b) Undertake essential works (approximately \$7 million) to keep the centre open for another 8-10 years before a possible closure
- c) Closure of the centre within two years.

I encourage you to 'have your say' on these options as Council considers the future of the Whitehorse Centre.

Have Your Say:

The following opportunities exist for you to have your say:

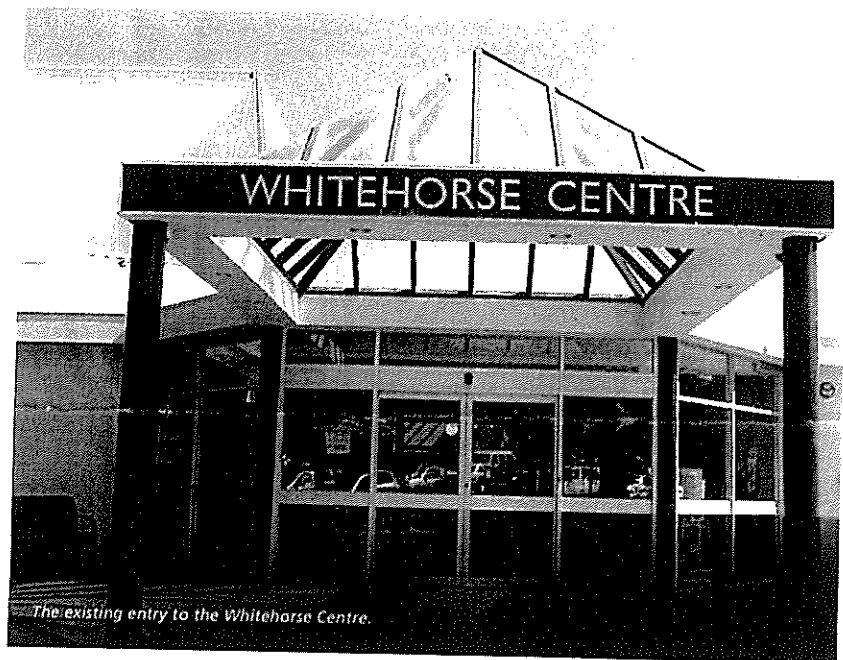
- An on-line survey will be available during the consultation period at the 'Consulting Your Community' page of Council's website, www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/Consulting-the-Community.html or at the Whitehorse Centre www.whitehorsecentre.com.au
- A hardcopy version of the survey will be available with a reply paid envelope during the consultation period at the following locations:
 - Council's three Customer Service Centres,
 - the Whitehorse Centre,
 - Box Hill Town Hall,
 - Box Hill Community Arts Centre,
 - Nunawading Community Centre,
 - Box Hill and Nunawading Aqualink
 - On request by emailing whitehorse.centre@whitehorse.vic.gov.au or phoning 9262 6371

The Future of the Whitehorse Centre

As detailed in the Whitehorse News, Council is investigating options for its well-used performing arts theatre and functions centre, the Whitehorse Centre.

The ageing centre is incurring increasingly expensive maintenance costs and does not comply with today's building codes, particularly in regard to disability access. Council is now seeking community input on the three options being considered for the future of the Whitehorse Centre, including:

- A** A redeveloped centre at a cost of \$67m (with an additional \$10.9m for a car park)
- B** Undertaking \$7m essential works to the existing centre that would continue its operation for another 8-10 years before probable closure
- C** Closure and demolition of the existing centre within the next two years.



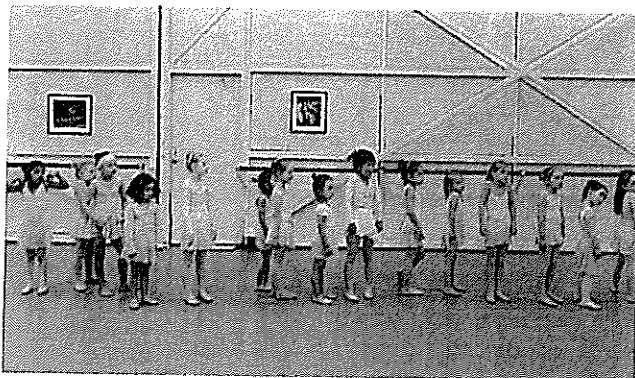
The centre's limitation (detailed in the Whitehorse Centre Business Case) include:

- A lack of disability access to toilet facilities, circulation spaces, all backstage areas, orchestra pit, technical areas and seating
- Limited theatre technical capability compared to modern standards
- The foyer is too small and limits simultaneous hire of the venue
- The function room has no windows, is small compared to similar venues and is not attracting as many events.



What is the Whitehorse Centre

The Whitehorse Centre provides a range of performing arts and function services to the local community and neighbouring suburbs. It is also a popular venue for many of the City of Whitehorse's performing arts groups.



The Whitehorse Centre comprises a:

- 408 seat theatre
- 180 seated function room
- Rehearsal space
- Foyer with a nominal capacity of 300 people - wheelchair space
- Soundshell stage for events and rehearsals.

More than 120,000 people attend the centre annually and about 43,000 attend the range of annual events held from the Whitehorse Centre soundshell.

Utassy Ballet School, one of the performing arts groups that regularly use the Whitehorse Centre.

Have Your Say

JWS Research will consult on the Whitehorse Centre from the 30 March to 22 April 2016. You can have your say in the following ways:

- An online survey is at www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/Whitehorse-Centre.html
- A hardcopy version of the survey will be available at Council's three Customer Service Centres, Whitehorse Centre, Box Hill Community Arts Centre, Nunawading Community Centre, Box Hill and Nunawading Aqualink or on request by emailing whitehorsecentre@whitehorse.vic.gov.au or phoning 9262 6371

Written feedback will also be received and can be emailed to www.whitehorse@jwsresearch.com or posted to:

JWS Research
Whitehorse Centre Project
PO Box 2575,
Caulfield Junction, 3161

Please refer to Council's website www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/whitehorse-centre.html for the Privacy Statement.

A

REDEVELOPMENT

Building and project costs: \$67m
Car park costs: \$10.9m

Over the past five years, two independent studies on the Whitehorse Centre have reached consistent conclusions about the required size of the centre to cater for current and future community use.

Research indicates a redeveloped centre would see an increase in community, Council and commercial bookings, with the greatest growth in community bookings.

The Whitehorse Centre Business Case proposes that a redevelopment would provide:

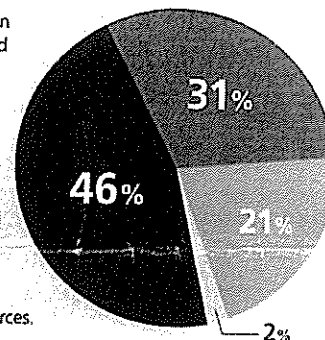
- 600 seat main theatre with a larger stage and greater technical capability
- 200 seat studio theatre enabling smaller works and a space for youth activities
- A modern, equipped and accessible backstage area
- 300 person flexible dinner-style seated function room that can be divided into smaller spaces
- A rehearsal/dance studio that can be divided into two spaces for multipurpose use
- A soundshell that is technically equipped to deliver festivals and can be used for other purposes
- Increased foyer space so multiple events can run at the same time
- A building design and fitout that is environmentally and economically sustainable
- A three level deck car park to accommodate the Whitehorse Centre, Library, Civic Centre and Walker Park users



How Council would fund the redevelopment

Approximately 77 per cent of the combined funding is from non-rate sources.

- 46 per cent would be drawn from existing reserves and funds from asset sales
- 31 per cent from long term loans
- 21 per cent over a five year period within forecast rate rises anticipated to be capped annually at CPI
- 2 per cent would be sought through as yet unidentified grants or other income sources.



For a comprehensive description of the redevelopment option, please refer to the Whitehorse Centre Business Case at www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/Whitehorse-Centre.html or access hard copy versions at Council's Customer Service Centres.

If you have questions about the Whitehorse Centre Business Case, please email whitehorse.centre@whitehorse.vic.gov.au or post written enquiries to:

Arts and Recreation Development Administration Officer
Whitehorse City Council
Locked Bag 2
Nunawading Delivery Centre VIC 3131

B

ESSENTIAL WORKS

Building costs: \$7m

These essential works will allow the centre to operate at an estimated building cost of \$7 million for 8-10 years before a probable closure.

Essential works include:

- Full roof replacement
- Replacement of boiler and air-conditioning system
- Replace carpets and paint internally
- Upgrade of kitchen and some bathroom facilities
- Reupholster 30-year-old theatre seats
- Replace uneven pavers at the entrance and improve drainage
- Upgrade centre lighting and audio system.

Works not included:

The essential works would not improve the size or capacity of the centre, nor would they resolve its disability and access issues. Major structural works (e.g. lifting the roof, changing floor levels, moving structural walls) would be required to improve disability access, capacity and use of the centre.

The following additional works are beyond the scope and cost of essential works and include:

- Code compliance with disability access
- Increase to both the stage size and backstage areas
- Increase to theatre seating capacity

- Increase to the size of the foyer, rehearsal studio and function room
- Disability access to the orchestra pit
- Replacement of the ageing technical cabling infrastructure

If the essential works maintain the existing building, usage is projected to decline over the next 8-10 years. It is forecast an increased subsidy would be needed to operate the centre. After 10 years, closure and demolition at a cost of more than \$2 million would be considered.

C

CLOSURE AND DEMOLITION

Demolition works: \$2m

If Council does not re-invest capital funds into the ageing Centre, critical failures would see its immediate closure within the next two years.

Considerations for this option include:

- As a 30-year-old building it has never undergone major works
- The roof needs to be replaced within two years, the air conditioning unit is nearing the end of its working life and its failure would close the centre

- This option would see the centre demolished and the site returned to parkland at an estimated cost of \$2 million.
- With this closure, Council's popular festival events would need to relocate from the Whitehorse Centre, increasing each event's operational costs.



Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

The redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre is an exciting initiative for the Whitehorse community and the largest project investment in the history of the City of Whitehorse.

The Centre provides community access to the performing arts, function services and is home to major events within the Whitehorse Festival Season.

Council is now embarking on this critical stage of consultation as it releases the findings, concepts and proposed outcomes of the project to date. This stage of community consultation will inform Council on the future direction of the Whitehorse Centre. Council values your feedback and looks forward to hearing your views.

The survey will only take a few minutes to complete. It is confidential and no individual will be identified. The results will only be published as aggregated responses.

1. Do you believe that the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre is an important project for the City of Whitehorse?

☐ Yes

☒ No

2. To what extent do you support the redevelopment as currently proposed?

☐ Highly support

☐ Support

☐ Somewhat support

☒ Do not support

☐ No opinion

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
Council has an important role in providing cultural facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Whitehorse Centre is a valued community asset	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Whitehorse Centre requires redevelopment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The improved scope and size of the redeveloped centre meets my expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

4. Which description best suits you? Although you may attend the Whitehorse Centre in more than one category, please choose the one that would be your primary contact with the centre.

- ☐ I am a season subscriber to the Whitehorse Centre
- ☐ I have attended a performance at the Whitehorse Centre
- ☐ I have attended festivals and events at the Whitehorse Centre soundshell (amphitheatre)
- ☐ I have attended a function at the Whitehorse Centre
- ☐ I have hired the Whitehorse Centre
- ☐ I am a producer of shows in the Whitehorse Season
- ☒ I have never visited the Whitehorse Centre

5. Are you a resident of the City of Whitehorse?

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

6. Are there any other comments or feedback you would like to provide?

COMPLETE WASTE OF MONEY

BETTER SPENT ON OTHER PROJECTS

THIS COUNCIL WASTES MONEY, LIKE POURING
WATER INTO A BOTTOMLESS BUCKET.

Thank you for your time.

If you require additional details please contact
Arts & Recreation Development on 9262 6371
or email: ard.admin@whitehorse.vic.gov.au

Postal Address:
Whitehorse City Council
Locked Bag 2
Nunawading Delivery Centre, VIC, 3131

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Sunday, 3 April 2016 10:38 AM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Future of Whitehorse Centre

Categories: Orange Category

Hi,

I was disappointed that the survey didn't incorporate an ability to provide written feedback to help justify the comments made. Anyway, these are my brief thoughts:

- Agree that a redevelopment is needed.
- Do not agree with the funding arrangements for the rebuild – I see that the redevelopment should be delayed until there are alternative funding arrangements in place. I would like to see funds provided by state and federal governments making up a proportion of the funds as the benefits of the Centre also accrue to users outside the City of Whitehorse (both directly and indirectly e.g. without this Centre, other centres in other municipalities would be placed under greater user pressures). Of course I see the council needing to provide a substantial proportion of the funds e.g. 50% of the redevelopment costs plus the costs of the carpark (i.e. the car park will benefit other users in addition to Whitehorse Centre users).
- Cannot see how the Council can realistically afford the cost of this redevelopment without additional funding from non-Council sources. At an estimated cost of \$78 million (including car park) it is anticipated to be over twice the cost of the redevelopment of aquaLINK Box Hill which the City of Whitehorse Annual Report for 2013-14 (the most recent I could find) said "was Whitehorse City Council's largest capital works project ever conducted". Using the figures from that Annual Report, this project would be over 40% of the Council's entire budget. Even a relatively small cost overrun on the estimated costs would put the Council and its ratepayers in an invidious position.
- As a stop-gap measure it may be necessary to undertake essential works to keep the existing centre functioning.
- Was very disappointed to read in the local paper earlier on in the debate about the centre that one of the justifications for the need to redevelop was that the centre needs to be raised 1 metre due to the potential for flooding. What an absolute load of codswallop. If the existing centre, near the top of a ridge and way higher than most of the municipality, is prone to flooding of any kind then I think we need to forget about any redevelopment of the centre and consider using those funds to help relocate all of the City of Whitehorse to the top of Mt Baw Baw. There might be all sorts of reasons for redevelopment but the existing centre being flood prone is not one of them and calls into question the whole Business Case.
- In a quick comparison with another municipal performing arts project (Cairns Performing Arts Centre) it seems that the Whitehorse Centre will be smaller for a greater cost. I would have thought that costs of building in Far North Queensland would be higher than in Victoria so what gives. Seems that we are looking to pay top dollar. It may be an unfair comparison but we should look at the costs as they do seem rather high.

Regards

Planned Expenditure of \$76 Million on the Refurbishment of the Whitehorse Centre

The authors of this submission, , are equivocal about a costly, major refurbishment of the Whitehorse Centre, particularly given the popular perception amongst many Whitehorse residents that 'big ticket' capital works in Whitehorse and active sporting pursuits/facilities (e.g. Aqualink Box Hill at \$45M) have always taken precedence in budgetary allocations over unstructured recreational pursuits and associated facilities. Facilities 'screaming out' for a better slice of the capital works and recurrent budget include parks and open spaces, path networks and linkages and expenditure on improving active transport i.e. walking and cycling infrastructure and connectivity throughout Whitehorse.

This is of particular relevance when resident survey results strongly demonstrate the importance of unstructured recreational pursuits including walking. Whitehorse has a very high proportion of its population who nominate walking as their preferred recreational pursuit.

The following questions need to be adequately answered and communicated to the community before any major refurbishment of the Whitehorse Centre is decided:

- Is there an element of 'empire building' in the rush to commit \$76,000,000 to this project?
- What proportion of the Whitehorse population use these facilities now?
- Are Whitehorse residents, who pay for the facility, being subsidized by Council for using the facility compared with the large numbers of non-Whitehorse people who also use the facility?
- When were the well-advanced, detailed plans for the major refurbishment of these facilities developed, given that no firm decision has been made as to whether the project will proceed?
- What is Council's decision-making methodology on major projects? For example has a strong business case in favour of a major refurbishment been established? If yes, has the business case been made available for ratepayer scrutiny?
- What is the reason for apparent haste in commissioning the Whitehorse Refurbishment Project?
- Is there a demonstrated need for such grandiose refurbishment for these facilities? For example are the facilities functioning at maximum capacity currently?
- Isn't the cost excessive (\$76M over 6 years) particularly given that Council will still have \$10.82M in borrowings at 30 June 2016 for the Aqualink Box Hill and Sportlink refurbishments?
- Is the method of payment fair to ratepayers? That is significant borrowings and a 2% one-off ratepayer levy in addition to the proposed 5.6% general rate increase proposed for 2015/16?

At the time of writing this respondent did not have the opportunity to read the full business case, but only the summary. This has resulted in some weaknesses in the ~~summary~~ as presented.

There is no preamble to identify what comparable facilities there are in and around the facility. e.g. how does the White Horse Arts Centre compare with facilities like the Karsalyka Centre (Ringwood), George Wood. P.A.C. (Yarra Valley Grammar), Besen Centre (Mt Scopus) and the Alexander Theatre (Monash University) and could these facilities serve the local community as well.

The option of an enhanced refurbishment that might include ~~refurbishment of~~ the theatre but rework the other areas to ~~enlarge~~ ^{increase} the backstage areas and the foyer and function rooms. This would clearly involve the rebuilding of the sound shell and increase the ^{area of} basic footprint. Such a redevelopment could be staged so that the costs are spread over a longer period.

The parking issue could be managed progressively, rather than simultaneously. As a resident of Box Hill the argument about impact on neighbours for deciding location is interesting. Around Box Hill we have seven days a week construction, lane and other access ways closed without consultation or compensation, and the proposed sale of two Council owned car parks when local residents and visitors would contend that parking is inadequate around the centre of Box Hill. A Melbourne University style 'underground' car park with parkland and trees on top is one option that might be considered given the slope of the land.

Disability access, and safety for workers and the public appear to have fund requirements, and it is likely that whatever is done by the time a redevelopment is finished, or soon after, it may no longer be compliant with the latest regulations.

Additional Notes about this Survey

- ① Although I have lived in the present Whitehorse area for over 20 years, I lived in Box Hill City until 1994. Box Hill was then merged with Nunawading, in 1992.
- ② Box Hill had purchased the supplier of electricity to Nunawading much earlier and when this supplier was taken over by the state of Victoria on various terms still had significant financial reserves which were taken over by Whitehorse and have been held since then. Box Hill was thus a wealthy Council whilst it was widely rumoured that Nunawading was almost bankrupt, in part because of the present Whitehorse Centre building constructed some years before the Council merger, and the services provided by Council have been relatively poor since that merger.
- ③ All remaining financial reserves now held by Whitehorse originated in Box Hill I believe and are to be directed to the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre if this proceeds, and the Council will also take on large additional borrowings. This appears to many former Box Hill Ratepayers to be likely to produce some financial difficulty for the Whitehorse City which should be avoided at almost any cost.

Note added by

Feedback:

I am concerned that Council continues to consider spending money on the performing arts centre. If there was a real need for such a centre in our private enterprise economy, one would be built by private enterprise, NOT with ratepayer dollars.

With an economy having to support an enormous community debt at all levels of government, this is not the time to subsidise small groups who should help themselves.

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Wednesday, 20 April 2016 10:26 AM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Whitehorse Centre redevelopment

Morning

There are a number of points I wish to raise in relation to the redeployment options for the Whitehorse Centre. The three options provided do not allow for an option to rebuild the centre with a proscenium theatre only. They jump from spending \$10m to \$87m - surely there is an option in between.

I have provided some feedback on the business case below:

There seems to be little or no demand for a black box theatre other than a couple of producers. My daughters school (Sion) in Boxhill has just built a black box theatre. Maybe the producers can hire that one.

There also seems to be little demand for increased function rooms. Why come to the Whitehorse centre for a function or business meeting when you have facilities in the business hubs of Boxhill and Ringwood.

The current use of the Whitehorse Centre does not justify this huge development. The theatre is used 216 days per year - 100 days currently free and you want to add another theatre!

The basis of the design has come from the minimum standards from VAPAC. They are an organisation that is made up of producers, performing companies and performing arts centres that have a vested interest. They are only guidelines and in the case of Whitehorse should be used with caution.

If the scope of the project is reduced then there would be no need for additional car parking and loss of open space. I will not support a project that takes away open space - council opened up the space between the civic centre and Walker park some years ago which was a fantastic move and now they want to take it away!!

Finally the cost to operate it is unbelievable - \$1.2m operating subsidy. If the centre was to be redeveloped in any form then this needs to be looked at. Maybe the operation of the centre should be managed externally from Council? The financial figures do not include the interest on any borrowing for the Centre. This is likely to be in the millions as well. Combine this with depreciation and what do you have - a heavy long term burden on the community that will never make any money.

Council - rethink your plans. Look at a reduced scope.

JWS-Whitehorse CC

From:
Sent: Wednesday, 20 April 2016 9:35 AM
To: JWS-Whitehorse CC
Subject: Feedback on Whitehorse Centre proposal
Categories: Orange Category

Dear Surveyor,

I do not support this proposal.

In the past I have checked out events held at this centre and simply cannot afford the prices charged.

I presume that any new facility would be managed in the same way so why should I pay for a facility that I have to pay for again to use if I could afford it.

I am a retiree. The current rates are high enough. I would like to see the rates reduced not unnecessarily increased. The focus should be on minimising rates not what is the maximum we can charge ratepayers.

Why should the City of Whitehorse provide a cultural centre for the eastern suburbs to use. It makes no sense to me.

We have fantastic rapid transport to the city. The state government should provide facilities in the CBD that all suburbs can use. The transport is not used at nights and weekend when such facilities are often used. It makes a lot more sense to me. As the current Prime Minister has said "We have to learn to live within our means".

If we are to build any car parks then priority should be at railway stations to encourage people to use trains like they do in all other major cities in the world. We simply cannot go on widening the Tullamarine Freeway or the Monash, removing level crossings or think building another tunnel will solve long term transport problems. It is clearly lunacy. There is unlimited free space over railway lines just waiting to be developed into car parking near probably every station. Local people have to pay to park their car at Box Hill to buy basic food to eat at the market because of the lack of car parking.

The biggest need in our neighbourhood is the lack of parks. We simply do not have enough. The current leader of the Federal Opposition Shorten was recently reported as having said that if elected his party would contributed to a feasibility study to turn Box Hill into a CBD. Without more parks the residents will stress out and go crazy. Clearly parks for people are a higher priority than parks for cars. If the Federal Government and the State Government makes deliberate decision to increase population in the City of Whitehorse then clearly they should be providing the funds to support their decision. Why should we? I cannot see any benefits in it for me or any other existing residents by turning Box Hill into another Hong Kong or Manhattan. Developers and their shareholders who don't live here are the only beneficiaries.

As an aside, why is New Hope Baptist church building its new building as a community use building and the City of Whitehorse want to build a facility with similar characteristics. Surely the 2 bodies can work together?

In summary I think the current proposal is very short sighted. Rather than the leaders in the City of Whitehorse thinking in a myopic way and allowing the State and Federal Governments to have their way they should be joining with all other Melbourne municipalities and putting a proposal to the State govt to utilise the existing asset that we have ie rail lines to the CBD and build both car parks at stations and cultural facilities in the CBD for all Melbournians to enjoy. This approach would be a win, win win.

Thank you for consulting with the existing residents in the City of Whitehorse on this issue.

Regards

C

Cr Andrew Munroe
Central Ward
PO Box 30
BLACKBURN 3130

15 February 2016

Dear Councillor Munroe

I write in response to your recent newsletter in which you asked for views on the proposed new Whitehorse Centre.

Firstly, I think Council is being very disrespectful of Whitehorse citizens as it put this proposal out last year and gave residents until 29 May 2015 to have their say. Like many others, I had my say but the result evidently wasn't to Council's liking, and so it is spending more of our rates in trying to get the answer it wants – even to the extent of hiring consultants to help push its option. I am against Council's proposal because:

1. If there was a real need for this building, private enterprise would take the opportunity to build and operate it as a commercial business.
2. Council should stick to its core responsibilities and not try to deaden ratepayers' senses with entertainment and festivals, while constantly increasing rates and building a bigger empire.
3. A proposal to demolish a building less than 30 years old should cause great shame to Council.
4. Building standards and regulations will always change – does Council propose to demolish all its buildings (including the much admired Box Hill Town Hall) whenever new standards are introduced? Should those of us living in homes built before the 6-star energy rating requirement, for instance, now demolish them?
5. Evidently the construction and design of the current performing arts centre was very poor, but Council still seems to have problems with even comparatively small projects, e.g. the duck crossing in Main Street.
6. As Council believes this 30-year old building to be in such a precarious state (as explained in February 2016 edition of "Whitehorse News"), I support implementing Option C (Closure of the Existing Centre) without delay.

Yours faithfully

Dear Andrew,

In Response to the Mail Out to residents recently, I would just like to say the following -

Being an older member of the Municipality, - a keen Theatre goer, and struggling Pensioner, I think + appreciate our Current Arts Facility in Whitehorse, which is 'wonderful' for local residents to be able to enjoy many great performances + Artists that we can travel to easily + see for a reasonable price.

I feel that \$78M is too big a sum to be spending at this point, on any Grand New Facilities, that appear to be quite adequate at present. I would expect also that such a large outlay of funds for this proposal would have a very heavy impact on our Council Rates in the near future?

As I reside in a local Retirement Village where current Rates for our very small Properties seem already much higher than they should be any new rises in Council Rates would create Financial difficulty for many Citizens. We probably would no longer be able to afford to continue using any 'Grand New Facilities' if that were the case? Given a choice I would prefer the 'Lower Cost Proposal' - to go ahead with any 'Necessary Improvements' to our current Buildings etc, + to keep them operational for as long as possible.

Also to try to keep rates at a reasonable level for Rates Payers in the future, where they could be spent on more urgent needs.

Hoping this will receive your earnest consideration

Yours Faithfully

Feedback:



Cr. Philip Daw,

31st December, 2015

Mayor, City of Whitehorse

Dear Cr. Daw, Mayor and Councillors

Thank you for your letter dated 17th December, 2015 regarding the proposed feasibility study of the Whitehorse Centre. We do not want the Whitehorse Centre closed.

I have been following the "Community Conversations" in the Whitehorse Leader and do not agree with some of the "open ended" comments they are making. They do not want the Whitehorse Centre "updated", BUT they are not prepared to come up with another option.

YES, I do believe we have to do something to bring the Whitehorse Centre into the 21st Century and beyond, BUT I feel just the one quote was not sufficient. I always thought Local Government operations were expected to get three {3} quotes. I know it is time consuming but one gets a better idea of fairness.

My main points of view are:

- We do not want the Whitehorse Centre closed without a full transparency investigation and a "bandaid job" will not do.
- We certainly do not want the Whitehorse Centre closed because it is one of the Cities most valuable and appreciated assets. ...BUT
- It has outgrown its valuable use, by that I mean the seating arrangements in the auditorium must be increased.
- There is not enough "easy disabled" access to the Auditorium/Theatre.
- Quite a proportion of the "clients" to the Whitehorse Centre are of older age groups and are not well catered for at present e.g. regarding stairs and hand rails.
- The Foyer has also outgrown its capacity for people to meet comfortably when attending the "full house" functions/theatre.
- The Refreshments Bar has also outgrown its convenience for the many hundreds of people who attend the functions/productions regularly.
- The Parking will then have to be addressed.
- The Bathrooms/Toilets seem to suffice, but they should not be overlooked in any major "upgrade".

I personally visit the Whitehorse Centre with three different local groups for a variety of functions and some of my "points of view" are the ones that we most times comment on.

If the Whitehorse Centre is closed our nearest Arts and Entertainment Centre will be Ringwood and that is too far in travel time and most inconvenient to most people. We do not want the people in Whitehorse to be without this valuable source of a venue for Entertainment.


Once again, I thank you for an opportunity to be able to reply constructively and honestly.

Yours sincerely



Additional Feedback:

opines only



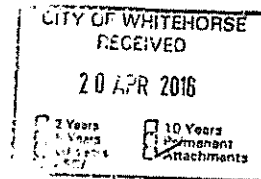
14th April, 2016

Officer-in-Charge,

I.W.S. Research

P.O. BOX 2575, CAULFIELD JUNCTION. 3163

Re: Future of the WHITEHORSE CENTRE



Thank you for the letter I received (4/4/2016) from Rachel Bullen of the Arts & Recreation Development Unit at Whitehorse Council regarding the proposed development of our Council's Whitehorse Centre and for giving me the opportunity to again support the City of Whitehorse in its endeavour to fully re-develop our Whitehorse Centre as per Option A.

From my submission that I have hand delivered to Whitehorse Centre Office on 13/12/2015 (copy attached), I fully outlined all the requirements that are require to bring the Centre into the 21st and 22nd Century.

We have "outlived" all areas at the current Centre. The current building is very tired and inadequate for our needs and must be fully re-developed as per Option A. Funding for the "new" Whitehorse Centre" will be tricky but I am sure our Whitehorse Council will be applying for a Commonwealth and/or State Government Grant.

and with a
(following amalgamation of Councils). In
the City of Nunawading established a the upcoming building of the
Bill Sewart Athletic Track on East Burwood Reserve and

I know how difficult it is with juggling funds, but there is a necessity to redevelop our Whitehorse Centre.

I have been involved with the and I know how much money has been sourced from Council, State and Federal Governments towards the building, upgrading and maintaining athletic tracks in our City as well as maintaining Football, Swimming and Cricket facilities.

Supporting "The Arts" in our City is just as important as funding for all sports, roads etc. It is only fair to have equalisation and keep attending to the maintenance of the infrastructure in a well planned schedule so that the funds can be expended across all areas.

If the community takes the time to read the Brochure supplied by Council they will see that 77% of the combined funding is from non-rate sources and will be well spent.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to again support this wonderful opportunity.



Feedback:

23 December 2015

Ms. Noelene Duff
CEO
City of Whitehorse

28/12/2015

Re: Redevelopment of Whitehorse Centre – Nunawading

Greetings Noelene & best wishes for the Festive Season.

I write to you, your colleagues, the Mayor and all other Councillors in response to the letter dated 17 December, signed by the Mayor and addressed to]

As a resident of Elgar Ward and Whitehorse for more than 33 years and having some knowledge of earlier relevant discussions, debates and Council decisions, I submit the following comments and request that these be included as input to the proposed consultation sessions please.

My understanding of the 17 December letter content requires a number of matters to be stated and questioned.

- The Centre operates in a very good central location, has excellent car-parking areas and the capacity for more. Some would say it is a potential Regional location.
- It is incorrect to limit discussions about the existing facility and location to only the Whitehorse community. Usage and attendance records will show that many non-Whitehorse groups and individuals access the Centre.
- I note the three options. These are the result of expensive and ongoing consultations. The intention to extend the consultation process even further raises the very real question of validity of using more of the Whitehorse's financial resources. I suggest the existing and extensive information base leading to the three

- Options could well provide sufficient arguments for Management and Councillors to consider and arrive at a well-balanced decision.

Option B – Essential Works to the Existing Centre to remain open for 8 to 10 years.

- **Disability Access Standards.** Stating the obvious, Council has known about deficiencies and should have fixed the problem some time ago! Sufficient funds are probably available in Council Reserves to address this issue. OOD standards set out under Building Regulations and OH&S requirements have also been known to the Development portfolio and could have been remedied. It is pointless to mention these matters.
- **Considering the overall content of this section, Whitehorse Council must recommend and authorise a number of remedial and renovation actions without any further ado.**


Option C – Closure of the Whitehorse Centre within 2 years.

This is unacceptable both to the Whitehorse community and the numerous Arts and Stage Performance groups. Existing parkland and Open Space is excellent; it is well maintained and accessed by many people for numerous events.

Concluding Comments.

- **Repair and upgrade the Stage Auditorium**
- **Upgrade/ Enhance the adjoining Rooms**
- **I believe the City of Whitehorse still has Capital and Financial resources to “fix the list of existing problems” and thereby stop both the threat of building and safety issues.**

I recommend that Council supports Option B and commence (or continue?) to dialogue with the Eastern Region Local Governments, the objective being to form a partnership that supports the long-term Regional use of the Whitehorse Centre.



**THERE ARE OVER
167 THOUSAND PEOPLE
IN WHITEHORSE...**

**FIND OUT
WHAT THEY'RE
THINKING.**

Contact Us:

John Scales
Managing Director
03 8685 8555

Mark Zuker
Managing Director
03 8685 8555



J W S R E S E A R C H

