



# Whitehorse Centre Business Case

## Part A: Business Plan

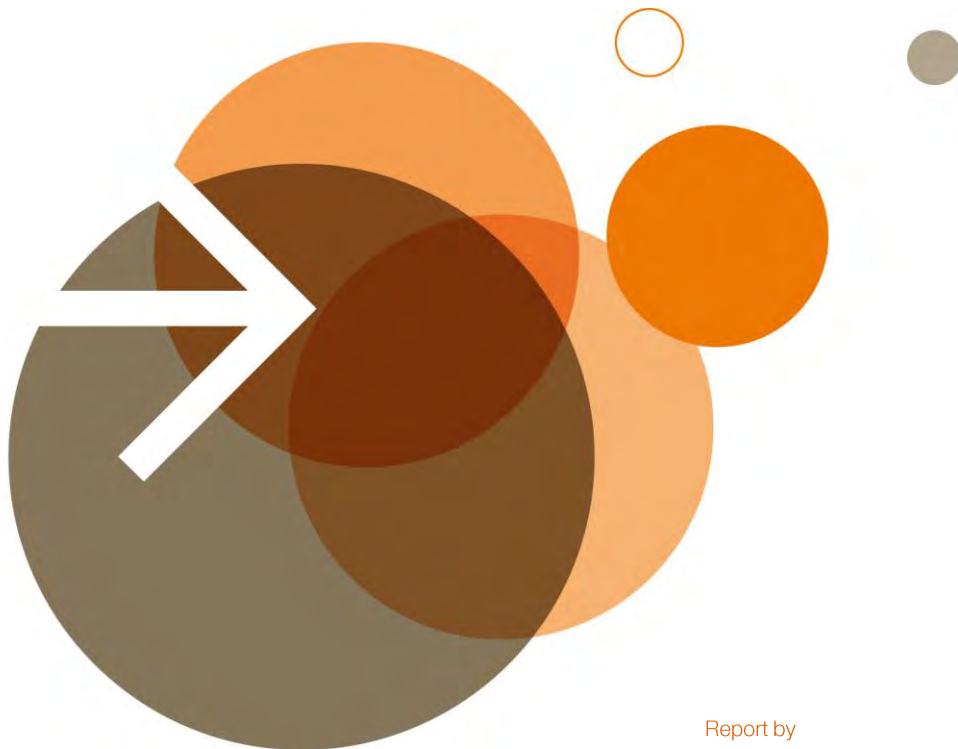
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# Whitehorse Centre Business Case Development

## Part A: Business Plan



Report by  
creative thinking  
**positive solutions**

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# 1. Brief and Scope

Positive Solutions was engaged, as sub-consultants to Williams Ross Architects (WRA), to assist in preparing a business case for the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre (the Centre). The brief required the undertaking of market research, preparation of a costed design brief and concept plan, and drafting of a business case to include forecasts of operating costs and revenues, and advice on staffing and operating arrangements, amongst other elements.

The initial business case was completed in September 2014 and further updated following an additional community consultation process undertaken in May 2015 and this is included as Part C. This Report (Part A) summarises the consultants' findings and recommendations resulting from the market research undertaken, and presents the financial and management implications of redevelopment of the Centre. The Report complements a document prepared by WRA (Part B) which focuses on; site investigation, design brief, concept plan and capital build costing and related issues. The market research informed the design brief, and the concept plan – in turn – informed the financial forecasts.

Positive Solutions was joined by James Buick of Artefact Consulting Services in addressing the market research and business case elements of the brief, and both worked as part of a larger, integrated team led by WRA.

At the inception of the project an Investment Logic Map (ILM) was generated through two workshop sessions led by ILM facilitator Jeremy Smart, in keeping with State Government's expectations for significant capital projects. A copy of the map is included at Appendix A. Three key problems were identified with the existing facility:

1. The Centre is failing to appeal to a range of community, artistic and commercial groups limiting further program diversity and space utilisation
2. Some members of the public find it difficult to access the Centre excluding them from participating in events and service
3. Rapid deterioration of buildings within the precinct require substantial remedial and maintenance effort to address urgent issues

## 2. Contexts

### 2.1 Profile of the City

The City of Whitehorse is located 15 kilometres east of Melbourne and covers an area of 64 square kilometres. The municipality is bounded by the City of Manningham to the north, the Cities of Maroondah and Knox to the east, the City of Monash to the south and the City of Boroondara to the west. The Wurundjeri-Balluk Tribe is the traditional custodians of the land on which the City of Whitehorse is located.

Whitehorse has a population of approximately 161,724 residents (as at 30 June 2013) with more than one-third born overseas. Recent forecast data has been provided and it is expected that the population will increase to around 167,599 by 2016. The 2011 Census data reveals that approximately 66% of Whitehorse's residents are aged between 18 and 69, 21% are aged under-18 years and 13% are aged over 70. The Whitehorse population estimate for 2036 is forecast to grow to 186,365. Between 2011 and 2021, the age structure forecasts for Whitehorse indicate a 3.1% increase in population under working age, a 14.7% increase in population of retirement age, and a 10.4% increase in population of working age.

In a household survey undertaken as part of the development of the Whitehorse Arts and Cultural Strategy 2014-2022 it was found that (in the 12 months preceding the survey):

- 76% of Whitehorse people had attended or participated in arts, cultural or heritage activity (72% men, 79% women)
- 19% did so inside of Whitehorse only
- 47% did so outside of Whitehorse only, and 34% had attended or participated both within and outside of Whitehorse
- The age groups with the highest attendance/ participation rates were 40-49 years and 20-29 years, attendance/participation rates dropped off in the over 60 age group
- The residents who had attended or participated in arts and cultural activities nominated over 60 different forms of activity

### 2.2 Policy Contexts

An overview of Council policy contexts which are pertinent to the development of the Whitehorse Centre is included at Appendix B. The following summarises elements of these.

The Whitehorse Arts and Cultural Strategy 2014-2022 is a research driven strategic Arts and Cultural Plan for Council. It delivers organisational goals and incorporates the needs of the broader community, as well as delivering outcomes that will influence planning and policy across a wide range of Council departments. Two major themes, or pillars, form the foundation for articulating the Strategy and for arts and culture in Whitehorse. These are:

Pillar 1: Arts and Cultural Facilities and Programs

Pillar 2: Community Cultural Development

The priority areas in each pillar are tabled below. Issues are identified and recommendations made under each priority area.

Table 1 Priority Areas

<b>Pillar 1: Arts and Cultural Facilities and Programs</b>	<b>Pillar 2: Community Cultural Development</b>
1. Facility, program and provision gap	1. Community Spirit and Pride of Place
2. Box Hill Community Arts Centre and its Programs	2. Art Collection Development and Management
3. Box Hill Town Hall	3. Arts Industry Support
4. Festival and Events	4. Cultural Development Support Services
5. Heritage	5. Grant Programs
6. Whitehorse Art Space	
7. Whitehorse Centre	

The Vision for Whitehorse 2013-2023 contains a number of goals relating to arts and culture, including: a range of programs and initiatives that facilitate well-being and connectedness; recognition and celebration of arts, culture, recreation, sport, leisure and community well-being; and embrace creativity and innovation in developing facilities and services to meet community needs.

The City of Whitehorse Council Plan 2015-2019 contains a range of strategies and strategic indicators relevant for the proposed Whitehorse Centre redevelopment. One of Council's Strategic Objectives within these four years includes: Appropriate multi-purpose programs, services, facilities and initiatives that promote and deliver well-being and inclusive connected communities.

Council's Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017 outlines key priorities and objectives to implement over the next four years to improve the health and wellbeing of the municipality. An Action Plan is developed each year under this overarching plan identifying specific projects and activities Council will undertake to work towards this goal.

The current Municipal Health and Wellbeing Action Plan component of Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017 outlines the key priorities and objectives to implement for 2014. This includes the following indicator relating to arts and culture:

*Provide opportunities for increased social connections through participation in arts and culture, recreation, sporting and other community activities.*

Action items under this indicator relate to arts and cultural programming for seniors (Midweek Matinee Series at the Whitehorse Centre) and cultural events for young people (FreeZA).

Council's Positive Ageing Strategy 2012-2017 encourages greater community involvement and connection, and the improvement of older people's access to essential goods and services. The objectives are accompanied by strategies that outline the actions that will contribute to the implementation of the Strategy. Relevant to the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre are:

- Explore opportunities for intergenerational projects and activities
- Upgrade community facilities in line with Council's capital works program to be more age friendly
- Improve access to buildings, pathways, parks and public spaces

Finally, the Young People's Strategy: Living and Thriving in Whitehorse includes goals to: ensure there are a diverse range of opportunities for young people to have a voice, artistically, creatively and politically; and to provide interesting and diverse places and spaces in the community for our young people to socialise, study, play and learn.



This is not an exhaustive list of the policy contexts relevant for the Centre, but an illustration of the different dimensions of Council policy – and the community's life – to which an enhanced Whitehorse Centre can contribute.

## 2.3 Provision and Competition

### Local Provision

The Whitehorse Centre is well regarded by patrons, hirers and the arts industry generally. It complements Council's other cultural facilities; the Box Hill Community Arts Centre, Schwerkolt Cottage, Whitehorse Artspace and the Box Hill Town Hall.<sup>1</sup>

The Whitehorse Centre is the primary focus for performing arts in Whitehorse. It presents an annual professional season of music, dance, circus, children's entertainment and theatre productions for all age groups as well as being a venue for hire for a diverse range of community groups and corporate events. In addition, the Whitehorse Centre has successfully co-produced a number of successful productions which have toured throughout Australia.

The cultural facilities are managed by the Cultural Facilities and Programs Unit and there is close connection between each of the facilities. It is recognised that this connection could be further strengthened with additional programming initiatives and studio space at the Whitehorse Centre to support creative development programs, particularly with the Box Hill Community Art Centre.

Box Hill Town Hall supplements the suite of facilities, providing an alternative space for community groups to hire for functions and events in a self-catering mode, as distinct from the fully serviced options offered at the Whitehorse Centre.

### Regional Provision

There are seven venues within 30 minutes travelling time of the Whitehorse Centre that offer theatre hiring and in some cases similar programming:

*Table 2 Regional Theatre Provision*

Venue	Description	Programming	Travel time from Whitehorse
Karralyka Theatre Ringwood	430 seat theatre with fly tower Function rooms catering up to 550	Theatre season, music programs, cabaret and children's shows Hiring predominately community, schools	10 mins
Besen Centre Burwood	999 seats with flytower	Venue for hire, schools, community groups, some commercial hiring	14 mins
Hawthorn Arts Centre	490 seats (flat floor 400, 90 balcony)	Programming to consist of presentations, concerts, limited performance due to small stage area  Community and commercial hiring  Function facilities, multiple spaces	26 min

<sup>1</sup> Further details of the City's cultural facilities are provided in the *Arts and Cultural Strategy Directions Paper* prepared by SGL Consulting Group Pty Ltd in collaboration with Outside the Square Creative Consulting.



Venue	Description	Programming	Travel time from Whitehorse
Burrinja Upwey	400 seat theatre 120 seat studio Gallery	Programming music, theatre  Community hiring	26 min
Drum Theatre Dandenong	521 seat theatre full flytower	Professional theatre season, music program, children's program  Community and commercial hiring	22 min
Darebin Arts & Entertainment Centre	395 seat theatre full flytower  Function rooms catering up to 350	Professional theatre season, children's program, morning music series  Community and commercial hiring	28 min
Alexander Theatre Monash Clayton	508 seat theatre flytower	Predominately University programming  Community hiring, schools and local musical companies	23 min

Of the surrounding venues, Karralyka Theatre and the Besen Centre can be viewed as competitors due to programming offer (Karralyka) and venue hiring (Besen Centre), although both offer different service levels to Whitehorse Centre.

The Besen Centre is a venue for hire and is in demand due to the large seating capacity however there is no venue-initiated programming.

The Alexander Theatre at Monash did have an established theatre subscription season but the focus has changed over the last 10 years. Since the University changed the programming focus of the Alexander Theatre, the Whitehorse Centre has benefited by attracting many of the previous Alexander Theatre subscribers.

The impact of the new Hawthorn Arts Centre which has recently opened is unknown. However, due to the limited staging facilities it is not considered a major competitor.

The other surrounding venues each have their own established markets and as members of the Victorian Performing Arts Centres Association and partners in the touring circuit to work collaboratively with the Whitehorse Centre.

Although there are a number of other school performance facilities in the region, the use of the venues are predominately for the school activities and outside availability or programming is restricted in order to first meet the needs of the schools.

## 2.4 The Whitehorse Centre: Current Utilisation

Descriptions of the current Whitehorse Centre building and other contextual data related to its condition, the site and location are provided in the complementary WRA Report. Here we focus on the current utilisation of the Centre. The primary research for this study took place during 2013 and 2014. Consequently, the utilisation summary presented here is based on the most recent available data at that time, for calendar 2014.

### Space Utilisation

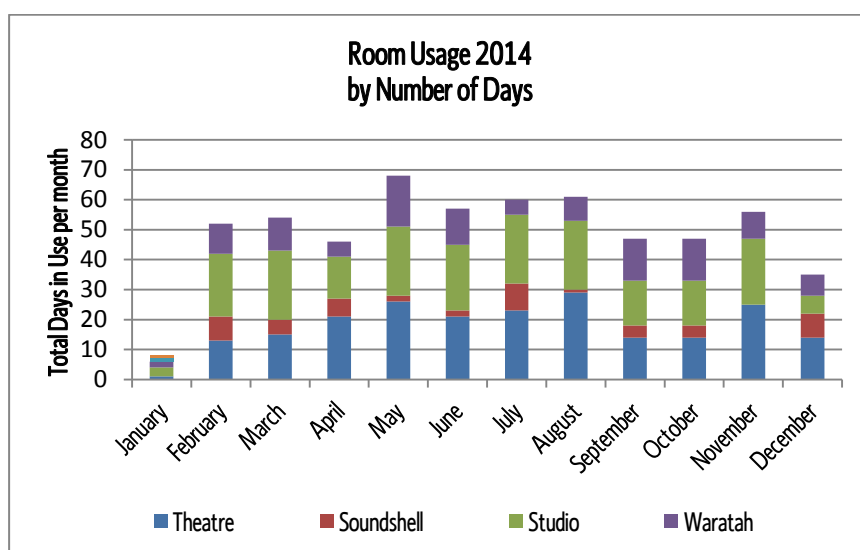
The Whitehorse Centre consists of the Theatre, Soundshell, Studio and Waratah Room. In addition the centre also has the responsibility for servicing and booking the Willis and Courtyard Rooms which are located in the Civic Centre. For the purpose of this analysis the usage of the

Willis and Courtyard Rooms is not included. In the main auditorium the number of performance days has been relatively steady over the past five years. The Theatre is currently in use for 216 days per year<sup>2</sup>. This is typical with most performing arts centres where the quieter months are mid-December to April. In addition, in line with best practice, the theatre is closed for 27 days of maintenance.

In 2014 there were 630 events in the Theatre, Waratah Room, Studio and Sound Shell combined, including performances, functions, bump-ins and rehearsals. As the table below shows the theatre was used the most (216 days), followed by the Studio (210 days), Waratah Room (114 days) and the Sound Shell (49 days).

Theatre, Soundshell, Studio and Waratah

Figure 1 Room Utilisation 2014



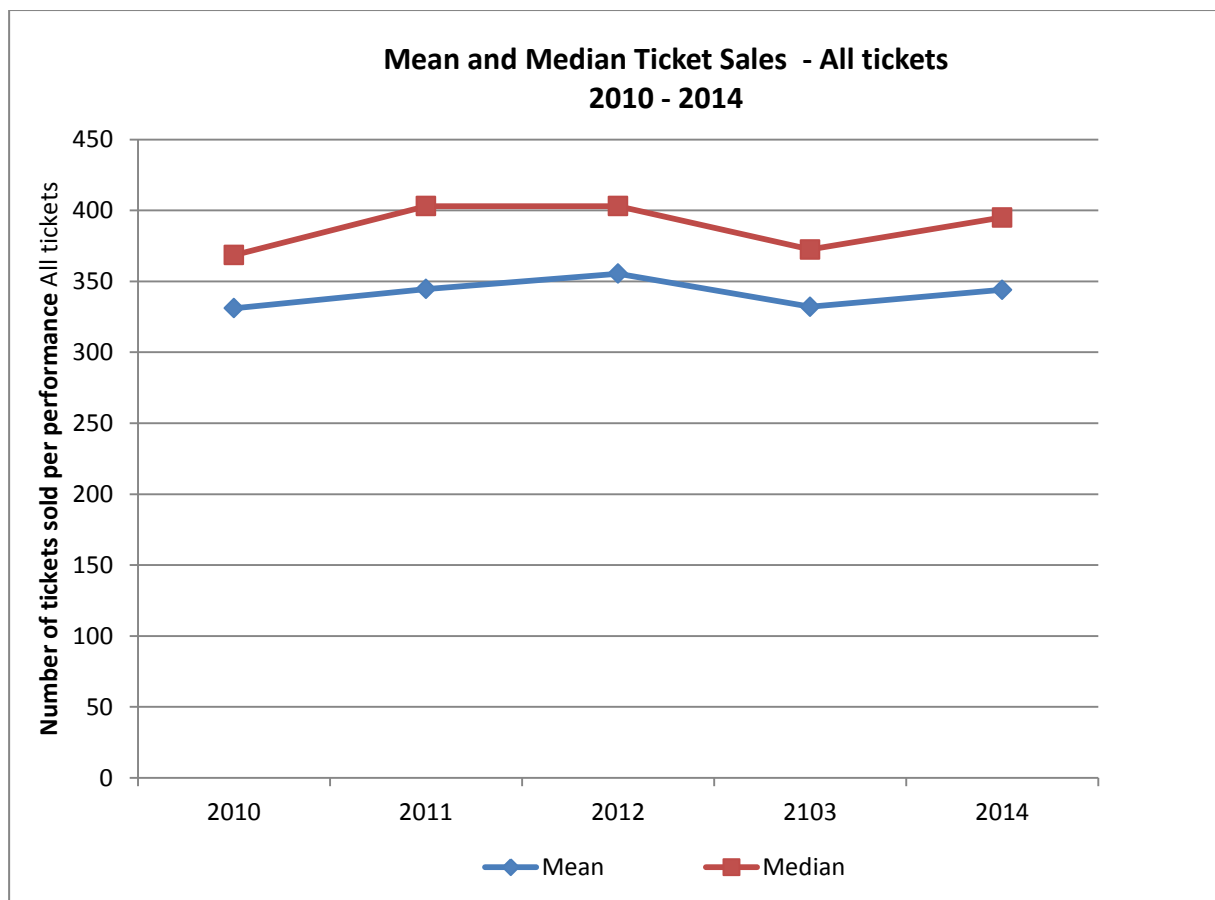
<sup>2</sup> This usage includes performances, bump-in and bump-out days, rehearsals, events, functions and days .

## Attendance

An analysis of box office data for the Whitehorse Centre Theatre from 2010-2014 was undertaken to consider trends in ticket sales and the types of product attracting the largest audiences.

The average (mean) number of tickets sold for events in the Theatre has increased since 2010, although there was a slight decrease in 2013 and then an increase in 2014, overall the data is showing a 5% increase in the number of tickets sold from 2010-2014. The median of ticket sales over the same period (2010-2014) has been slightly higher than the mean number of tickets sold, indicating that there are generally larger numbers of people attending theatre performances.

Figure 2 Ticket Sales

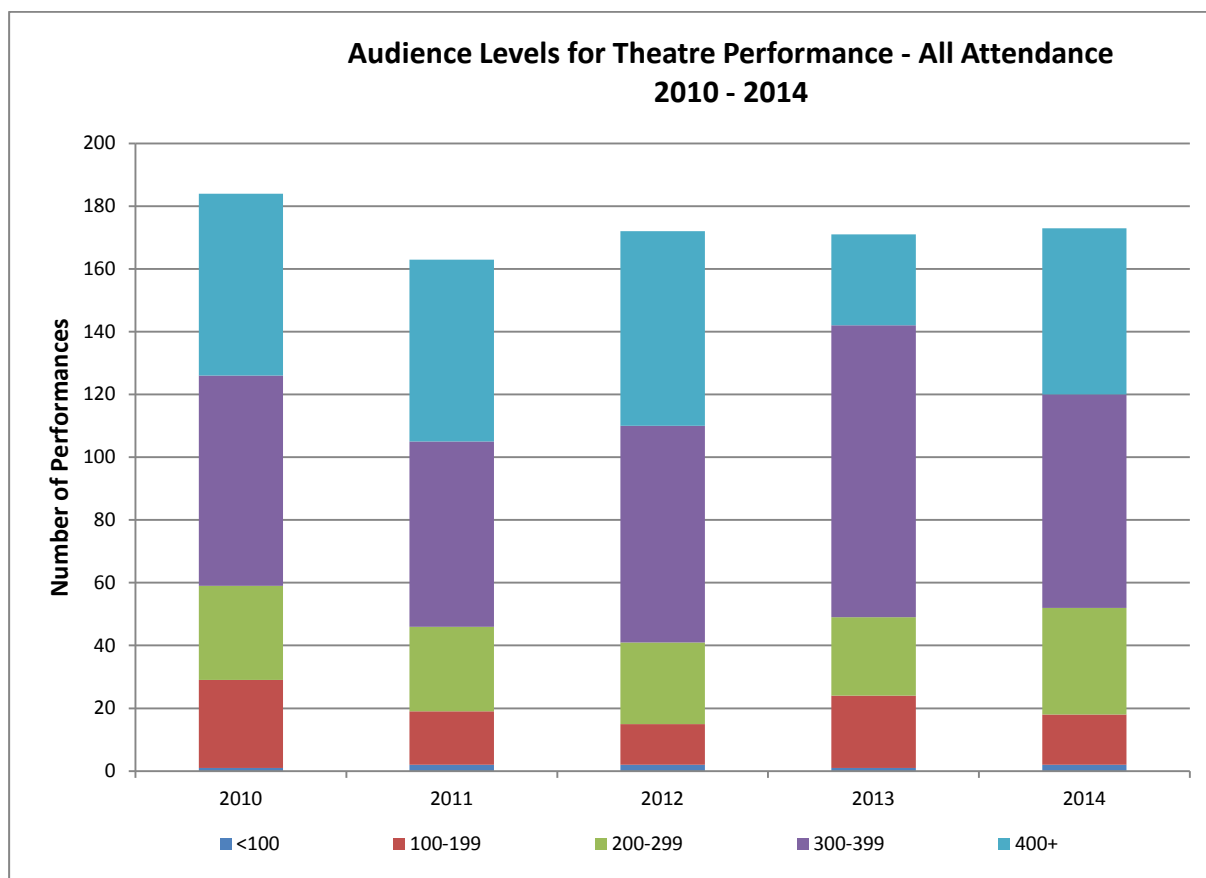


The prevalence of larger audiences is also shown clearly in the chart below. This chart shows the number of performances that attracted different levels of audience attendance. For the purposes of analysis, audience levels have been grouped into five brackets (<100, 100-199, 200-299, 300-399, and 400+ people).

Over the five year period from 2010-2014 the most common audience capacity was 300-399 people. This was followed closely by performances to an audience of 400+ and then audiences of 200-299 people. This shows an average theatre attendance capacity of 80%. Depending a range of factors, the industry standard for projected attendances, ranges between 55%-65% positioning the Whitehorse Centre well above the national average ref

Product types generating the largest audiences<sup>3</sup> in the Theatre in 2014 were musical theatre, schools performances, dance school productions and community group performances.

Figure 3 Audience Level



Product generating the smallest audiences consisted primarily of performances scheduled in morning or early afternoon time slots. These productions were primarily aimed at children, were midweek film screenings, or were the matinee performances of shows that were presented to much larger audiences in the evenings. The productions are broad and aim to cater to the diversity in theatre audiences. For instance, some of the programming of matinee performances and classic films exist primarily to provide a service to an older aged Whitehorse audience. In service to this community, Whitehorse programs matinees to reduce barriers of travel and coming out at night for this demographic and is a wonderful opportunity for connecting people.

<sup>3</sup> Large audiences defined by 400+ people in attendance at three or more performances

## 3. Market Research Findings

### 3.1 Previous Research

Before undertaking primary research to inform the design brief for the Centre, Positive Solutions reviewed Whitehorse Centre previous audience research which had been undertaken.

An initial feasibility study for the development of the Whitehorse Centre was undertaken from 2010-2012 by SGL Consulting Group Pty Ltd in Collaboration with Outside the Square Creative Consulting. The consultation process included a household survey (500 respondents), focus groups and key stakeholder interviews with theatre patrons and users, and benchmarking research against five other performing arts facilities. See Appendix C for further information about the SGL methodology and findings. Key issues identified included:

- A need for performance space (rehearsal space for music, dance, theatre and other performing arts)
- A need for increased studio and workshop space (for programs, classes and meetings)
- A need for increased provision of exhibition space (for showing the municipal collection and for artists to show their work)
- A lack of places to see and perform music
- Lack of opportunity expressed by arts and cultural groups to access audiences in Whitehorse
- A need for full service premium function capability, able to accommodate large events

User views of the Whitehorse Centre were very positive. Limitations of the Centre which attracted comment included car parking, food and beverage facilities, the facility being overcrowded, the level of fees and charges, and disability access. The Feasibility Study recommended that:

- The auditorium capacity needed to be increased by approximately 180 - 200 seats
- Function facilities need to be upgraded and increased in size to meet demand
- Programming gaps to be addressed included:
  - Programming for older patrons
  - Youth programming
  - Dance programming
  - Multi-cultural programming

### 3.2 Research

In order to validate, or challenge, the findings of the earlier 2010-2012 feasibility study and as required to provide specific data to feed into a design brief and business modelling for a redeveloped Centre a number of steps have been undertaken. These include:

- Surveys of existing hirers of the Centre, of other local arts and cultural groups, and local businesses
- Interviews with local and Melbourne-based arts and cultural groups, commercial arts and entertainment producers, event organisers, Arts Victoria, regional venue managers
- Interviews with Council officers and Councillors

The surveys and interviews were designed to elicit information on current venue utilisation patterns, to identify likely usage of a redeveloped Centre, and to inform the design brief for a redeveloped Centre.

Due to the previous consultation, the focus of the business case was to understand the current operations, usage and the potential future demand from the business perspective.

A full analysis of the surveys can be found in Appendix E and summary of the interview findings is included at Appendix F. The following is a summary of these findings.

### 3.3 Survey Participants Overview

Online surveys were collected from 34 hirers and community organisations from a total of 63 organisations contacted. These organisations are regular hirers of the Whitehorse Centre, organisations within the community with an interest in the future of the Centre, or local/state government representatives with an interest in the redevelopment.

Online surveys were collected from 13 arts and cultural organisations from a total of 40 organisations contacted. This includes organisations which are not regular hirers of the centre. Eight of the respondents were dance schools; three were music organisations and another two were music theatre focused. Those who did not respond to the survey included four multicultural organisations and three theatre companies, as well as a number of other music and dance organisations.

#### **Hirers and Community Organisations**

20 respondents (59%) indicated that they use facilities in Whitehorse or surrounding areas for cultural activity. The preferred seating capacity of hirers and community organisation respondents was 400-599 people (35% of respondents), followed by <100 and 100-199 people (26% each).

When asked to rank the factors most influencing future decisions to hire the Whitehorse Centre, affordable hiring charges was ranked as most important, followed by auditorium facilities and technical equipment, seating capacity, parking, accessible access and catering services.

#### **Arts and Cultural Organisations**

The most common space to be utilised by arts and cultural organisations was the Whitehorse Centre, with 21 performances/workshops/meetings delivered by seven organisations throughout the year, attracting 2,500 audience members. The most common types of activity to be presented at the Whitehorse Centre were dance performances.

Other common venues in use included Karralyka Theatre, Doncaster Secondary, George Wood Performance Centre and Maroondah Secondary College Theatre.

The preferred seating capacity of arts and cultural organisations was 400-599 people (46%, six respondents) closely followed by 200-399 people (38%, five respondents).

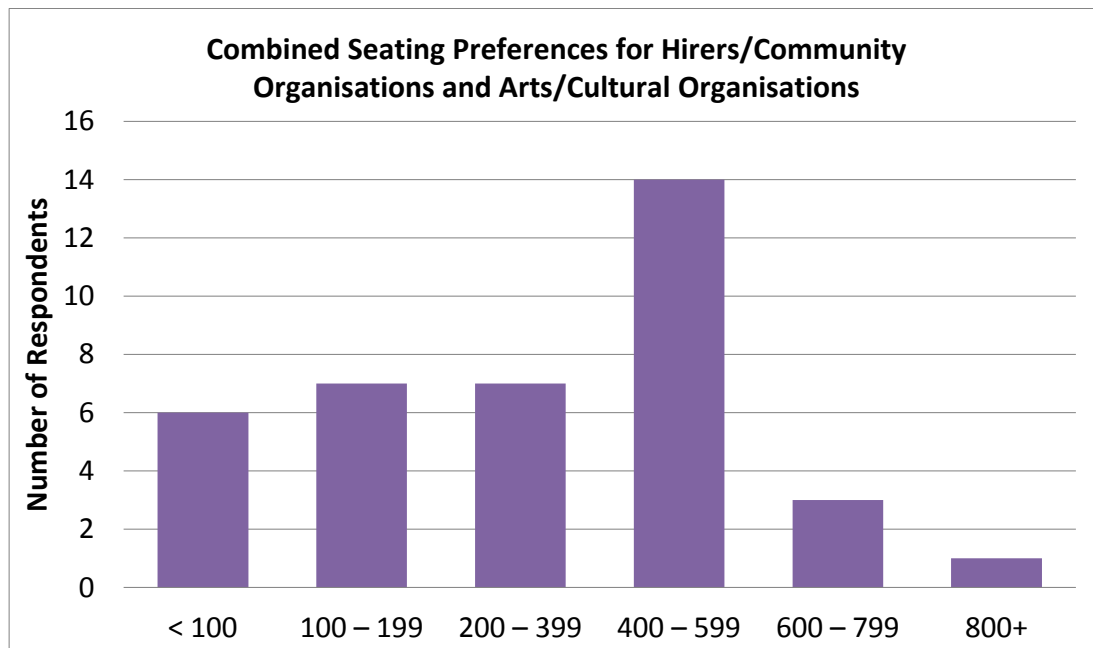
When asked to indicate their preferred staging configuration, proscenium arch with fly tower was the choice of four respondents, followed by proscenium arch or open, concert style stage with no fly tower for two respondents respectively.

When asked to rank the factors most influencing future decisions to hire the Whitehorse Centre, affordable hiring charges was ranked as most important, followed by onstage facilities and technical equipment, seating capacity, dressing rooms and parking.

## Combined Usage

When combining the seating capacity preferences for both hirers and community organisations, and arts and cultural organisations, 400-599 people is the most common seating capacity indicated by respondents (37%, 14 organisations), followed by both 100-199 people (18%, seven organisations) and 200-399 people (18%, seven organisations).

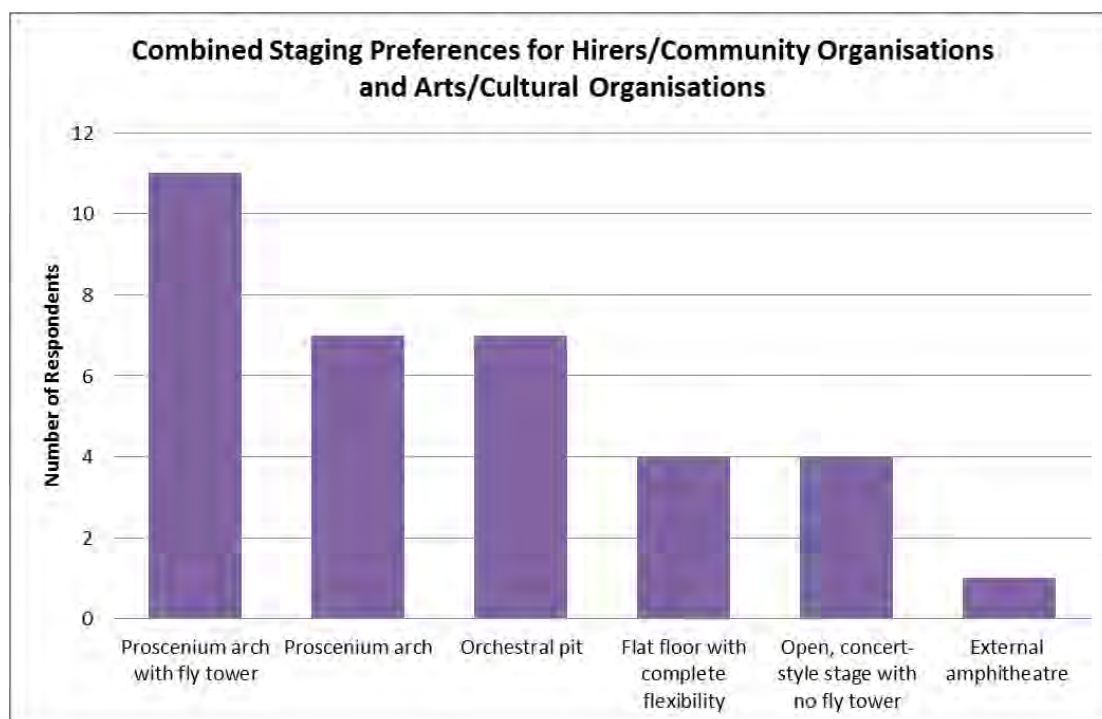
Figure 4 Seating Preferences



When combining the staging configuration preferences for both hirers and community organisations, and arts and cultural organisations, proscenium arch with fly tower is the most common choice (32%, 11 organisations), followed by proscenium arch (no fly tower) and the need for an orchestral pit (21% or seven organisations each).



Figure 5 Staging Preferences



Evidence of the level of future demand for different spaces in the theatre was provided by 32 different organisations, and can be summarised as:

Table 3 Usage Summary

Rehearsal space		Meeting and function space		Small auditorium/studio theatre		Main auditorium	
Users	Days	Users	Days	Users	Days	Users	Days
14	273	17	133	11	84	22	131

These demand estimates would be supplemented by predicted usage by non-respondents, local businesses, Council own usage, schools, and potentially other categories of hirer.

Telephone surveys with 12 local businesses at various scales were undertaken. A report on the findings from these surveys is included at Appendix G. Eight of the twelve businesses interviewed indicated that they had an interest in using training rooms, beyond their in-house facilities, and with capacities ranging from 20 to 100. Seven indicated possible use of meeting rooms, and four indicated potential use of a function space with a dance floor. Only one of the businesses indicated possible usage of the theatre main auditorium, and none expressed interest in use of outdoor space – for example to erect a marquee for special events. This very small sample of businesses in the area suggests considerable latent demand for the meeting and function facilities which a redeveloped Centre might house, especially if appropriate resources are devoted to active marketing of the facilities.

Partly because of timing issues (proximity to school holidays when the research was being undertaken) response from the schools sector was poor. The consultants have advised that primary research with schools occur at a later stage of the development, and probably through focus group discussions where specific design proposals can be discussed.

In addition to the surveys, a total of 37 interviews were conducted with key stakeholders as well as representatives from selected arts and events organisations. A report on the stakeholder interviews is included at Appendix F.

Interviewees included:

- Four commercial producers
- Twelve professional arts organisations
- Two non-arts commercial hirers
- Five venue managers
- One State Government representative
- Five City of Whitehorse City Councillors
- Eight Council staff

The key findings that emerged were:

- Whitehorse Centre is well regarded by hirers and the arts industry generally
- A larger seating capacity in the main performance space is preferred and the proposed capacity of 580 is attractive to commercial hirers
- Larger seating capacity as well as an increase in stage size allows for a broader range of productions to be programmed. There is, however, a large amount of product touring that is suited to smaller spaces and if there is only the one performance space this would require an auditorium that can reduce capacity by curtaining or other means in order to create a more intimate space
- A second space or flexible Black Box Studio would cater for the smaller product as well as being suitable for creative development programs or as rehearsal space and occasional functions
- Due to the smaller seating capacity, a Black Box Studio space has a reduced box office potential but allows for a greater opportunity for partnerships and co-producing with producers and theatre makers
- Non-traditional theatre seating (e.g. benches and floors mats for children's performances) increases capacity in Studio spaces and is suitable for a range of performances. This can be in addition to retractable theatre seating
- The Foyer space is critical to the success as the first impression of the venue, primary point of contact, multi-use opportunities such as displays, conference registrations, pre-function entertainment as well as providing appropriate traffic flow for concurrent events.
- A Café provides activation of a venue space during non-performance time but financial viability would rely on an identifiable regular clientele or being programmed with regular entertainment to develop a loyal patronage. The café service could be operated in conjunction with the broader function catering service to reduce the risk
- There is a perceived shortage of medium size function rooms in Whitehorse and a 200 + seat (banquet style) function space that has operable walls and appropriate audio visual facilities would be attractive to a range of users. The current function space does not allow for flexible usage or for concurrent events to be staged
- The conference and seminar market requires additional support spaces and smaller meeting rooms to be used as break-out areas. Smaller meeting spaces would also be attractive to community groups or for business meetings

- There are currently no specific State Government policy initiatives to support capital funding proposals for the theatre redevelopment. However, this does not preclude negotiations with State Government as the project progresses.

## 4. Key Findings

The primary research largely endorsed, but also refined and added hard data to, the findings which emerged from the earlier feasibility study. On the basis of the research the consultants conclude that the following enhanced configuration would be appropriate for the Centre following redevelopment:

- A larger auditorium, of c.580 - 600 seats
- A second, studio theatre of c.200 seats
- A larger foyer, appropriate to the increased audience sizes, and available for other uses
- A rehearsal space/ dance studio, scaled to align with the stage size of the main theatre
- A sound shell, with its stage doubling as a second rehearsal room (as at present)
- A larger function space, with separate foyer space. The function space to accommodate up to 300 seated or 600 standing
- A meeting room
- Improved staff accommodation and storage
- Improved disability access, to current standards

The following table (adapted from the WRA report) compares the current principal spaces available with the new configuration proposed for the future, and comments on the functionality of each space:

*Table 4 Functionality*

Venues / Hireable Spaces	Existing Centre	Proposed Centre	Primary Uses	Secondary Uses
Main Foyer	Nominal capacity 300	Nominal capacity 600	Patron entry & circulation Audience gatherings Event "Openings" Bar / lounge hospitality	Exhibition / display Private events Performances
Proscenium Theatre	408 seat auditorium small productions only	600 seat auditorium small/medium productions	Musical theatre / Opera Dance / ballet Drama / Spoken word Speeches / lectures Amplified & unamplified Audiences 300-600	Musical concerts Circus / Acrobatics Cinema
Black Box Studio Theatre	none	200 seat capacity variable format sub-divides into 2 smaller studio/function rooms	Contemporary theatre End stage & other formats Drama / spoken word Unamplified acoustics Audiences <200	Musical recital Exhibition / display Trade show
Sound Shell Stage	Concert stage Rehearsal/dance studio	Concert stage Rehearsal/dance studio	Outdoor concerts stage Outdoor civic events stage	Rehearsals Perf arts classes Performance marshalling
Meeting Room	none	20 person video-	Meetings / small seminars	Temporary workspace / project room

Venues / Hireable Spaces	Existing Centre	Proposed Centre	Primary Uses	Secondary Uses
		conference	Video-conference	
Pre-functions Foyer	none	Nominal capacity 200	Patron entry & circulation Tea/coffee food service to functions	Exhibition / display Trade show
Function Room	180 dining 350 standing sub-divisible x2	250 dinner-dance 300 banquet 600 standing event sub-divisible x3 or 4	Dinner-dance / Banquet Functions Seminars / Presentations Cocktail parties	Exhibition / display Trade show
Rehearsal Room 1 single room	Rehearsal/dance studio (former Banksia Room)	Rehearsal/dance studio (Double Banksia size) small performances (100) sub-divisible x2	Rehearsals Perf arts classes	Meetings / seminars Performance marshalling Small performance <100
Sub-divided room			Small rehearsals Meetings / seminars	Perf arts classes Performance marshalling

Benefits of this enhanced configuration would include:

- Multiple activities could occur simultaneously – especially with a design which improves noise containment within the different spaces in the building. This facilitates more intensive usage of the building
- The additional black box studio theatre enables smaller-scale and specialised product to be appropriately accommodated, without competing for time in the main theatre. This would not only support the many local organisations which prefer to perform in an intimate (and lower cost) theatre but also provide a natural space for supporting young people's activities
- The larger capacity of the main auditorium will make its use more economic for local groups which attract larger audiences, but also more viable for touring product including commercial promotions
- The black box studio theatre, functions foyer, enhanced functions space and larger rehearsal room greatly increase the overall flexibility of the building, particularly given the range of secondary uses which they support
- The larger functions space could accommodate pre- and post-show functions which accompanies an event taking place in the main auditorium, with sufficient standing room for a full audience. As with the rehearsal space, the functions space could be sub-divided to increase the range of uses it supports. This will expand the function business beyond weekday meetings to more evenings and weekends

Disabled access, staff accommodation, storage, and a number of other improvements would accompany the development of the configuration proposed.

The consulting team considered several additional possibilities – a dedicated café, a second rehearsal room, a function space capable of seating up to 400, a main auditorium with greater

seating capacity. We comment here on why these elements have not been recommended in the current scheme.

#### 4.1 Size of Auditorium

There is sometimes a perception that a growing population implies the need for a larger auditorium. In fact, population size is not the key determining factor – it is appropriateness of the auditorium and stage configuration for particular types of product and event, and the commercial viability of those events. A larger population may drive the need for another theatre in the region in the future (not necessarily within Whitehorse) but not the need for increased seating capacity.

Very few hirers and potential hirers expressed a preference for a theatre greater than 600 seats. While Frankston Arts Centre and Geelong Performing Arts Centre both have larger primary auditoriums, both are further from Melbourne CBD and from other regional competition. All theatre hirers prefer a full or near-full auditorium for the ambience this creates – the provision of a larger auditorium than c.600 would result in many performances where the ambience suffered as a result of a high proportion of empty seats. This is also a factor in recommending the provision of a smaller studio theatre.

#### 4.2 Size of Functions Room

A larger functions room has been recommended – but not much larger. The Centre remains a performing arts centre with functions capability, not a conference centre. Consultation with events and conference organisers confirmed that the local/ regional need is for small-scale conferences and functions. Larger events would require improved hotel capacity locally, and would either be attracted to the CBD or to more rural locations where the isolated environment is itself an attraction and is clearly distinguished from the CBD offer. However, providing band space, dance floor and sufficient floor area to accommodate 250 – 300 would extend the range of functions which can be served.

#### 4.3 A Dedicated Café

A quality catering operation adds greatly to the welcome and vibrancy of a theatre venue, and to the overall customer offer, as well as generating an additional revenue stream, and even an additional entertainment space. It is a very desirable addition. However, whether the catering is directly managed by the theatre management or contracted out it has to be commercially sustainable. This is largely a matter of location and pedestrian traffic. The position of the Whitehorse Centre, away from the main road (and the road being a highway) does not encourage pedestrian flow. A café would be highly dependent upon theatre audience patronage and staff at the Civic Centre. It is unlikely that these would be sufficient to sustain a profitable enterprise. For the short to medium-term it will be more appropriate to provide a more modest catering offer which could service pre-theatre light fare, espresso coffee and conference breakouts using the enlarged foyer, while providing the kitchen infrastructure to service functions business at the Centre. However, we would also recommend that allowance be made for potential future expansion of the catering offer.

#### 4.4 A Second Rehearsal Room

Many arts and other community organisations would welcome access to rehearsal facilities. At present a high proportion of the available days in the rehearsal space (which can be sub-divided in the proposed development) are absorbed by the long-standing arrangement with Utassy Ballet School. This raises the question of whether additional rehearsal space should be provided to accommodate the needs of others.

The sound-shell stage would continue to offer a second rehearsal space for most of the time. With the addition of a studio theatre (which can be sub-divided) and enlarged function space (which can be sub-divided) there are further fall-back options for rehearsal space in the proposed new configuration. In light of this we do not believe further investment in a second rehearsal space is warranted.



## 5. Management and Operations

### 5.1 Staffing Arrangements

The current staffing structure provides appropriate service levels for the existing program and venue infrastructure. This structure also compare well with the benchmark facilities. However, additional specialist staff will be required to service an increase in the number of spaces and to ensure the Whitehorse Centre has a focus on audience development and broadening the programming offer.

### 5.2 Operating Model: Conference/ Function Activities/ Catering Arrangements

The Whitehorse Centre currently offers a range of hospitality services catering for seminars, conferences, meetings and social functions. The current facilities limit the function size and ability to run concurrent events.

Due to the proposed increase in function capability, the catering service will need to be reviewed to identify the most suitable model for the new venue. The catering services have the potential to be a significant source of income but catering contracts are complex and require considerable contract management time.

There are a number of models currently in operation at venues similar to Whitehorse. One of the challenges is the price point needs to be accessible for community groups as well as providing quality catering to the corporate market.

The City of Whitehorse has the advantage of having a range of facilities for community groups that wish to provide their own catering - in particular the Box Hill Town Hall for larger functions and a range of community halls and spaces (including the Willis Room at the Civic Centre) for smaller community meetings that wish to self-cater.

The business analysis and contract development for the catering services will require the services of a specialist hospitality consultant, especially in view of the linkage between functions and catering operations within the Whitehorse Centre and in the Council administration building. Pending that more detailed analysis of the functions/ catering arrangements the financial forecasts below have been prepared on the basis of a continuation of the present arrangements.

## 6. Financial Projections

The Whitehorse Centre has been operating since 1986. There is, therefore, a depth of understanding within Council regarding the operating costs and the financial dynamics of the Centre.

In order to illustrate the likely costs and revenues of a redeveloped Centre we have assembled a financial model which projects activity in the Centre for five years following redevelopment.

### 6.1 Financial Assumptions

Proposed key assumptions in the model are as follows:

*Table 5 Key Assumptions*

<b>Average Ticket Prices to Patrons - Year 5 2023-2024</b>	
Professional Performing Arts Events (theatre, music, dance, circus)	\$50
Community Theatre Events	Determined by Client
Cinema Screenings/Midweek Matinees/Children's Shows/Creative Development	\$18
<b>Total Number of Tickets Sold - Year 5</b>	<b>72,660</b>
<b>Hire Charges - Year 5 (inc GST)<sup>4</sup></b>	
Auditorium - Commercial rate for performances	\$2,090
Auditorium - Community rate for performances	\$1,672
Studio Theatre - Commercial rate for performances	\$880
Studio Theatre - Community rate for performances	\$704
Function Room - Average Commercial rate per hour	\$220
Function Room - Average Community rate per hour	\$176

Activity levels in the different spaces within the Centre have been detailed in the model and include, amongst others, the following assumptions:

*Table 6 Activity Level Assumptions (excluding Willis & Courtyard Rooms)*

<b>Number of Events/ Hires - Year 5</b>	
Ticketed Events	247
Rehearsal, bump-in	312
Meetings, Classes, Forums etc.	644
Total Number of Events/Hires	1,203

<sup>4</sup> All rates are averaged over a seven day week and include GST.

Figure 6 Projected Booking Types

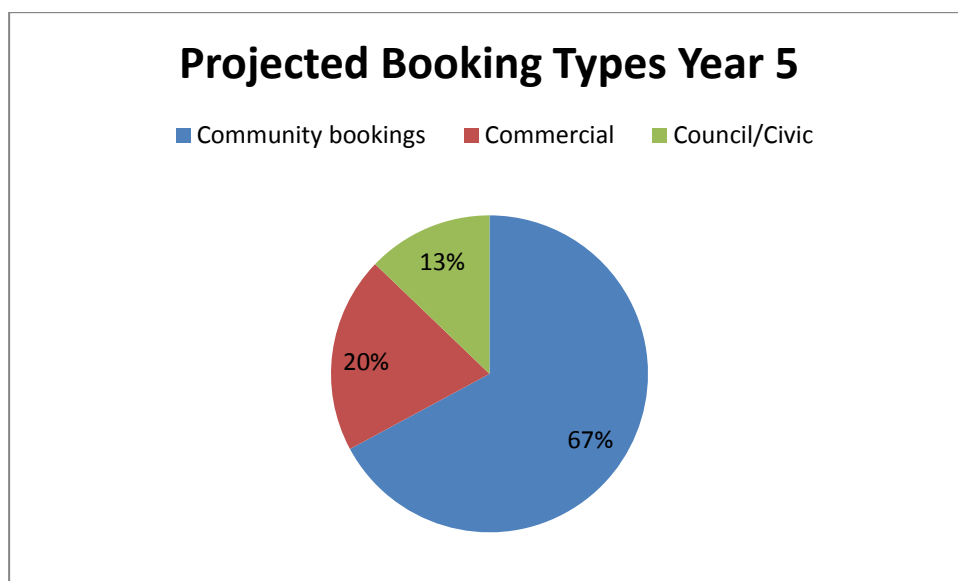


Table 7 Projected Booking Types

Number of Hires - Year 5	Commercial	Community	Council/Civic	TOTAL
Auditorium	39	175	70	284
Studio Theatre	39	85	39	163
Rehearsal Studio	13	270	0	283
Sound Shell	25	103	10	138
Function Room	90	117	15	222
Meeting Room	35	58	20	113
<b>ALL SPACES</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>808</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>1203</b>
	<b>20.03%</b>	<b>67.17%</b>	<b>12.80%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## 6.2 Summary Profit and Loss

A summary projection of costs and revenues follows:

Table 8 Projected Profit and Loss

<b>5 year Profit and Loss - Summary</b>	<b>2019/ 20</b>	<b>2020/ 21</b>	<b>2021/ 22</b>	<b>2022/ 23</b>	<b>2023/ 24</b>
<b>Level of Activity</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Income</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1,529,921</b>	<b>\$1,833,505</b>	<b>\$2,158,948</b>	<b>\$2,507,511</b>	<b>\$2,743,928</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$3,297,982</b>	<b>\$3,421,085</b>	<b>\$3,599,730</b>	<b>\$3,787,550</b>	<b>\$3,963,638</b>
<b>Operational subsidy required BEFORE depreciation</b>	<b>\$1,768,061</b>	<b>\$1,587,580</b>	<b>\$1,440,782</b>	<b>\$1,280,039</b>	<b>\$1,219,710</b>
Depreciation A	\$922,365	\$922,365	\$922,365	\$922,365	\$922,365
Depreciation B	\$515,297	\$515,297	\$515,297	\$515,297	\$515,297
<b>Subsidy Required - combined operational and depreciation</b>	<b>\$3,205,723</b>	<b>\$3,025,242</b>	<b>\$2,878,444</b>	<b>\$2,717,701</b>	<b>\$2,657,373</b>

The cost to Council is estimated at \$1,219,710 in Year 5 (before depreciation). While overheads and staffing costs are increased by the larger scale of the Centre, these are offset by the availability of more spaces to hire, and by hiring charges that reflect the cost of providing first rate facilities. The figures above include the Willis and Courtyard rooms as their operating costs are included in the Centre's overall budgets.

The hire charges assumed in this report allow for a 20% discount on the commercial rate for community NFP organisations.

Looking to the longer-term the asset management costs of a redeveloped Centre will include periodic refurbishment, and replacement or upgrading of technical equipment. Over a 25-year period it could be anticipated that a refurbishment would be necessary to maintain a high quality of customer service, as well as more frequent upgrading of technical equipment. Routine repairs and maintenance of the building and equipment are provided for in the financial model outlined above.

## 7. Financing the Development/ Opportunities

### 7.1 Capital Costs

Most local government-developed cultural facilities are financed predominantly by local governments themselves. There are examples of new or redeveloped facilities securing support from State Government and, exceptionally, from Federal Government. In Victoria the Clocktower in Moonee Ponds received support for redevelopment from the Community Support Fund (CSF), supplementing the resources devoted by Council. More recently, Footscray Community Arts Centre received support of \$2.5m under the CSF, supplemented by \$330,000 under the Arts in the Suburbs program. The Drum, Dandenong secured \$5m. However, the support available through normal officer channels from State Government is typically less than \$500,000.

Larger contributions from State Government result from lobbying and advocacy at a political level, and are subject to the prevailing policy priorities of the day. Recent emphasis has been on investment in regional locations (The Cube, Wodonga, c\$12m; Wangaratta Performing Arts Centre, c\$10m) rather than outer-metro locations.

Whitehorse has the benefit of well-established demand, a track record for commitment to the arts and specifically to sustaining the operational costs of a performing arts and entertainment centre. The current study, addressing normal requirements of a Business Case, also provides a solid foundation for building the case for support. However, support from the State will require advocating and building the case for support with State Government members and officers.

The private sector may also play a modest part in contributing to the cost of the development. However, it is rare for local facilities to secure more than \$2m to \$3m, and then as a consequence of sustained and strategic effort. The existing ownership by local government is a disadvantage in this regard – the most successful private initiatives have tended to be independent of Government. There are exceptions, The Brolga Theatre, Maryborough (Queensland) was financed through a four-way funding partnership between Local, State and Federal governments, and a successful private sector campaign.

### 7.2 Operating Costs

Costs and revenues for the redeveloped Whitehorse Centre have been outlined above. A conservative approach has been adopted towards business partnerships, sponsorship and philanthropy. As the Centre's program evolves and expands within an enhanced facility there will be opportunities for private sector support and partnerships which have not existed previously. Community programs, outreach and education programs all create opportunities for philanthropic support – provided the venue has the personnel to pursue these opportunities. Equally, a more intensive main-stage and studio program will create opportunities for business and education partnerships.

Both State and Federal Government may be a source of support for strands of the Centre's program. Creative Victoria's programs may benefit audience development, program development, industry development and organisational capacity-building, as well as project work with specific sections of the community. The Australia Council's programs include support for community partnerships, for Aboriginal arts, for artist-development and other initiatives. Both agencies' programs change over time. Venues which maintain good communication with these agencies reap rewards with financing of a richer program than they could otherwise afford.

## 8. Action Plan

The following is a proposed action plan template to progress the development of this project.

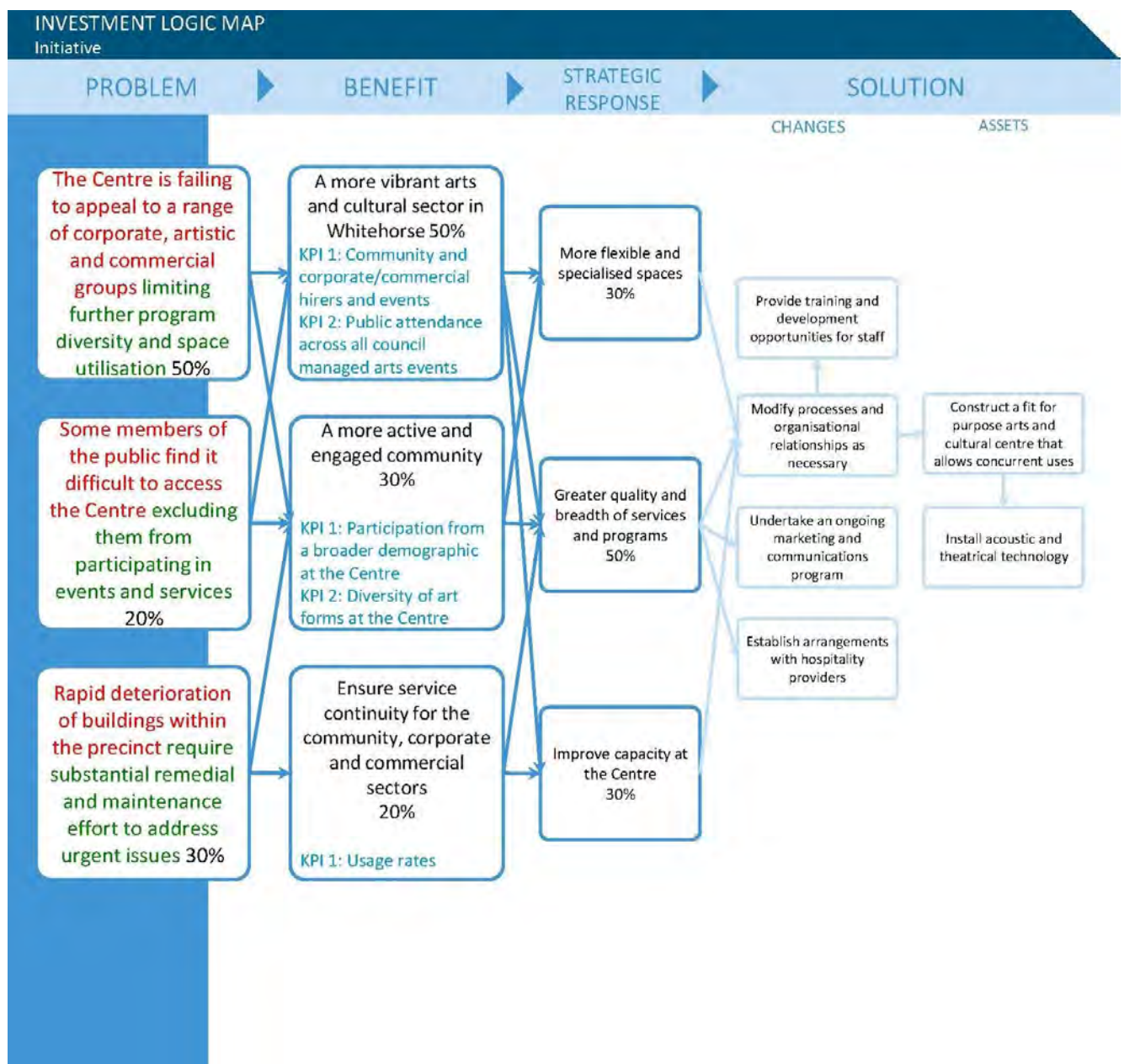
Action	Timeline
<b>Leadership and Transitional Arrangements</b>	
Confirm composition and terms of reference for continuing Project Control Group	
Confirm corporate structure, leadership and project management arrangements	
Confirm project monitoring and review processes	
Confirm operator arrangements for the Centre (e.g. in-house, contracted out)	
If operated in-house, agree management structure model for redeveloped Centre	
Confirm appointment of Centre Coordinator (if post being recontested)	
<b>Funding (capital)</b>	
Confirm funding targets	
Build fundraising group – Council and private sector	
Undertake feasibility study to quantify potential private sector contributions	
Prepare funding case material from Business Plan and other documentation	
Present initial funding case to State and Federal Government representatives, and initiate cultivation process	
Present initial funding case to major potential private donors, and initiate cultivation process	
Maintain communications strategy in support of public and private sector funding	
<b>Program Development</b>	
Confirm program parameters for existing Centre during construction period	
Confirm future program policies and access strategies	
Establish partner protocols: agree linkage to education and access programmes, and benefits to be offered to future partners	
Confirm residency arrangements (Utassy and others)	
Agree program policy framework	
Advance negotiations with potential users and draft usage agreements	
Confirm method for identifying hirers who enjoy priority booking arrangements, and terms on which these benefits will be retained	
Agree curatorial and management arrangements for any exhibition spaces and public domain (general public areas)	
Review education and public program functions	
Full assessment of sponsor and donor potential to support future programme	
Plan re-opening celebration events, and launch programme	
<b>Business Planning and Operations</b>	
Prepare draft Service Level Agreement between Centre and City Council	

Confirm nature and management of commercial elements (e.g. catering, retail)	
Confirm hiring charges, contra charges and booking arrangements	
Revised consolidated cashflow projections (capital and revenue) to four years beyond re-opening	
Revise sensitivity analysis in light of any emergent risks	
Produce full three-year or five-year Strategic Plan and short-term Operational Plan	
Financial reporting systems reviewed	
Customer service systems reviewed	
Administrative/supplier systems reviewed	
<b>Marketing and Development</b>	
Confirm approved spokespersons during development process	
Agree key points for press briefings	
Develop communications strategy for period through to re-opening	
Develop marketing and communications strategy for period from re-opening	
Briefing session for cultural, educational and commercial organisations (first of several)	
Agree feedback mechanisms from public and users during development period	
Detailed marketing strategies and budgets to underpin each service strand during operational period	
Confirm nature of development/fund-raising function (operational)	
<b>Design Development and Site Issues</b>	
Establish a Design and Construction Stage Action Program for implementation by relevant parties.	
Conduct further site investigations and confirm location	
Appoint Design Team experienced in cultural and theatre design and delivery	
Approve nature of artists' involvement and public art strategy/commissioning strategy.	
Conduct further Schematic Design stage consultation with stakeholders / users to confirm requirements.	
Confirm spatial allocations and functional relationships	
Present draft design to industry representatives and potential hirers	
Agree final Schematic Design	
Obtain, consider and approve Design development Cost Plan B	
Lodge Development Application	
Design Development (in parallel with Development Application)	
Obtain, consider and approve Design development Cost Plan C	
Contract Documentation	
Bill of Quantities	
Obtain, consider and approve Contract Documentation Cost Plan D / Pre-tender	

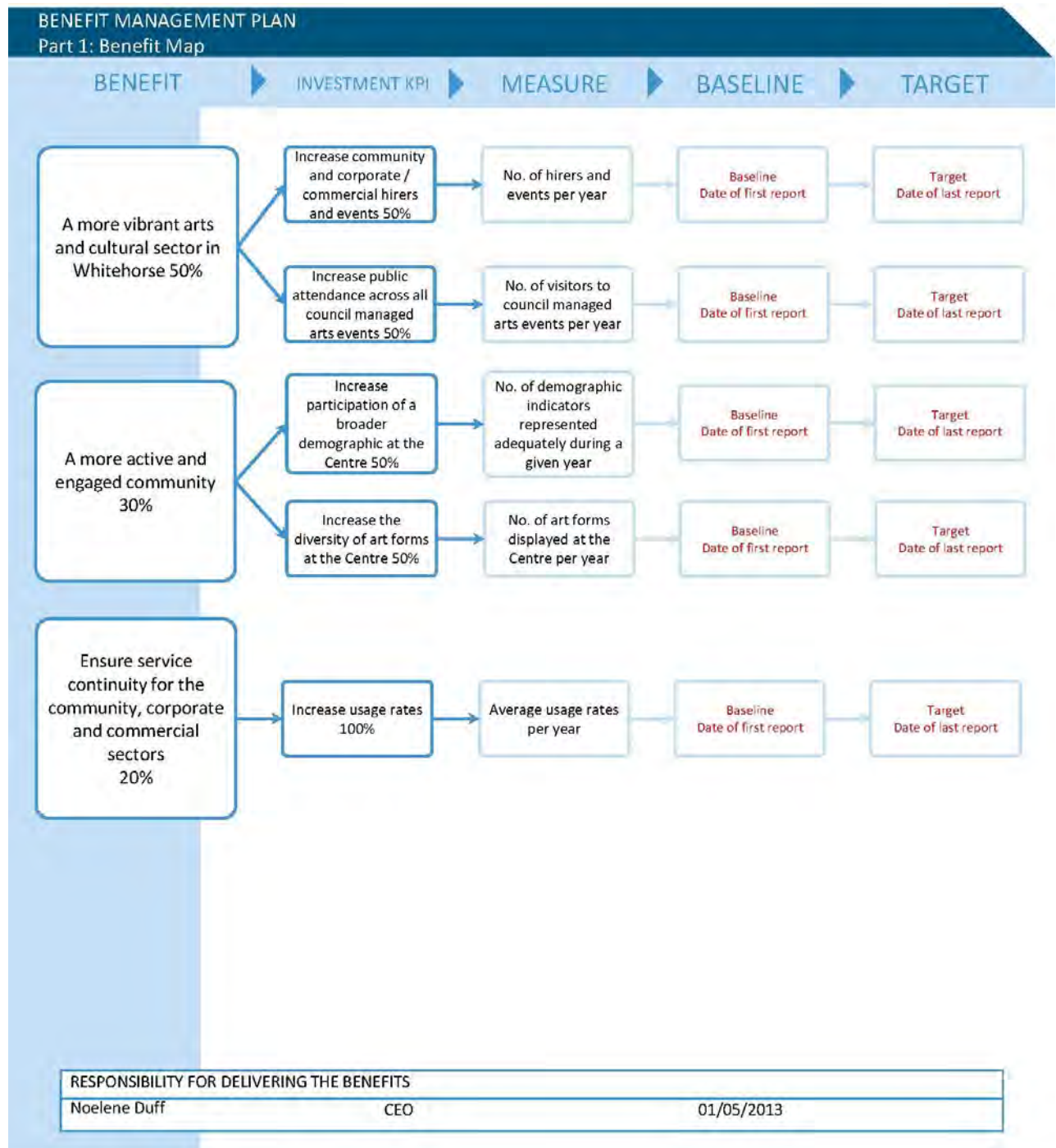


Estimate	
Tender Construction Works, let Contract assuming works are on budget	
Commence Construction on site	
Complete Construction	
Handover / Commissioning Period	
One year monitoring of facility performance by the Design Team with quarterly reporting on actual against projected building performance (e.g. energy, water consumption, functionality, safety, changeover) in addition to Defects Liability.	
<b>Human Resources Development</b>	
Draft new Centre Manager duty statement and delegations	
Confirm staffing posts and salary levels	
Agree recruitment and selection criteria and procedures	
Draft employment policies, terms and conditions of employment	
Initiate recruitment of Centre Manager (if recontested)	
Initiation of remaining staff recruitment	
Casual/part-time staff pool refreshed	
Initiation of volunteer recruitment program	
Pre-launch training program	

# Appendix A: Investment Logic Map and Benefit Management Plan



## Benefit Management Plan



# Appendix B: Policy and Prior Work Review

## Summary

This document describes some of Whitehorse City Council's key policies and strategies, and indicates their relevance for the Whitehorse Centre redevelopment. It also summarises any prior work undertaken towards the redevelopment. It includes:

1. Overarching Plans
  - 1.1 Council Vision 2013-2023
  - 1.2 City of Whitehorse Council Plan 2014-2018
  - 1.3 Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan: Health & Wellbeing in Whitehorse 2013-2017
  - 1.4 Municipal Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2014
2. Strategy Documents
  - 2.1 Whitehorse Arts and Cultural Strategy – 2014-2022
  - 2.3 Whitehorse Economic Development Strategy 2014-2019
  - 2.4 Whitehorse Positive Ageing Strategy 2012-2017
  - 2.5 Whitehorse Reconciliation Action Plan 2011-2015
  - 2.6 Whitehorse Young People's Strategy: Living and Thriving in Whitehorse
3. Research and Consultation
  - 3.1 Capital Works Consultation/ Feedback Document for the Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment
  - 3.2 Research Report: Annual Resident's Survey 2012
  - 3.3 An Audit and Market Assessment of Arts, Cultural, and Meeting Venues in Eastern Melbourne 2011
4. 2012-2013 Annual Report

## 1. Overarching Plans

### 1.1 Council Vision 2013-2023

The Council Vision is a high level strategic document. It articulates the aspirations of the community about the future. It is a broad set of statements about the type of city the community wants to see in ten years including high level goals which describe how this might be achieved.

This is complemented by a set of guiding principles to ensure consistency in how Council plans and delivers on the Vision in the long term. The Vision as articulated in this document is:

*We aspire to be a healthy, vibrant, prosperous and sustainable community supported by strong leadership and community partnerships.*

The City of Whitehorse will be:

- One of the most liveable and sustainable municipalities in Melbourne
- Recognised for the quality of its open space and natural environment

- A community rich in culture and diversity that is inclusive, healthy and vibrant
- A well governed city that has a healthy and strong relationship with the community
- A municipality with a prosperous and well supported local economy

These aspirations form the basis of five key strategic directions in the Council Vision which commits Whitehorse City Council to a set of priorities for future action. These are:

- Support a healthy, vibrant, inclusive and diverse community
- Maintain and enhance our built environment to ensure a liveable and sustainable city
- Protect and enhance our open space and natural environments
- Strategic leadership and open and accessible government
- Support a healthy local economy

Each Strategic Direction is supported by a set of Strategic Goals and Guiding Principles. Those that are relevant for the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre are articulated in the table below. Because of its broad community and regional reach; facilitation of partnerships, collaboration and inclusivity; and its opportunities for innovation and sustainability, it is envisaged that each of these goals and guiding principles will heavily inform the Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment.

*Table One: Strategic Directions and Goals Relevant to the Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment*

Strategic Direction	Goals	Guiding Principles
1	<p>Accessible, inclusive and integrated services and facilities that meet community needs</p> <p>A range of programs and initiatives that facilitate wellbeing and connectedness</p> <p>Recognition and celebration of arts, culture, recreation, sport, leisure and community wellbeing</p>	<p>Services and structures that reflect the dynamic, multicultural and intergenerational nature of the community</p> <p>Practices and processes that encourage participation, increase community access and promote equity for all through the fair distribution of resources, services, facilities, programs and opportunities</p> <p>Active involvement of the community through community consultation and collaborative partnerships</p> <p>The development of services, programs and initiatives strengthens wellbeing through social inclusion and connectedness</p> <p>Health encompasses physical, mental and social wellbeing and acknowledges the importance of access to community, arts, cultural, recreational, leisure and social infrastructure in maintaining the health of the community as a whole</p>
2	<p>A sound planning framework with high levels of consultation with the community</p> <p>Planned development in consultation with the community</p> <p>An accessible and well-connected city</p> <p>Flexible, quality amenities and services that support the needs of individuals and</p>	<p>Commitment to sustainable practices in accordance with the Whitehorse Sustainability Strategy 2008-2013</p> <p>Actively engage the community in decision making processes</p> <p>Planning that is equitable, efficient and responsive to both neighbourhood character and community needs</p>



	the community Well maintained infrastructure and community facilities Leader in environmental sustainability	Embrace creativity and innovation in developing facilities and services to meet community needs
3	Recognition of the importance of quality green and accessible open space available to all ages and abilities A natural environment that has been well maintained and enhanced	Open spaces that are community friendly and accessible by all
4	An engaged and involved community A community that is well informed and connected Strong Council and community partnerships High standards of customer service and service delivery Sound financial management	The community should be both sufficiently informed and able to contribute to Council's decision-making process Council is open to public scrutiny and community feedback Wide range of mediums used to communicate with and inform the community Strong levels of community engagement including strong collaborative partnership arrangements Innovation in how the community is engaged, involved, and informed.
5	A thriving and sustainable local economy that provides a comprehensive range of products and services to the community Strong regional connections that enhance the local economy	Support for and working with local business Conducive to investment attraction and promotion of Whitehorse opportunities Strategies that set out clear directions Representing the interests locally and regionally through partnerships and advocacy at regional, state, and federal level

## 1.2 City of Whitehorse Council Plan 2014-2018

The Council Vision (see above) should be read in conjunction with the Council Plan, which is the instrument through which the Council Vision is translated into strategic objectives, strategies, strategic indicators and actions. It is more specific and focused on what might be achieved in a four year timeframe that contributes to or helps to achieve the aspirational statements in the Council Vision.

Council's Strategic Objectives over the next four financial years are:

- Appropriate multi-purpose programs, services, facilities and initiatives that promote and deliver wellbeing and inclusive connected communities
- Maintain, develop, and enhance our built environment
- Increase in the amount of quality open space and improvement in the sustainability of our natural environment
- Strong leadership and governance in partnership with the community and supported through regional collaboration and cooperation
- Dynamic local economic environment that is regionally connected

Strategies to achieve each of these directions, and strategic indicators are given for each strategic direction. Actions over four years towards achieving each strategy are also given. Some of these are directly relevant to the Whitehorse Centre redevelopment. These are articulated in the table below.

Table Two: Strategies Relevant to the Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment

Strategic Objective	Strategies	Strategic Indicators	Actions Over Four Years
1	<p>Continue to develop existing Council facilities accessible and adaptable to inter-generational and diverse and multicultural community users</p> <p>Promote benefits of flexible, multipurpose spaces</p> <p>Promote services, programs and facilities to meet the needs of the community</p> <p>Further strengthen partnerships to implement policies, plans and projects that deliver positive outcomes for the community</p> <p>Continue to provide financial and in-kind support to community groups and organisations</p>	<p>Community feedback through evaluation programs</p> <p>Program or service participation rates</p> <p>Number of visitors and users to facilities including demographic spread in relation to accessibility</p> <p>Evaluation of annual action plans, strategic plans and policies</p> <p>Level of attendance at Council events and celebrations</p>	<p>Continue to explore opportunities to facility use is optimised</p> <p>Explore opportunities to ensure existing Council facilities are accessible to inter-generational and diverse community needs</p> <p>Continued provision of Council's Annual Community Grants program</p> <p>Continued development of major events and celebrations with the Whitehorse community</p>
2	<p>Continue to maintain and enhance Council's physical assets for long term sustainability, safety, public amenity and appearance</p> <p>Continue to improve utilisation of Council assets including optimal multipurpose usage</p> <p>Continue to encourage sustainable and quality retrofit of existing facilities</p> <p>In partnership with community and key stakeholders, develop policy and principles that guide responsible and appropriate development</p> <p>Improve shared civic open spaces</p>	<p>Review and update existing asset management plans</p> <p>Increase number of enhancements to the built environment that encourage walking, cycling, accessibility, and liveability</p> <p>Number of Council owned buildings retrofitted with Environmentally Sustainable Design principles</p>	<p>Annual asset benchmarking against other Councils</p> <p>Incorporate principles of accessibility, walkability and liveable neighbourhoods into structure planning and policy development</p>
3	<p>Continue to develop a municipality which retains, enhances and increases open space and sustainable streetscapes</p>	<p>Support and work with the community in protecting and enhancing natural assets</p>	
4	<p>Communicate decisions through a wide range of mediums that are accessible</p> <p>Further strengthen key financial management strategies that promote efficiency and accountability</p> <p>Continue to advocate and address the needs of Whitehorse's community, including those with CALD</p>	<p>Enhanced broad participation in coordinated community consultation processes</p> <p>Positive community feedback</p> <p>Best practice in financial management and governance</p>	<p>Adopt a whole of Council communication strategy that links with the Community Engagement Framework</p>



	backgrounds, people with a disability and older people		
5	Support the development of a sustainable, growing local economy	Facilitate increased information sharing methods Establishment of regional partnerships	Regional collaboration and cooperation in creating employment opportunities Support tertiary education institutions to have stronger links with local businesses

### 1.3 Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan: Health & Wellbeing in Whitehorse 2013-2017

Council's Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan is Council's fifth plan for the area and represents Council's long term commitment and endeavours towards improving the health and wellbeing of the municipality. It supersedes the Whitehorse Community Wellbeing Plan 2009-2013, and is based on extensive consultation with residents, visitors and workers, as well as partner organisations. The plan is strongly aligned with the Whitehorse Council Vision 2013-2023 and the Whitehorse Council Plan 2013-2017 (see above), with which it shares the following strategic objectives for Whitehorse:

- 1. Support a healthy, vibrant, inclusive and diverse community**
- 2. Maintain and enhance our built environment to ensure a liveable and sustainable city**
- 3. Protect and enhance our open space and natural environments**
- 4. Provide strategic leadership and an open and accessible government**
- 5. Support a healthy local economy**

The Health and Wellbeing Plan identifies five priorities for action in Whitehorse, these are:

- 1. Creating safe environments**
- 2. Reducing harm from alcohol and other drugs**
- 3. Increasing active learning**
- 4. Supporting healthy eating**
- 5. Promoting mental wellbeing**

The Plan includes a health demographic profile and a number of action areas for each priority, reflecting the information collected through research and consultation. For example, under Priority 1, Creating Safe Environments, are the following key action areas:

- Safe public spaces
- Family violence
- Injury protection

It outlines key priorities and objectives to implement over the next four years to improve the health and wellbeing of the municipality. An action plan will be developed each year identifying specific projects and activities Council will undertake to work towards this goal.

### 1.4 Municipal Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2014

The current Action Plan component of Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017 outlines the key priorities and objectives to implement for 2014. This includes, under strategic

objective 1. (Support a healthy, vibrant, inclusive and diverse community), the following indicator relating to arts and culture:

*Provide opportunities for increased social connections through participation in arts and culture, recreation, sporting and other community activities.*

Some of the action items identified in the Plan under this indicator include:

- Support and work together with Council departments to ensure all information relating to events and activities are promoted widely to the Whitehorse community in a timely, user friendly, easy to understand manner
- Develop an accessible event and festival guide, including site specific information relating to access
- Program the Midweek Matinee Series at the Whitehorse Centre to service an older community and increase social connectedness
- Deliver FreeZA events in Whitehorse to provide young people the opportunity to attend affordable and accessible music and cultural events

## 2. Strategies

### 2.1 Whitehorse City Council Arts and Cultural Strategy 2014-2022

The Whitehorse Arts and Cultural Strategy aims to be a research driven strategic Arts and Cultural Plan for Council that delivers organisational goals and incorporates the needs of the broader community, as well as delivering outcomes that will influence planning and policy across a wide range of Council departments.

The Strategy is informed by comprehensive research and consultation, including review and analysis of Council programs and arts organisations, government policies, strategies and research, as well as direct consultation with Council, community and industry. It is a 'companion document' to the Whitehorse Centre Feasibility Study and Whitehorse Arts and Cultural Strategy Market Research and Consultation Findings (see 2.2 below).

The Vision for the City of Whitehorse that drives this strategy is:

*We aspire to be a creative community that is vibrant, diverse and engaged through our arts, culture and heritage.*

Two major themes, or pillars, form the foundation for articulating the Strategy, and for arts and culture in Whitehorse more broadly. These are:

Pillar 1: Arts and Cultural Facilities and Programs

Pillar 2: Community Cultural Development

The priority areas in each pillar are tabled below:

<b>Pillar 1: Arts and Cultural Facilities and Programs</b>	<b>Pillar 2: Community Cultural Development</b>
Facility, program and provision gap	Community Spirit and Pride of Place
Box Hill Community Arts Centre and its Programs	Art Collection Development and Management
Box Hill Town Hall	Arts Industry Support
Festival and Events	Cultural Development Support Services
Heritage	Grant Programs

Whitehorse Art Space	
Whitehorse Centre	

Issues are identified and recommendations made under each priority area. Pillar 1 Priority 1 (Section 11.2.1) identifies facility gaps and shortfalls, including the need for:

- Additional Whitehorse Centre performance space
- Additional Whitehorse Centre studio
- Additional exhibition space (for showing the municipal collection and for artists to show their work)
- A lack of places to see and perform music
- A full service premium function capability

Recommendations made in light of these issues include (amongst others):

- The Whitehorse Centre business case (this report) to review the need for increased and accessible performance space, rehearsal space, studio and workshop space, exhibition space and music performance opportunities
- Explore alternate gallery space opportunities in the local area for community exhibitions that are not prepared by Council

Pillar 1 Priority 7 (Section 11.8) focuses on issues and recommendations relating to the Whitehorse Centre. Issues identified include:

- Regular centre users' concerns about car parking, food and beverage facilities, overcrowding, level of fees and charges, and available studio/ workshop space
- Adequacy of current facilities including size of theatre and function facilities
- The need to develop a 'future plan' for the Whitehorse Centre
- Programming gaps at the Centre including outreach and youth programs

Recommendations made in relation to these issues include:

- Implement the Council-endorsed finding and actions from the 2013-2014 Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Project
- Devise a performing arts curatorial plan that reflects the diverse programming needs and aspirations for the community
- Investigate the programming and residency opportunities of the Centre to encourage community engagement and well-being for current and future audiences both within the Centre and through outreach programs

Issues and recommendations identified under Pillar 2 – Community Cultural Development – focus on enabling the Whitehorse community to work creatively together to gain a sense of collective identity, as well as a sense of belonging, through the coordination and delivery of festivals and events, facilities, art collection, heritage services, grants and funding.

## 2.2 Whitehorse Economic Development Strategy 2014-2019

The Economic Development Strategy 2014-2019 sets the agenda for Council's ongoing support and direction of business activity to ensure a strong economic future for the city. It expands on the Whitehorse City Council Plan 2013-2017 (and annual budget), in particular strategic objective 5. Support a Healthy Local Economy.

The EDS 2014-2019 vision for the City of Whitehorse is 'Whitehorse: Gateway to the East':

*A gateway to Melbourne's east, with a high degree of self-sufficiency, yet well connected to the regional economy. It is a place of opportunity and innovation, with a skilled workforce and a diversity of employment opportunities, excellent economic prospects and a relaxed, enjoyable lifestyle.*

*The City's efficient infrastructure and well planned built form facilitate metropolitan equivalent employment rates, creating opportunities for all.*

The EDS 2014-2019 identifies five Strategic Project Areas as high level action areas, these are:

- Retail Activity Centres
- Box Hill Central Activities Area
- Local Business Development
- Regional Development and Investment Attraction
- Skilled People and Business

An implementation plan is outlined for each of these action areas, with reference to the overall vision and organised under the four key mandates of local government economic development. These are:

- Responsible leadership and advocacy
- Facilitating connections
- Helping business grow and prosper
- Promoting sustainable development

### **2.3 Whitehorse Positive Ageing Strategy 2012-2017**

The Whitehorse Positive Ageing Strategy sets out Council's vision for an age-friendly community where the physical, social, and mental well-being of older people is promoted and strengthened. The positive ageing framework has been adopted by many Victorian local governments to guide their work in promoting and strengthening the well-being of older people. The Strategy's development process included background research, a review of policy documents, and stakeholder consultation.

The overarching goals of the Positive Ageing Strategy are:

1. Promote the physical and mental health of older people
2. Provide physical infrastructure that supports positive ageing
3. Provide information, health and support services
4. Encourage greater community involvement and connection
5. Improve older people's access to essential goods and services
6. Monitor and respond to changing needs, circumstances and policy directions

Each strategic objective is accompanied by several strategies that outline the actions, projects, directions and initiatives that will contribute to the implementation of the Positive Ageing Strategy.

Strategic objectives relevant to the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre include:

- Explore opportunities for intergenerational projects and activities
- Upgrade community facilities in line with Council's capital works program to be more age friendly
- Improve access to buildings, pathways, parks and public spaces

## **2.4 Whitehorse Reconciliation Action Plan 2011-2015**

The Wurundjeri-Balluk Tribe are the traditional custodians of the land on which the City of Whitehorse is located. The Reconciliation Action Plan is a statement of Council's aims for achieving Indigenous equality. It identifies a number of areas of focus and priorities actions in these areas. The Plan was developed in association with the Whitehorse Reconciliation Advisory Committee.

There are three key focus areas: relationships; respect; and opportunities. Action items are organised under these. Those particularly relevant to the development of the Whitehorse Centre include:

- Relationships: respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members, community organisations and networks, to improve overall community wellbeing
- Information provided at Council service sites on local Aboriginal community and events
- Provide regular sporting and recreational partnership opportunities
- Respect: acknowledges the relationship that Aboriginal people have with their traditional land; respect for cultural traditions
- Promotion of local Aboriginal history and traditions
- Annual day or week of celebration/ recognition of work towards reconciliation
- Annual events held during NAIDOC Week to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Education around culture, traditions, and cultural competency
- Opportunities:
  - Engage with business to provide employment opportunities across the municipality
  - Include Aboriginal engagement strategy as part of the broader community engagement framework presaged in 2010 Annual Report
  - Investigate opportunities to use Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers

The Plan also outlines a process for tracking and reporting on actions.

## **2.5 Young People's Strategy: Living and Thriving in Whitehorse**

Four-year strategy aimed at young people 12-24 years old and developed in consultation with an advisory group comprised of Council members and local community agencies who work with young people; parents; and members of the community.

Information gathered through this community consultation, as well as policy and demographic research, identified five key priority areas. These are:

- I'm respected: young people are respected, valued and supported by the greater community
- I belong: young people feel connected and have a sense of belonging in the community
- I like where I live: young people are proud of where they live, work, and socialize and feel safe in these surrounds
- I like who I am: young people feel good about themselves and each other
- I have the opportunity to grow: young people have access to a diverse range of options, activities and opportunities

These five priority areas serve as measures of how well the community is fulfilling the needs of young people in Whitehorse. A range of goals are outlined beneath each priority area and for each of these goals, actions, partners, and Council roles are outlined. Goals relevant to the development of the Whitehorse Centre include:

- Indicator 1, Goal 1.1: Acknowledge and celebrate our young people's contributions to the community by facilitating and overseeing youth designed and organised showcase events
- Indicator 1, Goal 1.2: Ensure there are innovative and meaningful opportunities for young people to make valuable contributions to council and the community by exploring methods to attract, recruit and retain young people to volunteer in a variety of settings (including arts and cultural activities)
- Indicator 1, Goal 1.3: Ensure there are a diverse range of opportunities for young people to have a voice, artistically, creatively and politically
- Indicator 2, Goal 2.1: Provide consistent and easily available information about services, events, and activities in and around the community that is accessible and understood by all young people
- Indicator 3, Goal 3.1: Ensure young people have a say about the design and amenity of their surrounds
- Indicator 3, Goal 3.2: Provide interesting and diverse places and spaces in the community for our young people to socialise, study, play and learn
- Indicator 5, Goal 5.3: Ensure young people are aware of, and have access to, a diverse range of stimulating activities and learning opportunities in the community

### 3. Consultation

#### **3.1 Capital Works Consultation/ Feedback Document for the Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment, August 2012**

This document outlines capital works items for consideration in the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre from the perspective of different departments within Council including (amongst others) Traffic, Engineering, Facilities Maintenance, Urban Design, Sustainability, Emergency Management, and Metro Access. Where relevant, different departments provide commentary on all areas under consideration, these are:

- Traffic: parking, access, traffic flow, signage, drop off zones, loading, pedestrian management, traffic management and a traffic masterplan)
- Engineering: pedestrian management, vehicle management, access, external civil consideration (i.e. flooding, lead contamination), sustainability (re-use of stormwater, urban design guideline requirements), lighting requirements, drainage
- Property: existing property (boundaries, deeds, easements), sheds
- Sustainability: power options, water managements, gas, solar power, recycling, materials



- Urban design: site leisure requirements including seating, BBQ, and shelter, open space considerations for facility (footprint, festivals), zoning, signage (wayfinding), pedestrian movement, exterior finishes/ textures (in particular, consideration of ESD principles for material usage and building orientation and site design, consider green wall concepts, and maximize potential views to adjacent landscapes, landscaping, and artwork (in particular the need to create an arts precinct within and surrounding the vicinity of the Whitehorse Centre that includes public art<sup>5</sup>)
- Metro Access: fittings, toilets (need for ambulant toilets and provision of hoist), audio and captioning capabilities, access to all areas, colour and texture contrasts for the vision impaired, wheelchair charge battery points, precinct lighting, service counters, wheelchair access
- Parks Wide: planting/ vegetation, access, landscaping, irrigation systems
- Facilities Maintenance: plant/ material maintenance, finishes, roofing systems, vandalism management, services, equipment replacement (no comments made by Council on this), durability of products, warranties, defects liability, handover, sign off
- Risk: overall (risk register to be developed), tenders, contractor going bust
- City Works: lighting, footpaths, signage, vandalism, precinct cleaning, finishes/ material, access
- Building Surveying: permit requirements (no comments made), BCA (need to ensure the development of the Centre and the precinct is fully compliant with legislative intent and standard requirements – Council should strive to create the best possible venue with the greatest access), Section J requirements (should be aiming to achieve beyond best practice in sustainability – insulation levels, glazing, energy efficiency, passive solar design, etc), fire regulations (reduce reliance on use of fire stairs as only exit pathway), ESM's (no comments)
- Emergency Management: A floor plan that is on one level/ not too many stairs was proposed, but sustainability commented that this would greatly restrict the design of the centre. Other considerations include flexible room space, computer access, general access and shower facilities
- Planning: planning permit requirements not required, car parking requirements are 0.3 spaces for each person
- Parks, Planning and Recreation: open space considerations, master plan for the precinct (needs updating, does not currently indicate any changes to the Whitehorse Centre footprint), recreational requirements, zoning, planting/ vegetation

Commentary on the Whitehorse Centre from internal staff was also collated regarding the Theatre (design and functionality), Operations, and Functions. Some key points below:

### **Theatre**

- Good acoustics, leg room, visibility from Control Room, sight lines, stage surface, and access to dressing rooms
- Insufficient wing space, flooring, dressing rooms, loading dock access, fly tower height and access
- Need for wheelchair lift and better disability access
- Need for larger wings on both sides of stage
- Need for loading dock with larger turning circle and more storage

### **Operations**

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<sup>5</sup> It was noted that the Whitehouse Centre does not currently present itself as a complex for the arts, p18.



- Desire to future proof the complex as much as possible
- Need for large foyer to accommodate all theatre patrons
- Need for any architectural or artistic features of design take into consideration maintenance and cleaning
- Need for a green room
- Need for additional rehearsal, workshop, and office space

### **Functions**

- Function room with storage for furniture and equipment, high ceilings, large dance floor, server/ bar connected to kiosk, mobile bars and coffee stations, spot lights on art works to be part of lighting matrix, power spread around the room for 'expo' use
- Commercial kitchen with wet area, prep area, and dry storage

### **3.2 Annual Residents' Survey, November 2012**

The City of Whitehorse has undertaken annual surveys since 2000. In 2012, 1250 randomly selected residents were posted a survey with a covering letter and a reply-paid envelope. A total of 365 residents returned their completed surveys (29% response rate). Respondents were asked to rate the importance of local services using a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is critical; 3 is quite important, and 5 is not important at all. They were also asked to rate their satisfaction with Council's performance for delivery of each service where 1 = excellent; 3 = adequate; and 5 = needs a lot of improvement. Questions were asked about specific service issues, contact with Council, communication with residents, and overall satisfaction.

The profile of respondents was 59% female and 41% male with a good distribution of age groupings. 72% of respondents were born in Australia and 43% lived as a couple or single adult with children at home. 85% currently owned or are in the process of buying their own home.

Key findings from consultation include:

- 90% of respondents rated their overall satisfaction with Whitehorse Council as adequate or better
- 85% of respondents rated their satisfaction with communication from Council as adequate or better
- 95% of respondents rated their quality of life in Whitehorse as adequate or better; with 94% feeling that Council's contribution was important to their quality of life assessment
- 37% of respondents thoughts Whitehorse's appearance had improved; 55% felt it had stayed the same
- The top ten services of most importance to residents were regular garbage collection; regular recycling services; Council's food safety monitoring; street lighting; footpath maintenance; road surfaces; traffic management in residential streets; maintenance of parks and open spaces; libraries; general home care for older people

### **3.3 An Audit and Market Assessment of Arts, Cultural and Meeting Venues in Eastern Melbourne: Report by SGL and Outside the Square Creative Consulting, 2011**

In 2011, SGL and Outside the Square Creative Consulting undertook an audit and market assessment of arts, cultural, and meeting venues in eastern Melbourne. The project aimed to improve knowledge and information about current facilities. It also sought to gain a sense of the need for, and viability of, a large scale events venue, following on from a consultation undertaken by the Melbourne East RDA Committee which indicated that there is potentially a need for a large scale venue in the region.

The report found that:

- There are a range of facilities in Melbourne's eastern region ranging in size and quality from 100 to 1598 seats
- Within this range, 102 facilities provide for arts, culture, meetings, functions and events
- There was both some support and some caution regarding a large-scale (1000 capacity) venue in the region
- Municipalities were unlikely to want to spend money on a new venue outside their municipality, therefore it was suggested that the event venue be considered where an existing facility is earmarked for redevelopment. The Whitehorse Centre redevelopment was identified here, as well as Knox City and Ringwood City Central
- The preferred location for a large scale facility is the Yarra Valley region
- It is unlikely that a large scale events facility could compete easily with central city venues in the state and national conference market as the 600+ market is highly competitive
- Despite this, however, there was a strong view that there would be local demand for such a venue

The report recommended that:

- Consultation be undertaken with Tourism Victoria to determine if a large scale events facility in Melbourne's eastern region aligns with their Regional Tourism Plan<sup>6</sup>
- Consultation be undertaken with the CEO's from the seven eastern region municipal Councils to: review and discuss outcomes of the audit; identify possible partnership options; identify and possibly align with other major projects; identify possible lead roles
- A comprehensive needs and business review be undertaken by Council

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<sup>6</sup> Tourism Victoria identified the development of 'high quality large capacity accommodation, potentially integrated with a regional conference facility' as a priority in its Regional Tourism Plan 2009-2012.

## 4. City of Whitehorse Annual Report 2012-2013

### Overview

The Annual Report provides a guide to Whitehorse City Council's achievements, performance and financial management from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013. The report details how Council met the strategic objectives set out in the Vision for Whitehorse 2006-2016 and the Council Plan 2010-2016 documents. It also identifies challenges and difficulties Council has faced over the past 12 months and includes a financial report.

### Arts and Culture Services

In 2012, City of Whitehorse delivered a program including performing arts and functions at the Whitehorse Centre, visual art classes and room hire at the Box Hill Community Arts Centre, management of Box Hill Town Hall including the Whitehorse Artspace and exhibition program, Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum Complex and heritage site management, free events, markets and major festivals.

### Departmental Report – Arts and Recreation Development

This department comprises Cultural Facilities and Programs, Leisure Facilities and Parks Planning and Recreation Units.

Highlights of 2012/13 include (amongst others):

- 16,573 patrons attended professional theatre and midweek season performances at the Whitehorse Centre
- A collaborative exhibition of heritage and contemporary artworks from three local government art collections were held at the Whitehorse Artspace, Manningham Gallery and Maroondah Gallery. Visitors exceeded 2000 across the three venues
- Major conservation was conducted on key heritage works in the Whitehorse Art Collection, with a hidden drawing being discovered on the reverse of an artwork by Impressionist artist Tom Roberts
- The Whitehorse Centre conducted a highly successful professional theatre and music season with a number of sold out shows and particularly strong subscriptions sales with approximately 900 package buyers for Season 2013
- Australia Day Concert: approximately 15,000 people gathered for the concert and fireworks display. Amendments to the site plan eased access and increased the audience viewing space

Challenges identified for 2012-2013 relevant to the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre include:

- Ensuring marketing and communication of cultural services is effectively reaching its intended community
- Managing the increasing maintenance and safety fit-out requirements for ageing facilities
- Addressing the needs of changing demographics such as increasing attendance by young people at cultural activities and enabling more people with mobility issues to access programs

# Appendix C: The Whitehorse Centre Feasibility Study and Whitehorse Arts and Cultural Strategy Preliminary Market Research and Consultation Findings

## SGL and Outside the Square Creative Consulting, March 2012

In March 2012 SGL and Outside the Square Creative Consulting released a report based on consultation that began in 2010 with the purpose of providing an overview of key market research, consultation, operational reviews, and facility technical reviews for Council's six major leisure facilities. The following provides a summary of elements from this report which are particularly relevant to future development of the Whitehorse Centre.

### Demographic Profile

Findings regarding the demographic profile of the Whitehorse region include: for those born outside Australia the top five countries of birth in the area are China, United Kingdom, Malaysia, India and Greece; a review of annual income suggests that a high number of residents have access to disposable income; and approximately 8 out of 10 Whitehorse residents have access to a private vehicle. As a result, the study suggests that any facilities developed in the Whitehorse region should provide sufficient car parking facilities.

### Arts Participation

Respondents to the household survey indicated that, together, they had participated in up to sixty different arts, cultural or heritage activities in the previous 12 months, with 37% participating in performing arts, 33% in visual arts, 32% in festivals and events, 27% in music and 26% in film. The study concluded that festivals were the activity residents most frequently participate in, and therefore, that residents place a high value on community events. The similarly high attendance at performing arts activities indicates strong support for the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre to continue to provide access to these types of activities.

The majority of respondents indicated that they participated in arts and cultural activities less than monthly (22% less than monthly, 21% annually), while 13% participated in arts and cultural activities monthly, and 12% weekly.

The majority of respondents travel to arts and cultural activities by car with only a small percentage selecting public transport (4%) or cycling (1%).

### Centre User Surveys

The report included results and analysis from user surveys conducted during September 2010 at the Whitehorse Centre. A total of 200 surveys were completed, providing information on resident profile, current use of the Centre, and facilities and programs that would encourage further use. The survey was available in the foyer of the Whitehorse Centre and attendees at events were encouraged to complete it. 88.3% of respondents rated the current services and programs at the Centre as excellent or good, although 21.5% expressed dissatisfaction with car parking.

### Organisation/ Group Surveys

The results from group surveys conducted between September and December 2010 are included in the report. A total of 23 surveys were completed by arts and cultural groups, 22 were completed by broader community groups and 5 were completed by individual artists.

The key issue or challenge facing these respondents was the cost of venue hire/rent (60%). When asked to rank the services that Council could/should provide to support arts culture and heritage activity in Whitehorse, the top three priorities were identified as: grants/sponsorship for arts and cultural groups, promotion of arts, cultural, and heritage organisations, and providing a range of affordable venues for activities.

## **Focus Groups**

The results of focus groups held with key Whitehorse Centre stakeholders are also included in the report. These focus groups included Whitehorse Centre theatre groups, function user groups, both internal and external, and patrons and staff of the Centre. Focus groups were also held with staff and users of the Box Hill Community Arts Centre, the Whitehorse Art Space, Box Hill Town Hall, Schwelok Museum and the Whitehorse Arts Association. The focus groups also included participation from the Indigenous Advisory Committee, Disability Advisory Committee, Visual Arts Committee, and Whitehorse Executives and Councilors.

“The consensus from these focus groups was that the Centre is much loved and highly valued. From an audience point of view, people cited almost universally the comfort (leg room and sight lines) of the theatre as being excellent. People emphasized the importance of retaining the “intimate atmosphere” which is considered a critical aspect of the enjoyable experience of being in the audience in the Whitehorse Centre. That said, everyone agreed that the centre was in need of refurbishment.”

In regard to meeting and function rooms, it was suggested that creation of a facility that could accommodate up to 500 people with the option of splitting into 2, 3 and/or 4 rooms would be good. Most people considered that a gallery as part of the Whitehorse Centre would be a valuable addition.

Rehearsal space was identified as a gap in the current facilities at the Centre.

## **Arts and Cultural Strategy Focus Groups and Interviews**

Key issues identified by these groups included:

- Recognition that young people were a “gap” group
- Older people are the major group involved in or interested in the arts, and therefore suitable facilities for broad social/cultural activity for this group is important
- Increasing demand for access to space and programs from different cultural groups
- Importance of arts and culture to the Indigenous community as a means of community connectedness
- The importance of continued installation of public artworks, provision of ‘heritage interpretation’

## **Benchmarking**

The study undertook arts and cultural facility specific benchmarking including consultation interviews with the management of five performing arts centres that included function services and facilities. The study identified the following as key factors in determining the success of the combined theatre and function centre:

- Quality management with the ability to support and grow both sides of the business such that they are complementary/ beneficial to each other
- Good, well managed catering contracts
- Efficient, well designed, built for purpose facilities that have sufficient/ matching support spaces for both the theatre and the functions sides of the business
- Quality, easily accessible and sufficient back of house facilities
- Administration offices that are easily accessible and can accommodate all the staff
- Accessible loading docks
- Accessible, well located, built for purpose AND enough storage
- Well-equipped facilities that are in a good state of maintenance/ repair. Capacity to upgrade equipment and/ or facilities regularly is important



# Appendix D: Positive Solutions Whitehorse Centre Survey Analysis 2013

## 1. Overview

Online surveys were issued to lists of key stakeholders supplied by Whitehorse City Council in the following categories:

- Hirers and Community Organisations
- Arts and Cultural Organisations
- Schools
- Businesses

Numerous points of contact were made with stakeholders in an effort to secure survey responses:

- 11 June: Contacted all stakeholders with information about the project and a link to their respective survey
- 18 June: Reminder email sent to stakeholders who were yet to complete the survey
- 25 June (due date for responses): Final reminder to those who hadn't completed the survey
- 28 June: Phoned 20 schools to follow up on survey responses
- 1 July: Phoned an additional seven schools to follow up on survey responses
- 5 July: additional reminder email sent to businesses

Responses from schools and businesses were not as good as hoped, despite concerted efforts (6 out of 64 schools, and 6 out of 24 businesses, completed surveys).

Schools were difficult to reach via phone, with at least four citing that they did not wish to be consulted. There has been discussion between Whitehorse City Council and Positive Solutions regarding the potential engagement of schools in a separate consultation exercise at a later stage (e.g. one or two round-table discussions), presenting outline proposals to the schools to stimulate discussion. Schools utilisation levels from other Melbourne arts facility studies can also be drawn upon to supplement findings.

With 34 responses from hirers and community groups and 13 responses from arts and cultural organisations, along with a further 36 interviews held with key producers and other stakeholders, solid data has been collected and will confidently support the design brief.

This report analyses survey responses, with interviews summarised in a separate report.

## Survey Participants Overview

Online surveys were collected from 34 hirers and community organisations from a total of 63 organisations contacted. These organisations are regular hirers of the Whitehorse Centre, organisations within the community with an interest in the future of the Centre, or local/ state government representatives with an interest in the redevelopment.

Online surveys were collected from 13 arts and cultural organisations from a total of 40 organisations contacted. This includes organisations within the community, including those who are not regular hirers of the centre.

Eight of the respondents were dance schools, three were music organisations and another two were music theatre focused. Those who did not respond to the survey included four



multicultural organisations and three theatre companies, as well as a number of other music and dance organisations.

### **Hirers and Community Organisations**

20 respondents (59%) indicated that they use facilities in Whitehorse or surrounding areas for cultural activity. The preferred seating capacity of hirers and community organisation respondents was 400-599 people (35% of respondents), followed by <100 and 100-199 people (26% each).

When asked to rank the factors most influencing future decisions to hire the Whitehorse Centre, affordable hiring charges was ranked as most important, followed by auditorium facilities and technical equipment, seating capacity, parking, accessible access and catering services.

Respondents commented on the reasons for their priorities when it came to most influential factors:

*We always strive for the highest standards with our shows and the technical facilities are an integral part of that*

*Whatever redevelopment takes place, the venue must be accessible to all. Parking is always an issue that deters participants, particularly the older demographic*

### **Arts and Cultural Organisations**

Eight respondents (64%) primarily work in the dance sector, with the remaining 36% (five respondents) in the music or musical theatre sectors. Secondary areas of interest also included drama.

The most common space to be utilised by arts and cultural organisations was the Whitehorse Centre, with 21 performances/workshops/meetings hosted by seven organisations throughout the year, attracting 2,500 audience members. The most common types of activity to be presented at the Whitehorse Centre were dance performances.

Other common venues in use included Karralyka Theatre, Doncaster Secondary, George Wood Performance Centre and Maroondah Secondary College Theatre.

The preferred seating capacity of consulted arts and cultural organisations was 400-599 people (46%, six respondents) closely followed by 200-399 people (38%, five respondents).

When asked to indicate their preferred staging configuration, proscenium arch with fly tower was the choice of four respondents, followed by proscenium arch or open, concert style stage with no fly tower for two respondents respectively.

When asked to rank the factors most influencing future decisions to hire the Whitehorse Centre, affordable hiring charges was ranked as most important, followed by onstage facilities and technical equipment, seating capacity, dressing rooms and parking.

### **Combined Seating Capacity and Staging Preferences**

When combining the seating capacity preferences for both hirers and community organisations, as well as arts and cultural organisations, 400-599 people is the most common seating capacity indicated by respondents (37%, 14 organisations), followed by both 100-199 people (18%, seven organisations) and 200-399 people (18%, seven organisations).

When combining the staging configuration preferences for both sectors, proscenium arch with fly tower is the most common choice (32%, 11 organisations), followed by proscenium arch (no fly tower) and the need for an orchestral pit (21% or seven organisations each).

## 2. Hirers and Community Organisations

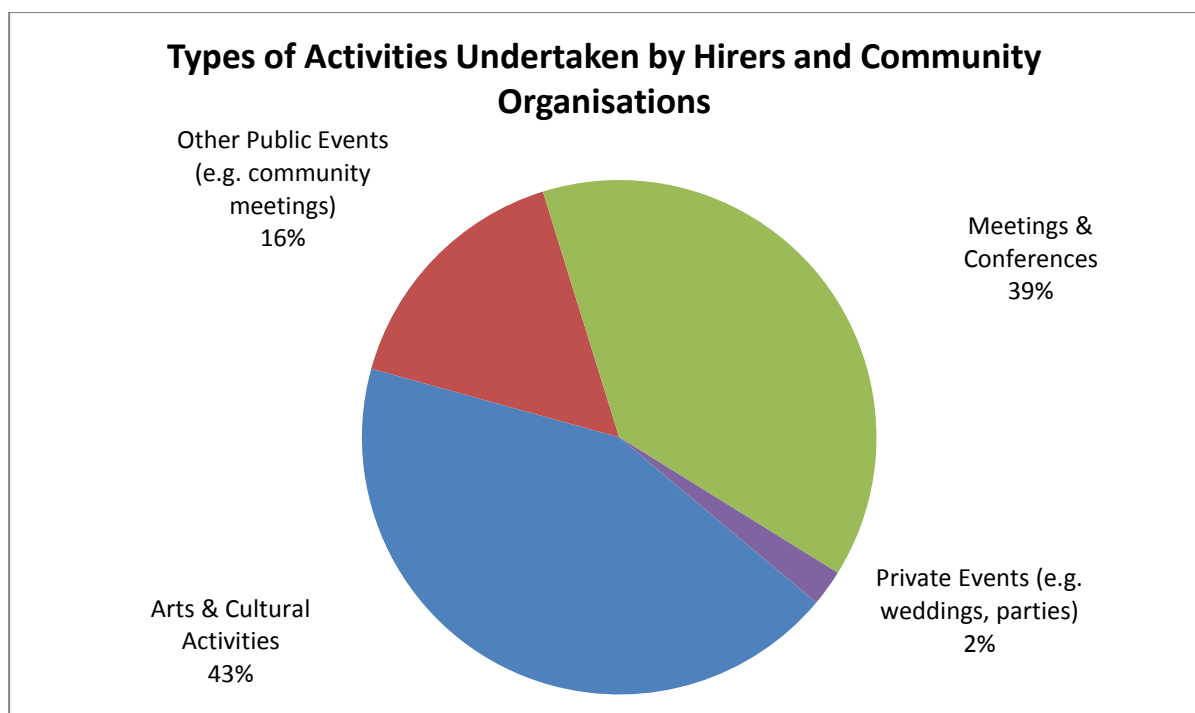
Online surveys were collected from 34 hirers and community organisations from a total of 63 organisations contacted. These organisations are regular hirers of the Whitehorse Centre, organisations within the community with an interest in the future of the Centre, or local/ state government representatives with an interest in the redevelopment.

Responses from arts and cultural organisations within the community, including those who are not regular hirers of the centre, have been analysed separately in Section Three of this report.

76% of respondents were non profit organisations.

### Activity

Respondents were asked to indicate the types of events and activities that their organisation undertakes. The most common activities were arts and cultural activities (43%) followed by meetings and conferences (39%). Other types of events included other public events, such as community meetings (16%) and private events (2%).



## Facilities Currently Being Used

20 respondents (59%) indicated that they use facilities in Whitehorse or surrounding areas for cultural activity. The most common activities were workshops presented by Utassy Ballet School and the Farmers Markets.

The venue with the second highest number of attendances was the Geelong Performing Arts Centre with 2,980 attendances over four events (all presented by the same respondent). The venue with the second highest number of activities presented was the Strabane Chapel (Mont Albert North) with 10 meetings being presented by the same organisation in that space.

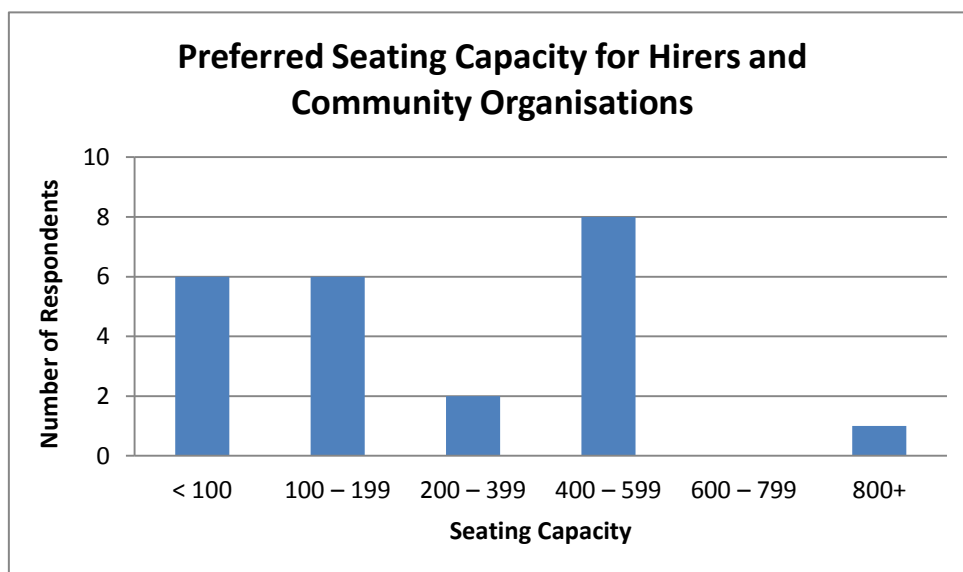
Other venues hired by respondents included:

- Box Hill Town Hall (9 events)
- Geelong Performing Arts Centre (4 events)
- The Clarion on Canterbury (3 events)

Two respondents did not present activities in external venues between January 2012 and December 2012. A further five respondents don't present events in external venues at all, and a respondent from Council indicated that their events are presented in council offices.

## Seating Capacity

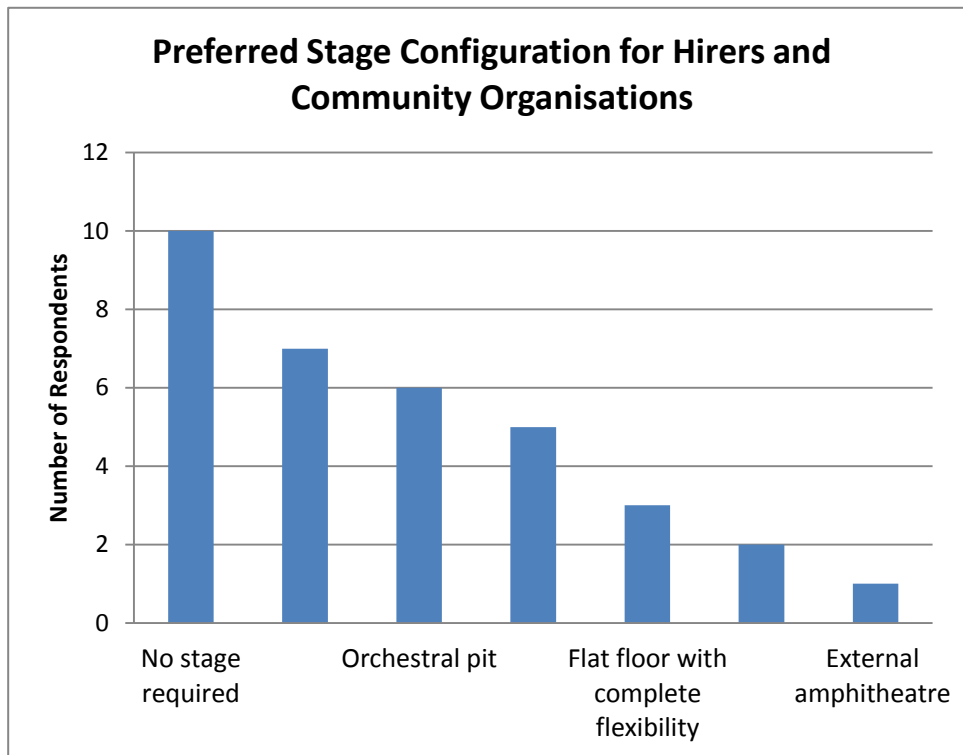
The preferred seating capacity of hirers and community organisation respondents was 400-599 people (35% of respondents), followed by <100 and 100-199 people (26% each). 23 organisations responded to this question.



## Stage Configuration

Respondents were asked to identify the stage type/s that they required for their use of the Whitehorse Centre. The most common response was that no stage was required (29%) – those organisations only use function rooms, external spaces (i.e. the Farmers Markets), or require a screen for the projection of films.

For those who require a stage, a proscenium arch with fly tower was the most preferred configuration (21%) closely followed by requirements for an orchestral pit (18%) and proscenium arch with no flytower (15%).



When asked to explain the reasons for their staging choices, even those who did not require a stage felt it was important:

*Usually I organise forums or workshops rather than stage performances. Would like to see all staging be fully accessible to performer and speakers*

*The stage brings a sense of theatre to the performance*

## Backstage Facilities

Of the 23 respondents who indicated whether they required backstage facilities, 11 indicated that they did have backstage needs.

The most common needs were dressing rooms and a green room (10 respondents respectively).

Seven respondents required 2-5 dressing rooms (the other three required more than six), most commonly with a capacity of 25-50 people, although four respondents indicated capacities of over 100 people. Seven respondents also required two or less green room spaces, with preferred capacities of 1-25 or 25-50.

Two or less rehearsal rooms were also required by eight respondents.

Room	Do you require these facilities?	Number of rooms	Number of respondents	To accommodate how many people	Number of respondents
Dressing rooms	Yes: 10	>2	0	1-25	1
		2-5	7	25-50	4
		6+	3	50-100	1
				100-200	2
				200+	2
Green room or band room (relaxing area)	Yes: 10	>2	7	1-25	3
		2-5	2	25-50	3
		6+	0	50-100	2
				100-200	0
				200+	1
Rehearsal room	Yes: 8	>2	8	1-25	2
		2-5	0	25-50	3
		6+	0	50-100	2
				100-200	0
				200+	1

Wardrobe/ sewing facilities were also indicated by two respondents as important.

47% of respondents (16 people) indicated they hire meeting and function rooms when hiring the Whitehorse Centre or other venues.

The most common uses of these rooms were:

- Meetings or workshops, including breakout rooms
- Presentations with guest speakers
- Training
- Catering provision (lunches, dinners, supper) during rehearsals and performances
- Showing films
- Props rooms

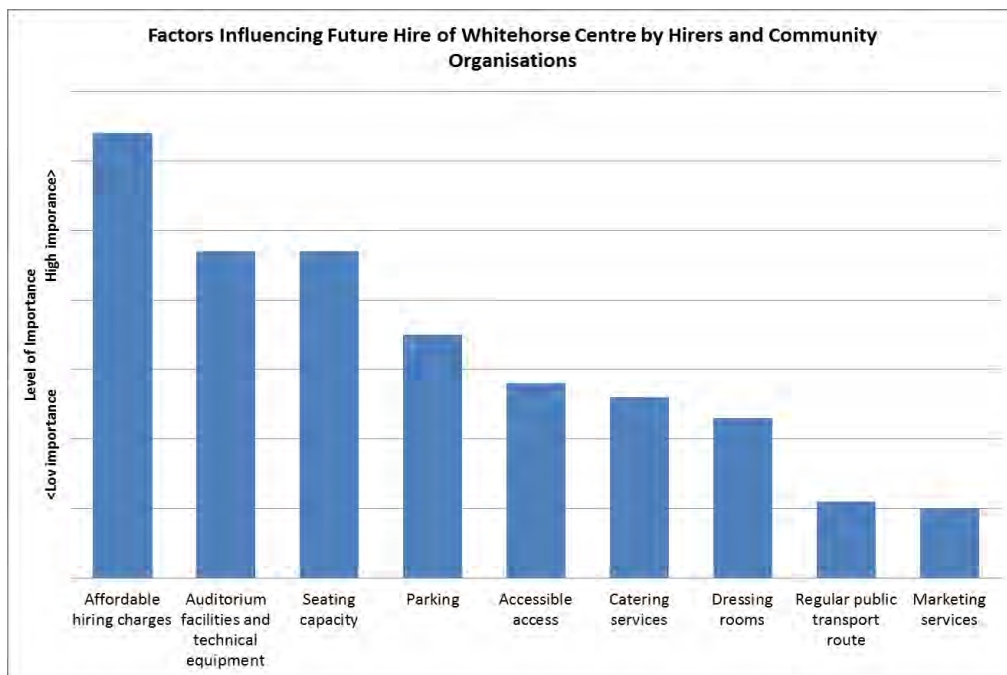
Other facilities that were important when hiring function facilities included a dance floor (9%) and access to a kitchen (9%).

## Catering Facilities

41% of respondents (14 people) indicated that they would be likely to utilise catering services when hiring function and meeting rooms, and would require tea and coffee facilities. Other catering services important to respondents included the provision of light refreshments (26%, nine respondents) and full catering support (21%, seven respondents).

## Factors Influencing Future Hire

When asked to rank the factors most influencing future decisions to hire the Whitehorse Centre, affordable hiring charges was ranked as most important, followed by auditorium facilities and technical equipment, seating capacity, parking, accessible access and catering services.



Respondents commented on the reasons for their priorities when it came to most influential factors:

*The current problem with the Whitehorse Centre at the moment is the lack of access from one space to another - e.g. students have to go through the class that is operating to get to their dressing room. When other clients are using the theatre there is no separate access to some the existing dressing rooms and/or toilets*

*We always strive for the highest standards with our shows and the technical facilities are an integral part of that*

*Whatever redevelopment takes place, the venue must be accessible to all. Parking is always an issue that deters participants, particularly the older demographic*

For a full list of comments, see Attachment Two (2.1.1).

The other needs important to respondents included:

- Audio-visual equipment (12 respondents)
- Rehearsal space (seven respondents)

- IT connectivity i.e. WiFi (seven respondents)
- Small meeting rooms (six respondents)
- Café (four respondents)

## Future Hire of Whitehorse Centre

### Number of events

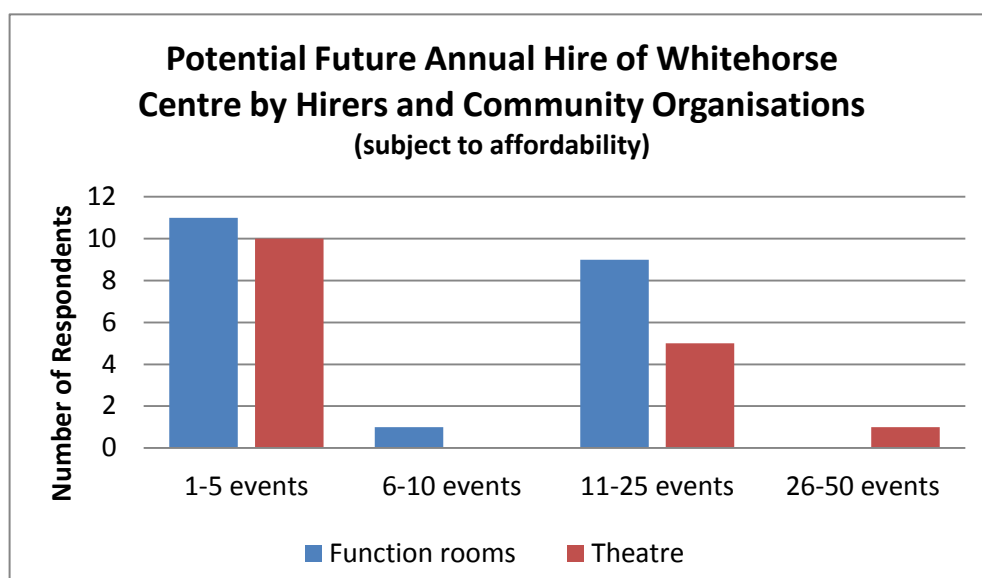
Survey respondents were asked to indicate the number of times their organisation would be likely to hire the Whitehorse Centre in any one year for performances, meetings or other events, subject to the affordability of hiring charges. 24 respondents answered this question.

11 organisations indicated that they would hire the Whitehorse Centre for 1-5 events per year in function rooms, and a further nine indicated it would likely hire the Centre for 11-25 events in function rooms.

10 organisations believed they would hire the Theatre for 1-5 events per year, and a further five indicated they would require the Theatre for 11-25 events per year.

The following table provides the breakdown of possible usage.

Function Rooms	Number of respondents	Auditorium	Number of respondents
1-5 events	11	1-5 events	10
6-10 events	1	6-10 events	0
11-25 events	9	11-25 events	5
26-50 events	0	26-50 events	1
50+ events	0	50+ events	0





### Likelihood of Future Hire

21 respondents (62%) indicated it was quite likely or very likely that they would hire the Whitehorse Centre in the future. Only three respondents (9%) didn't believe they would hire the venue, and the remaining 29% didn't answer the question.

Of those who were quite likely or very likely to hire the Centre, 18 would require meeting rooms, 11 would need a main performance space (i.e. the Theatre), seven would need a backstage workshop space and five would require a rehearsal space.

Facility	Yes	No
Main performance space	11	3
A smaller, second performance space	4	8
Meeting rooms	18	2
Rehearsal space	5	7
Backstage Workshop space	7	5
Other (please specify) - 2 ballet studios	1	3

For the majority of these spaces, respondents felt that their usage would be 1-5 days per year. The exception to this is meeting spaces, which a number of respondents envisaged using 10-25 times per year.

When considering potential annual usage of various spaces by survey respondents, the meeting rooms would be hired for 149 days, the main performances space for 104 days per year, backstage workshop space 80 days, a smaller, second performance space 69 days and rehearsal space 39 days per year.

However, it is important to consider the usage of those who did not participate in the survey. When considering the full list of 63 identified stakeholders in the 'Hirers and Community Organisations' category (34 survey respondents and 29 non-respondents), and applying a 50% discount to allow for less likely usage to the non-respondents, meeting and function rooms would be used for approximately 235 days of the year, 163 days for the main performance space, 127 days for the backstage workshop area, 109 days for a smaller, second performance space and 62 days for a rehearsal space.<sup>7</sup>

*Number of survey respondents who would use each of the spaces specified*

How many days per year	Meeting/Function rooms	Main performance space	Backstage workshop space	Rehearsal space	A smaller, second performance space
1-2	4	4	1	2	0
2-5	6	2	2	2	0
5-10	1	1	1	1	1
10-25	5	2	1	0	2

<sup>7</sup> Extrapolation of data has been calculated as follows: Average projected annual use of space (e.g. main performance space) per organisation (based on responses to the survey), multiplied by the number of non-respondent organisations likely to use the space (calculated by applying the percentage of survey respondents who required the space to the number of non-respondents); then calculating 50% of this figure to allow for less likely usage by those organisations who chose not to participate in the survey (resulting in the estimated number of days the space would be used by all 63 stakeholders in the Hirers and Community Organisations category).

How many days per year	Meeting/ Function rooms	Main performance space	Backstage workshop space	Rehearsal space	A smaller, second performance space
25+	1	2	2	1	1

### Other Comments

Other comments recorded by respondents include:

*A good theatre must have good lighting rig and sound. Stage must have good wing area on both sides*

*Please ensure that universal access principles are utilised in the development for all aspects of the building, going beyond mere compliance with BCA and DDA legislation to meet the needs of current and future audience, performers presenters and Council staff using the facilities*

Other comments are listed at Attachment Two (2.1.2).

## 3. Arts and Cultural Organisations

Online surveys were collected from 13 arts and cultural organisations from a total of 40 organisations contacted. This includes organisations within the community, including those who are not regular hirers of the centre<sup>8</sup>.

Eight of the respondents were dance schools, three were music organisations and another two were music theatre focused. Those who did not respond to the survey included four multicultural organisations and three theatre companies, as well as a number of other music and dance organisations.

Seven of the respondents were commercial companies, and the remaining six were non profit organisations.

### About the Respondents

Eight respondents (64%) primarily work in the dance sector, with the remaining 36% (five respondents) in the music or musical theatre sectors. Secondary areas of interest also included drama.

77% of respondents (10 organisations) rehearse at least once a week throughout the year, with three organisations (23%) rehearsing 2-3 times and a further three (23%) rehearsing 4-7 times per week.

Number of rehearsals	Number of respondents
4-7 times per week	3
2-3 times per week	3
Once a week	4
Lead up to performances only	2

<sup>8</sup> Regular hirers of the Whitehorse Centre, organisations within the community with an interest in the future of the Centre, and local or state government representatives with an interest in the redevelopment, have been analysed separately in Section Two of this report.

### **Facilities Currently Being Used**

10 respondents answered the question regarding the facilities they use in Whitehorse or surrounding areas for cultural activity. The most common space to be utilised was the Whitehorse Centre, with 21 performances/workshops/meetings hosted by seven organisations throughout the year, attracting 2,500 audience members. The most common types of activity to be presented at the Whitehorse Centre were dance performances.

Two respondents did not present activities in external venues at all.

### **Audience Reach**

Six respondents indicated the suburbs from which their audience members travelled from for performances. The most common suburbs were Mont Albert, Surrey Hills, Burwood, Nunawading, Mitcham and Vermont.

### **Developments and Directions**

When asked whether there any significant developments or changes in direction planned for their organisations (e.g. new types of work, major new facilities) within the next few years, one dance school noted that they were hoping to expand in 2014 and would potentially be looking for new facilities.

### **Current Rehearsal Venue**

Respondents indicated the current venue they use to meet, rehearse and prepare their work. Venues included:

- Various school studios and venues (four organisations)
- Maroondah Federation Estate (one organisation)
- Kim Annett Dance School, Wantirna (one organisation)
- Whitehorse Theatre (one organisation)
- East Ivanhoe School of Dance (one organisation)
- MarShere Nunawading (one organisation)
- Doncaster Lutheran Church Hall (one organisation)

11 respondents pay to use their rehearsal facilities. Hire costs per session ranged from \$20-55, with two organisations listing their annual rehearsal space costs as \$50,000 and \$70,000 respectively.

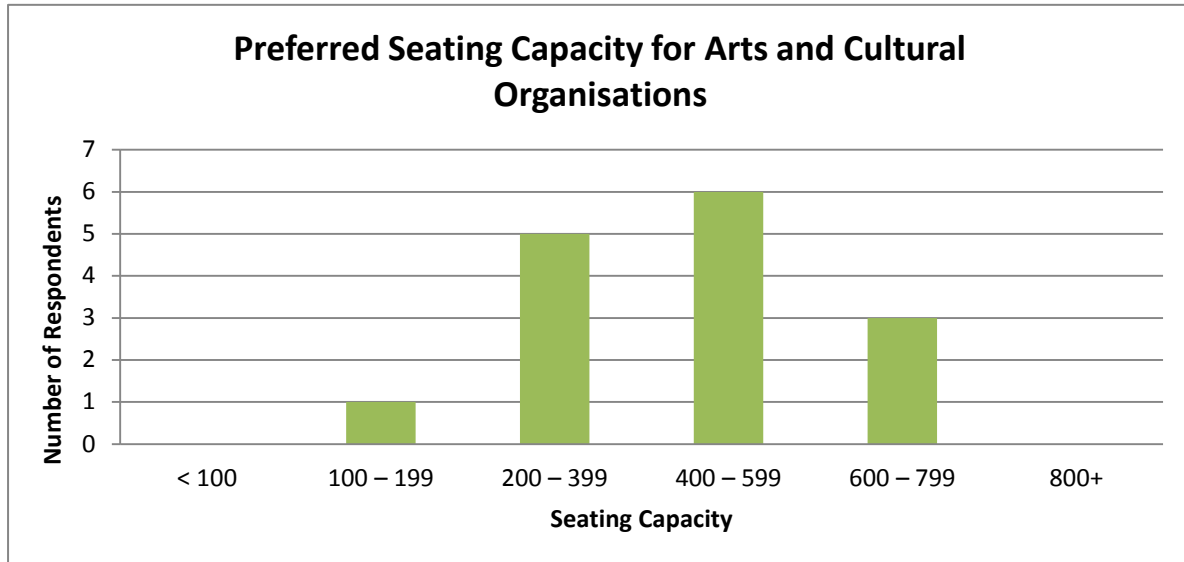
11 respondents also pay to hire performance spaces. Minimum costs per year ranged from \$3,000-8,000, and maximum performance space costs were listed as \$7,000 and \$10,000. For a breakdown of all responses regarding current rehearsal and performance space hire, see Attachment Two.

Other costs associated with hiring current venues included:

- Staff (lighting/audio technicians, stage manager, ushers, etc.)
- Technical equipment hire and consumables (microphones, spotlights, etc.)
- Musical equipment (percussion instruments, grand piano)

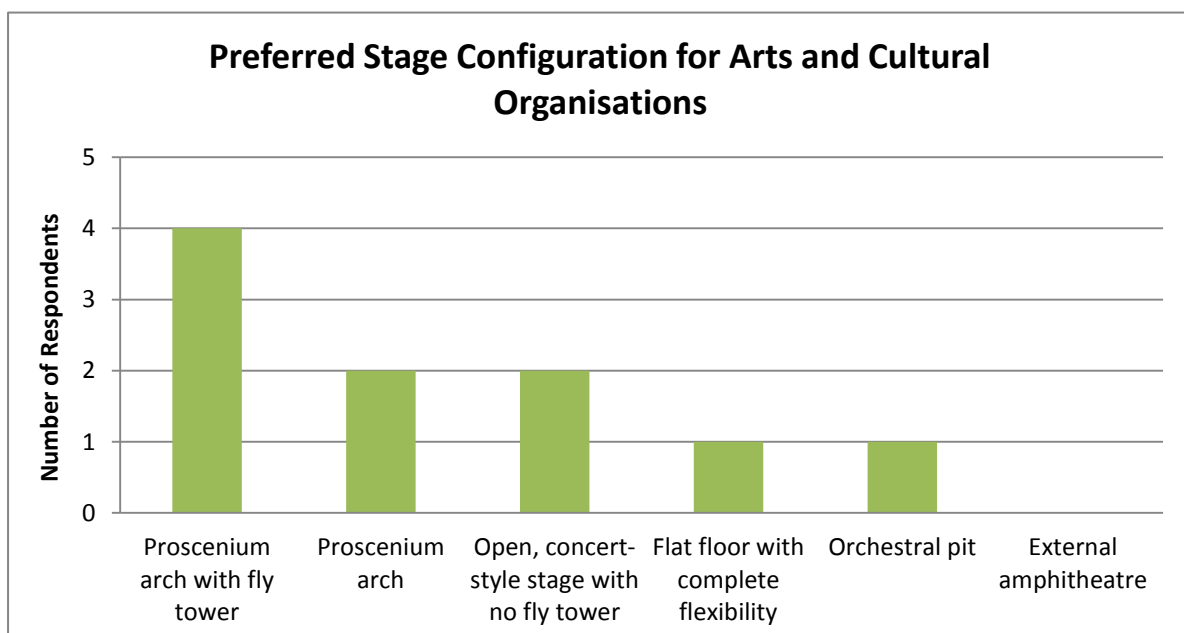
- Ticketing
- Insurance
- Use of additional rooms as dressing rooms

## Seating Capacity



The preferred seating capacity of consulted arts and cultural organisations was 400-599 people (46%, six respondents) closely followed by 200-399 people (38%, five respondents).

## Staging Configuration and Size



When asked to indicate their preferred staging configuration, proscenium arch with fly tower was the choice of four respondents, followed by proscenium arch or open, concert style stage with no fly tower for two respondents respectively.

Preferred stage sizes were listed as:

- To easily accommodate 18 dancers
- 11m x 18m, to accommodate 40 people
- 12m x 8m, to accommodate up to 35 people
- 14m x 12m, to accommodate 70 musicians and their stands/instruments

For comments on reasons for choosing stage preferences see Attachment Two (2.2.2).

## Backstage Facilities

### Dressing Rooms

Seven respondents said they would need 1-2 dressing rooms of varying sizes, four require 3-5 rooms, two require 6-10 rooms and three require 10 or more dressing rooms.

Size	Amount of rooms			
	1-2	3-5	6-10	10+
Two person	0	0	0	0
Four person	1	0	0	0
Eight person	1	0	0	0
Twelve person	1	1	1	1
Twenty person	3	2	1	1
Forty to ninety person	1	1	-	1

Seven respondents indicated they would need a green room and a rehearsal room, with most indicating they would require two or less of each type of room. The most common green room size was to accommodate 1-25 people, whilst the most common capacity requirement for a rehearsal room was 50-100 people.

Room	Do you require these facilities?	Number of rooms	Number of responses	To accommodate how many people	Number of responses
Green room or band room (relaxing area)	Yes: 7	>2	6	1-25	4
		2-5	1	25-50	1
		6+	0	50-100	1
				100-200	0
				200+	0
Rehearsal room	Yes: 7	>2	5	1-25	1
		2-5	1	25-50	1
		6+	0	50-100	3
				100-200	1
				200+	0

## Function and Meeting Rooms

Only two respondents who participated in the arts and cultural survey indicated that they would require function rooms when hiring the Whitehorse Centre, which could be used as dressing rooms in addition to those currently available.

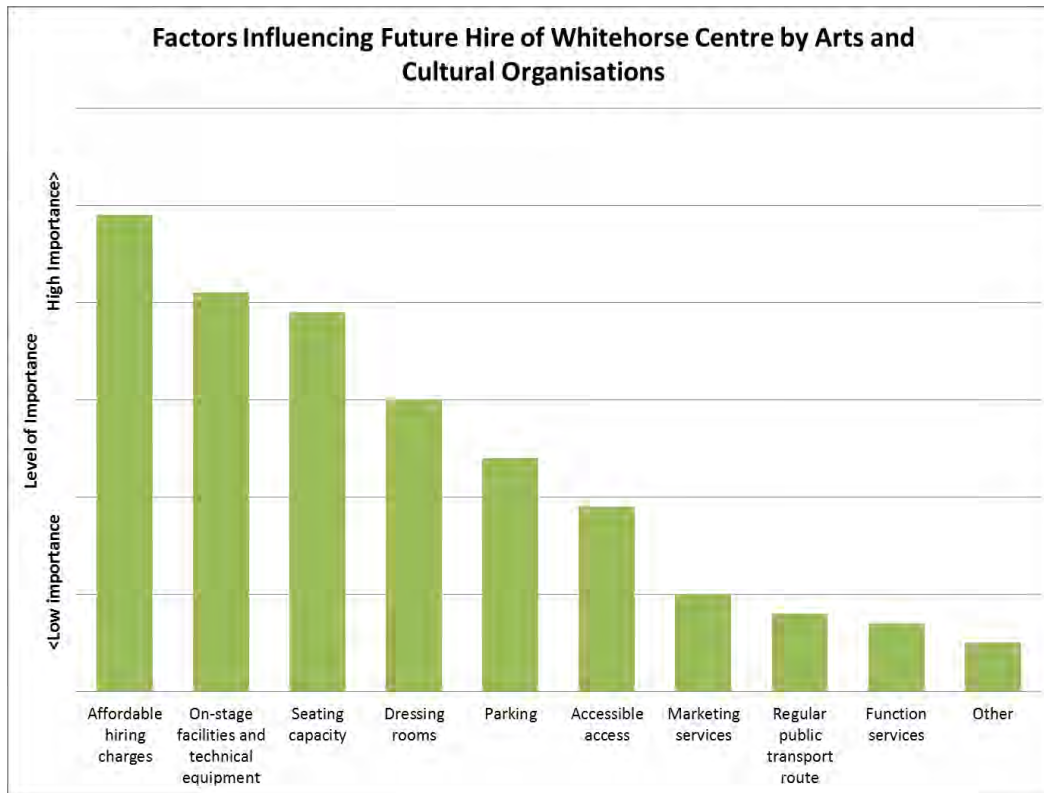
## Ancillary Facilities

Besides rehearsal space and green rooms, the most common ancillary facilities required by arts and cultural organisations included a café (four respondents), audio visual equipment and IT connectivity i.e. WiFi (three respondents), and a bar (two respondents). Other requirements listed included office space, a concert grand piano, and data projections onto the rear wall behind the stage.

Facility	Number of respondents
Rehearsal space	5
Green room	5
Café	4
Audio-visual equipment	3
IT connectivity i.e. WiFi	3
Bar	2
Office space	1
Other (please describe)	1
Small meeting room/s	0

## Factors Influencing Future Hire

When asked to rank the factors most influencing future decisions to hire the Whitehorse Centre, affordable hiring charges was ranked as most important, followed by onstage facilities and technical equipment, seating capacity, dressing rooms and parking.



Those who indicated 'Other' suggested:

*Quality concert hall acoustics like Iwaki Auditorium or Melbourne Recital Centre in Whitehorse*

*Very large dance floor with suitable wooden surface*

Comments on the reasons the most influential factors were chosen are as follows:

*Theatre is getting more and more expensive and we are getting less bums on seats every year  
(therefore need affordable hiring charges)*

*As a dance school who puts on an annual performance and whose students are predominantly young (3-14 years) a theatre with a good stage and technical and dressing room facilities is very important*

*I need enough seating for clients to...not miss out on a space, plenty of dressing room space to comfortably fit all the dancers, and good car parking for audience members so they don't arrive to my show frustrated and grumpy about not being able to find a park*

*It must be a quality acoustic where the instruments and voices sound like they should and can be heard clearly in all seats in the auditorium*

*Our first priority would be space - since ballroom dancing needs a lot of it. Affordability is next, then the use of a stage. Parking would need to cater for several hundred people, and some dressing room space for the organisers to be able to put their bags, costumes, etc.*

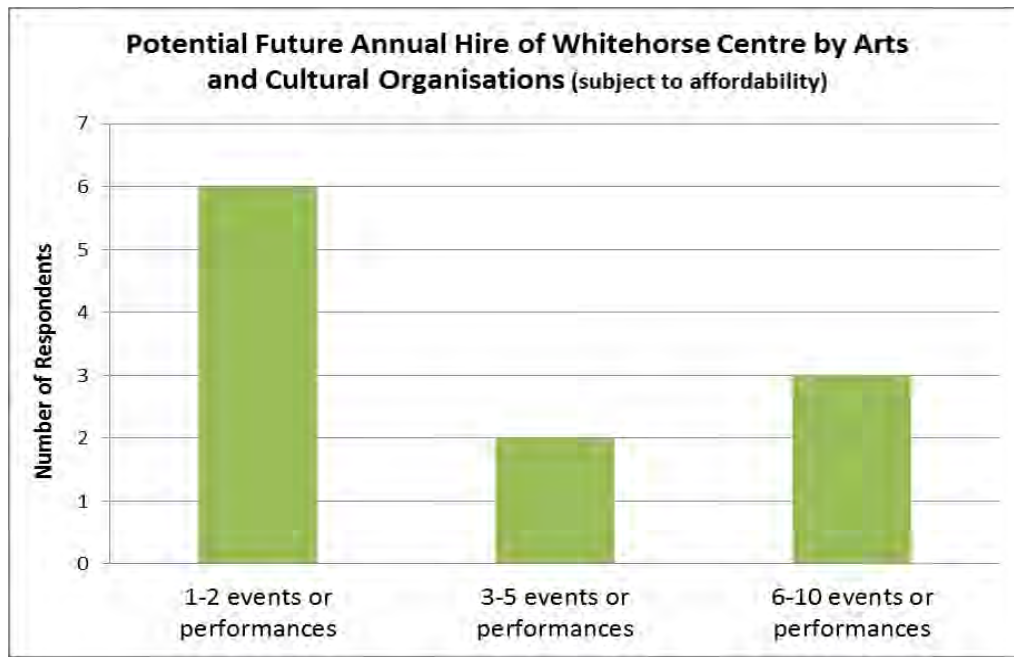


## Future Hire of Whitehorse Centre

### Number of Events

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the number of times of their organisation would be likely to hire the Whitehorse Centre in any one year for performances or events, subject to the affordability of hiring charges. 11 respondents answered this question.

Eight organisations indicated that they would hire the Centre for 1-5 events per year, and a further three indicated it would likely hire the Centre for 6-10 events or performances.



### Likelihood of Future Hire

Nine respondents (70%) indicated it was quite likely or very likely that they would hire the Whitehorse Centre in the future. Only two respondents (15%) didn't believe they would hire the venue, and the remaining 15% (two respondents) didn't answer the question.

Of those who were quite likely or very likely to hire the Centre, nine would require a main performance space (i.e. the Theatre), six would need a rehearsal space and three would require a smaller, second performance space and backstage workshop space.

Facility	Yes	No
Main performance space	9	0
Rehearsal space	6	1
A smaller, second performance space	3	2
Backstage workshop space	3	2
Function/meeting rooms	1	3

Respondents indicated they were most likely to hire the main performance space for 1-2 days per year (four respondents), and a smaller, second performance space for 5-10 days per year (two respondents).

When considering potential annual usage of various spaces by survey respondents, a rehearsal space would be used 60 days of the year, the main performance space 37 days of the year, a second, smaller performance space 18 days of the year, and the function rooms and backstage workshop space 8 days of the year respectively.

However, it is important to consider the usage of those who did not participate in the survey, which in the case of arts and cultural organisations equates to 27 identified key stakeholders. When considering the full list of 40 identified stakeholders in the 'Arts and Cultural Organisations' category (13 survey respondents and 29 non-respondents), and applying a 50% discount to allow for less likely usage, a rehearsal space would be used 127 days of the year, the main performance space 78 days of the year, a second, smaller performance space 38 days of the year, and the function rooms and backstage workshop space 17 days of the year respectively.<sup>9</sup>

*Number of survey respondents who would use each of the spaces specified*

<b>How many days per year</b>	<b>Main performance space</b>	<b>A smaller, second performance space</b>	<b>Function rooms</b>	<b>Rehearsal space</b>	<b>Backstage workshop space</b>
1-2	4	1	0	1	0
2-5	1	0	0	0	0
5-10	1	2	1	1	1
10-25	1	0	0	0	0
25+	0	0	0	2	0

## Other Comments

Other comments recorded by respondents include:

*The public venues for performance in Whitehorse are only suitable for performing arts - theatre, drama, rock/contemporary - not for large group acoustic orchestras and wind bands.*

*It would be exciting if the redevelopment included a place we could hire for balls or competitions. There are not many of these venues around*

*Better dressing room space needed at the centre*

*Too costly to hire venue*

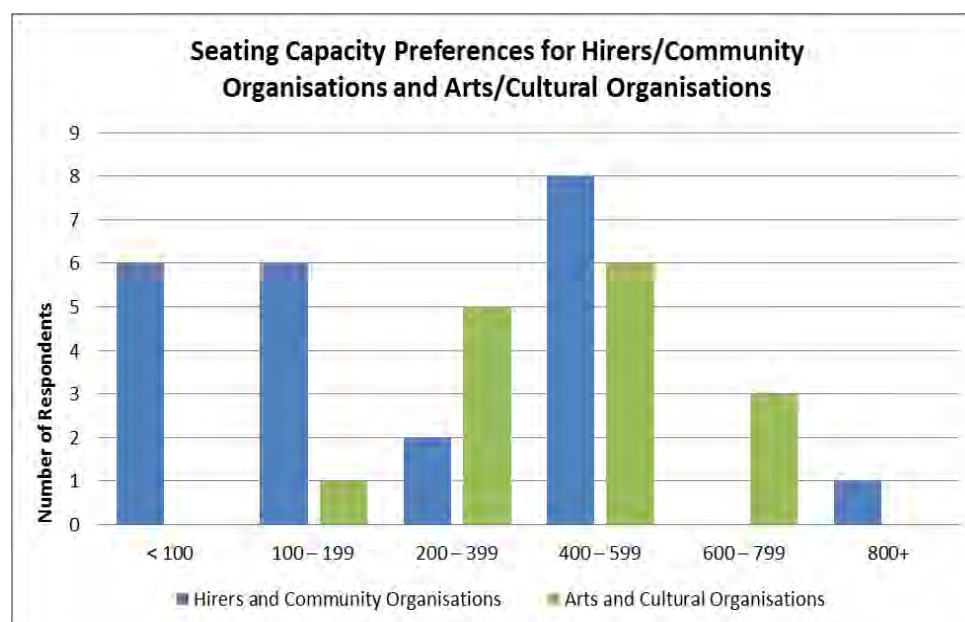
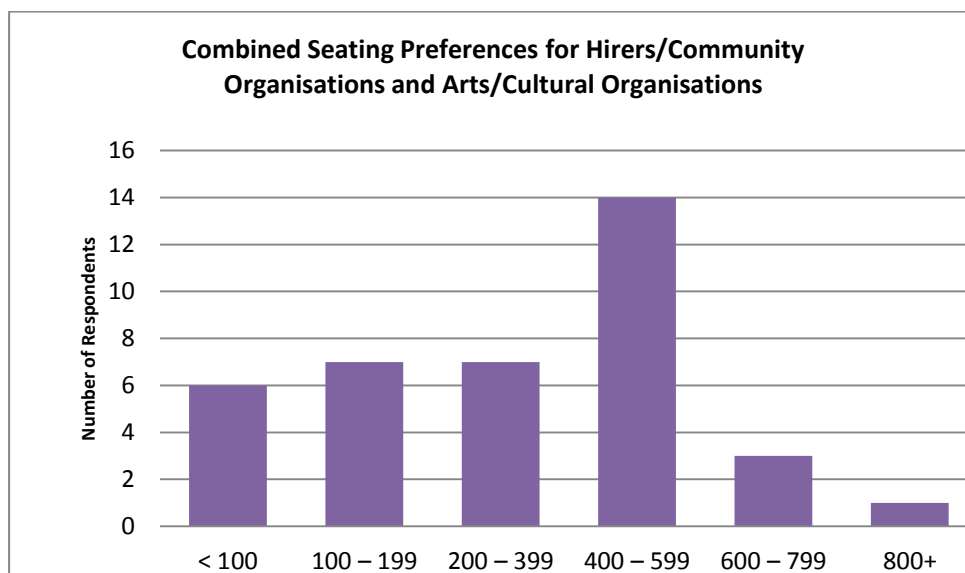
## 4. Combined Results

### 4.1 Seating Preferences

When combining the seating capacity preferences for both hirers and community organisations, as well as arts and cultural organisations, 400-599 people is the most common seating capacity indicated by respondents (37%, 14 organisations), followed by both 100-199 people (18%, seven organisations) and 200-399 people (18%, seven organisations).

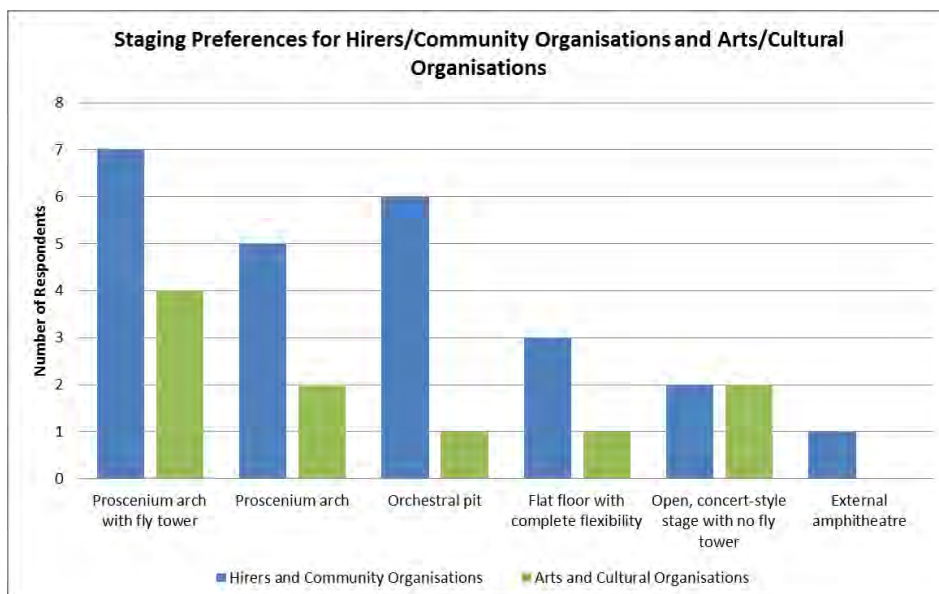
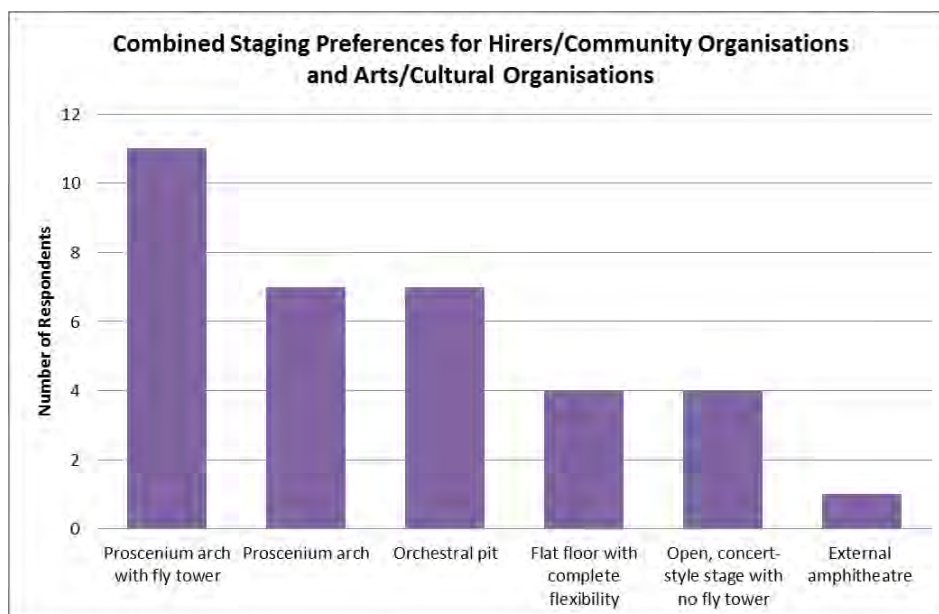
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<sup>9</sup> Extrapolation of data has been calculated as follows: Average projected annual use of space (e.g. main performance space) per organisation (based on responses to the survey), multiplied by the number of non-respondent organisations likely to use the space (calculated by applying the percentage of survey respondents who required the space to the number of non-respondents); then calculating 50% of this figure to allow for less likely usage by those organisations who chose not to participate in the survey (resulting in the estimated number of days the space would be used by all 40 stakeholders in the Arts and Cultural Organisations category).



## 4.2 Combined Stage Configuration Preferences<sup>10</sup>

When combining the staging configuration preferences for both hirers and community organisations, as well as arts and cultural organisations, proscenium arch with fly tower is the most common choice (32%, 11 organisations), followed by proscenium arch (no fly tower) and the need for an orchestral pit (21% or seven organisations each).



<sup>10</sup> Disregarded the 'No stage' selection by hirers, as those respondents only used function and meeting rooms (therefore do not require the theatre)

# Appendix E: Attachment Two: Additional Survey Comments

## 2.1 Hirers and Community Organisations

### 2.1.1 Comments Regarding Factors Influencing Potential Hire

*It is important to embed universal access principles into all aspects of Council's business to ensure that people with a disability can access facilities*

*An increase in the seating capacity would be beneficial as our patrons almost fill the auditorium. The marketing services provided by the centre are more than satisfactory*

*We are keen to see the venue is ...still affordable and accessible for the ratepayers*

*Excellent quality selection of food and beverages are important to us and our guests*

*Even Council internal hire charges can impact on training expenditure, so usually the Civic Centre meeting rooms are used for training (because there is no charge) - but they are not always appropriate for the various programs being delivered.*

*Parking is essential*

*(We) cannot afford high theatre charges*

*We rely on marketing services from the centre to provide our audience base*

*What you currently provide is adequate for our needs however freshening up and better technical equipment would be beneficial*

*Almost all our members arrive by car (95%)*

### 2.1.2 General Comments

*The idea of having various groups cross paths throughout the year has been good except that their productions impinge on each other. The separate spaces must be able to work simultaneously from points of view of access, noise, etc.*

*We have found that the acoustics are a little antiquated but have served their purpose in the past*

*Basically all we need is some space close to the front door so we can process stallholders to pay their market fees (and provide a place for our) equipment, jackets, collection buckets, etc.*

*We have never used the Whitehorse Centre but they have handled bookings for some of our events during the City of Whitehorse Heritage Week in the past. As we are the Box Hill Historical Society we aim to use facilities in the Box Hill side of Middleborough Road.*

*We hold meetings on the second Wednesday morning of every month in the Studio Room and are perfectly happy with current arrangements*

## 2.2 Arts and Cultural Organisations

### 2.2.1 Cost of Current Performance and Rehearsal Space (all responses)

Rehearsal Space	Performance Space
<b>Per session</b>	<b>Per session</b>
\$20/hour	\$20-35/hire
\$20/session	\$180/hour
\$22/hour	\$2,000/hire
\$22.50/hour	\$5,000-\$6,000/hire
\$25/session	<b>Per year</b>
\$55/session	\$3,000
<b>Per year</b>	\$4,000-\$7,000
\$50,000	\$8,000
\$70,000	\$10,000

### 2.2.2 Comments on Reasons for Choosing Stage Configuration Preferences

*Best accommodates people with disabilities*

*We prefer to be able to fly sets*

*In the City of Whitehorse there is no purpose designed concert hall with the acoustics for orchestras and wind symphonies to perform in a volume suitable for the ensemble, with necessary and safe back stage spaces for gathering, warm up, and with sufficient front of house space and facilities for a full house capacity audience. (We need a suitable venue that is) low in cost to hire and operate, and have the necessary equipment, lights and audience comfort.*

*We might hire an outside venue for either a Ball or a Competition. In both cases we use the large flat floor for all the dancing, and the stage is used for the compere, scrutineering, prize displays or music system.*

*We use a lot of scenery, curtains and fly in and out numerous scenes.*



# Appendix F: Consultation Analysis 2014

## Overview

This summary forms part of the Consultation Report which will be used to inform the Market Analysis Discussion paper to be developed for the Whitehorse Centre Business Case.

Interviews were conducted with key stakeholders as well as representatives from selected arts and events organisations – a total of 36 interviewees. The key findings that have emerged from this section of the research process are:

- Whitehorse Centre is well regarded by hirers and the arts industry generally
- A larger seating capacity in the main performance space is preferred and the nominated capacity of 580 is attractive to commercial hirers
- Larger seating capacity as well as an increase in stage size allows for a broader range of productions to be programmed
- However, there is currently a large amount of product touring that is suited to smaller spaces and if there is only the one performance space, this would require an auditorium that can reduce capacity by curtaining or other means in order to create a more intimate space
- A second space or flexible Black Box Studio would cater for the smaller product as well as being suitable for creative development programs or as rehearsal space
- Due to the smaller seating capacity, a Studio space has a reduced Box Office potential but allows for a greater opportunity for partnerships and co-producing with producers and theatre makers
- Non-traditional theatre seating (e.g. benches and floors mats for children's performances) increases capacity in Studio spaces and is suitable for a range of performances. This can be in addition to retractable theatre seating
- The Foyer space is critical to the success as the first impression of the venue, primary point of contact, multi-use opportunities such as displays, conference registrations, pre-function entertainment as well as providing appropriate traffic flow for concurrent events.
- A Café provides activation of a venue space during non-performance time but financial viability would rely on an identifiable regular clientele or is programmed with regular entertainment to develop a loyal patronage. The café service could be operated in conjunction with the broader function catering service to reduce the risk
- There is a perceived shortage of medium size function rooms in Whitehorse and a 200 + seat (banquet style) function space that has operable walls and appropriate Audio Visual facilities would be attractive to a range of users. The current function space does not allow for flexible usage or for concurrent events to be staged
- The conference and seminar market requires additional support spaces and smaller meeting rooms to be used as break-out areas. Smaller meeting spaces would also be attractive to community groups or for business meetings
- There are currently no specific State Government policy initiatives to support capital funding proposals for the theatre redevelopment. However, this does not preclude negotiations with State Government as the project progresses.

## 1. Introduction

As part of the consultation process towards the Business Case for the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre, in-depth interviews were arranged with a number of key stakeholders. These include current and potential hirers of the Whitehorse Centre, the managers of other



Victorian performing arts venues, a State Government representative and Whitehorse City Council staff and Councillors. Potential hirers included commercial theatre, music and comedy producers, professional arts organisations, and corporate hirers.

36 interviews have been undertaken, comprising:

- Four commercial producers
- Twelve arts organisations
- Two non-arts commercial hirers
- Five venue managers
- One State Government representative
- Five City of Whitehorse City Council Councillors
- Eight Council staff

See Attachment One for a list of people consulted.

The interviews supplement data gathered through a survey of venue users and potential users. 59 responses to the survey were received, which are the subject of a separate analysis.

Interviews were designed to secure input from relevant government and industry representatives to inform the scope of works required to meet the arts, cultural and hospitality expectations of the Whitehorse Centre. Interviews focused on contexts for the development of the Centre, likely future demand, and specific configuration requirements.

This summary report provides an overview of the findings from these interviews and includes commentary on key themes.

## 2. Producers

Four commercial producers were interviewed as part of this study. These organisations toured local and international product into Victoria and Australia on a regular basis, including music, dance, theatre and comedy acts. One producer toured shows that fit into the 400-500 audience capacity. The others commented that their audience capacity varied widely depending on the product and venue with ranges from 200-5,000 given.

### 2.1 Current Venues

Producers used a range of venues across Victoria, with two commenting that they were familiar with most of the venues across the State. One producer commented that they mostly use arts centres including the Whitehorse Centre, the Karralyka Centre, Frankston Arts Centre, and Mildura Arts Centre. Another listed the following venues:

- Colac Ottway Performing Arts and Cultural Centre
- Arts Centre Melbourne
- Geelong Performing Arts Centre
- Wendouree Centre for Performing Arts, Ballarat
- The Capital, Bendigo
- Wangaratta Performing Arts Centre
- The Drum Theatre, Frankston
- West Gippsland Arts Centre

Three producers interviewed currently used the Whitehorse Centre. One did not, commenting that they had not used the Centre in several years.

### **Favoured Venues**

Interviewees were asked to comment on their most favoured venues, not necessarily limited to Victoria. Management emerged as a key criterion here. The Whitehorse Centre was nominated as a favoured venue by three of the four producers interviewed, with two commenting specifically on the management of the Centre by Council staff:

*I think it [The Whitehorse Centre] is one of the best managed venues in the country. Council has the trust of their audience so they can present new or challenging work and the audience will still go because of that relationship. Management drives the audience and not the product. Clever management is of course going to be discreet about what they choose, but the ability to engage the audience is what matters.*

*From a management perspective Whitehorse can hardly be matched. Everyone is well catered for, everything is taken into consideration, good technical crew, and everyone is friendly and competent.*

Another producer commented that the Redland Performing Arts Centre and Mackay Convention Centre in Queensland were both very well run.

Other responses varied, depending on the type and scale of show the producer was used to presenting. Two producers mentioned the Drum Theatre, both commenting on the effective audience/ stage relationship.

### **Gaps in Provision**

Producers seemed fairly flexible about working with a broad range of venues and configurations. However, two interviewees suggested that there was a need for more provision of black box theatres in the eastern region, suggesting that Whitehorse could potentially provide this:

*A black box would be phenomenal. From my point of view professionally and from the community perspective; there are a lot of productions that I would put on if the opportunity were there. It would also entice community groups back again as school halls are too big.*

## **2.2 Industry/ Market Trends**

Asked to comment on industry/ market trends in Victoria, and Australia more broadly, commercial producers noted the reduction in people buying tickets and going to see shows. Several interviewees noted the need for more flexible venues, commenting that this is likely to increase as there is an interest in shows taking different formats.

*...flexibility is very important. Half empty detracts from the atmosphere – you always hear people say a show is successful if it's sold out...A lot of times the aesthetics of the building doesn't address this need of being half full or half empty – but this can be solved easily by very simple design, literally pulling a curtain across.*

*Two years ago we made a change from selling adult theatre to producing theatre for families due to the difficulty of the market – I think this will continue for a while.*

## **2.3 Whitehorse Centre Projections**

## Likely Usage

Asked to comment on their potential usage of the Whitehorse Centre, two producers responded that they would continue their current use of the Centre. For one producer, this was two to three days per year. For another, it was three to four weeks per year. A third interviewee currently regularly produced daytime shows at the Whitehorse, and also directed shows for other people at irregular intervals and felt this level of usage was likely to continue. The fourth producer had not used the Centre in several years, but commented that they would potentially be interested in doing so in future.

## Configuration

### Seating

Producers generally seemed flexible regarding seating capacity, commenting that their preferred configuration would rely on the type of product presented.

Two producers commented that a larger seating capacity (500-580 rather than 408) would be more sustainable and complement the growth in the area.

*580 is absolutely sustainable given the broad catchment area.*

*From a professional point of view, they can justify it [expansion].*

Another interviewee emphasised the need for flexibility in seating design:

*From a commercial perspective, flexibility is very important. A half empty theatre detracts from the atmosphere . . . This can be as simple as designing a curtain that can be pulled across to conceal seating and create intimacy . . . Architects often forget to add flexibility, particularly in regional or community-based theatres.*

### Stage

Three of the four producers preferred a proscenium arch design with full fly facilities. Two commented that they did not require an orchestra pit, with one adding the caveat that they would, however, recommend including one in the design for the benefit of other users. One producer felt that the current stage was a good size, commenting favourably on the distance between audience and stage.

## Competition

Competition with other venues was not felt to be a concern for producers.

Another commented that both Karralyka and Whitehorse seem to fill their venues, so felt that competition is not a major issue.

## Other Issues

A range of other issues were identified by producers, including:

- Need for improved provision and design of dressing rooms
- Need for improved parking if expanded
- Importance of good signage/ wayfinding, with one producer pointing out that there are excellent advertising opportunities with digital signage on main highway
- Access issues with loading dock

- Need to increase foyer size
- One producer commented on the need to address the necessity of the sound shell

Other final comment:

*In order for the Whitehorse Centre to continue to grow and maintain its leadership, this redevelopment is needed. The facility is fine as it is, but it's not state of the art. There's a lot that could be done with it.*

### 3. Arts Organisations

Interviews have been undertaken with representatives from eleven arts organisations, these are:

Bangarra Dance Theatre	Oz Opera
Barbirra Theatre	Polyglot Theatre
Box Hill Chorale	Tasmanian Theatre Company
Critical Stages	Utassy Ballet School
Monkey Baa Theatre Productions	Victorian Opera
Nova Musical Theatre	

#### 3.1 Current Venues

The most frequently used venues by Victorian companies included Whitehorse Centre, Victorian Arts Centre and the Geelong Performing Arts Centre. Other venues included Karralyka, BMW The Edge, Drum Theatre, Melbourne Town Hall, Frankston Arts Centre, Clocktower Moonee Ponds and various schools and cathedrals.

Oz Opera and the Victorian Opera were the main companies to hire the larger venues (Victorian Arts Centre and Geelong Performing Arts Centre).

### Configuration

#### Seating

Interviewees were asked to nominate their ideal seating capacity. Four out of eleven respondents (36%) indicated that 400-450 was their ideal range. A further four nominated 500+ seats. All responses, and any relevant commentary, are tabled below.

*Table Three: Preferred Seating Capacity*

Organisation	Capacity	Commentary
Bangarra	500+	Due to the size of theatre we require But we do go up to 800 and down to 350
Barbirra	400-450	Have a preference for 400 as every seat is a good seat with a theatre that size With a 400 seat capacity can offer up to 9 performances, more would mean offering less
Box Hill Chorale	400-450	Suits product and audience
Critical Stages	600-800	Product dependent, but 600-800 probably best as large but still intimate
Monkey Baa	400-450	
Nova	500-600	
Oz Opera	500+	Minimum of 500

Organisation	Capacity	Commentary
Polyglot	300-500	Depends on the show; black box spaces preferred
Tasmanian Theatre	600	
Utassy Ballet School	400-450	Commented that 500-580 would also work
Victorian Opera		Depends on product being toured

A number of interviewees also commented specifically on the current seating capacity of the Whitehorse Centre, and the possibility of increasing the capacity to 500-580 as recommended in the Feasibility Study undertaken by SGL in 2011. These comments include:

*It has implications for us if the seating capacity is increased in terms of a shorter season [although] if the end result is 580 seats I don't think we'd turn our backs on it.*

*It's important for venues to have a capacity over 500, otherwise you have to charge consumers more.*

*Think about seating capacity carefully. More doesn't necessarily mean better; quality should always trump quantity. Having 50 or 100 less seats and having a much more flexible space would be preferable, and increases the number of users the theatre attracts*

*550-580 would work – on the whole they [the Whitehorse Centre] have pretty good attendances. We'd adjust, for example we'd do three shows instead of four*

*The range of product on tour at the moment suits smaller seating of 400, but for the Whitehorse Centre 600 would be good, as long as there is a studio/ rehearsal space as well*

## Stage

The majority of interviewees nominated a proscenium arch theatre with full fly facilities as their ideal configuration. Only one interviewee did not prefer a proscenium arch, commenting that this restricts what you are able to do in terms of interacting with the audience. Almost half of all interviewees used an orchestra pit, commenting that the Whitehorse Centre pit needs to be made larger. Two others commented on the need to address access and safety issues.

*Orchestra pit needs upgrading, there are access and safety issues there*

*Orchestra pit needs to be larger than it currently is and needs to have access from elsewhere*

Three interviewees commented that they were happy to be flexible about configuration as their requirements would fluctuate according to the type of show presented.

Two organisations, both of which performed theatre for young people, indicated a desire for a black box space, commenting:

*Back box space is good for smaller shows. Something approximately 200 seats with inbuilt flexibility so the configuration can be changed. Black box style is good for young people's theatre in particular.*

*Black box spaces are preferred, that way we can have the audience in the work.*

## **Response to Redevelopment**

The majority of interviewees expressed enthusiasm about the proposed development, with the exception of one interviewee who was concerned that the needs of her particular art form

(chorale) would not be considered. Specifically, this interviewee was concerned that heavy furnishings would compromise acoustics. This interviewee did acknowledge, however, that the theatre needed to be redeveloped in line with the needs of a broad range of user groups.

Other responses include:

*It is a good thing for Council to look at how the centre is run and what the gaps are. Currently the Whitehorse Centre is falling in to the function centre/ theatre space trap. Good to fine tune the whole venue*

*Some development is needed, but it's not necessary to pull it down and start again. Some alterations would be good though*

*The Centre is still in pretty good nick, but it's a good idea to start thinking about redevelopment before it starts falling apart and while people are still engaged with the venue*

*Redevelopment is certainly a good thing; if technical and orchestra pit are improved, and seating capacity is increased*

## **Competition**

Only one interviewee commented on possible competition with other venues, but felt that this was unlikely:

*The redevelopment is definitely needed. There could perhaps be competition with Karralyka, but both are used quite heavily*

## **Other Issues**

Other issues identified by arts organisations include:

- Half of the arts organisations interviewed identified the current dressing room configuration as a problem, commenting that size and access were not sufficient. Several also noted that lack of an adequate number of showers, basins and toilets
- A large number of interviewees commented on the need for increased foyer size
- Stage access/ wing size also an issue for several people, in particular those who build their own sets or move heavy equipment onto the stage
- Conflicts with ballet school over access; i.e. arts organisations having to walk through ballet exams; need for separate access
- The foyer is so important from an aesthetic point of view, the theatre experience begins at the front door. It is important that the foyer has the ability to engage the audience immediately, it needs to be welcoming and functional (Monkey Baa).
- Several interviewees commented on the need for better loading dock access, with one commenting that there also needed to be a forklift
- Two interviewees required laundry facilities
- Two interviewees commented that function spaces are important and viable

Several interviewees commented on the need for versatility in design:

*Versatility is the key to create touring venues that work. The range of work that they produce is so vast that the more versatile the venue the better*



There were also several favourable comments regarding Council's management of the Whitehorse Centre:

*Management is fantastic, just need to address those design issues*

## 4. Non-Arts Hirers

### 4.1 Usage

Two regular non-arts hirers of The Whitehorse Centre were interviewed as part of stakeholder consultation. One interviewee hired the grounds surrounding the centre for a Farmer's Market each month. The other interviewee, who represented an accounting firm, hired a room inside the Centre three to five times per year for seminars and other events. Both interviewees are long-term hirers of the Centre.

### 4.2 Commentary

#### Needs/ Issues

- Larger capacity for conferences and seminars (preference is for 200-250 seat function space that can be divided for smaller events)
- Need for free Wi-Fi in the foyer
- In-house videoing would be ideal
- Update presentation/ technical facilities

#### General Comments

- There is a shortage of suitable conference/ seminar spaces in Whitehorse
- Foyer works well for registration and also for breaks during presentations and workshops so attendees are not in the same space all the time
- Due to the difficulty of the venue running multiple events at the same time, changeover can be tight
- Staff are very friendly and helpful
- Also use Box Hill Golf Club but only because it has larger capacity (180-200 people) or Karralyka in Ringwood, but preference is for Whitehorse
- Pricing/ fees and charges are fair
- Preference for spaces that can be divided

## 5. Venue Managers

Interviews were undertaken with five managers from Victorian performing arts venues with similar seating capacities, scope, and audience demographics to the Whitehorse Centre. These were designed to capture venue and programming information for benchmarking purposes, as well as to canvass managers' general perspectives on any potential issues and critical success factors for outer-metro and regional venues. Venues interviewed include:

Summary information from these interviews is provided below.

### 5.1 Venue Details



The venue managers interviewed ran venues with seating capacities of between 400 and 800. Their average audience for theatre was those aged 40+, however, all managers indicated that they also hire the venue to schools or have a children's theatre market. Four of the five venues had a secondary space as well as a main theatre space.

## 5.2 Issues and Critical Success Factors

Key themes to emerge from consultation with venue managers are summarised below.

- Larger capacity may be attractive to high profile hirers as the Eastern suburbs are lacking in appropriate facilities (Frankston is able to attract commercial hirers due to its position as outer-metro, stage size and large capacity) This could be an opportunity for Whitehorse due to its well established subscriber base
- A second space (black box studio or similar) is of advantage but it requires a higher subsidy due to smaller seating capacities
- If included in the programming framework, a second space allows for creative development/ fringe theatre opportunities
- Unless on a major street frontage with passing trade or ability to attract a regular clientele a cafe is not financially attractive. However, it can activate the space
- A cafe will require realistic projections and will need a programming element
- Whitehorse is lacking in suitable functions/ seminar spaces but this is also a major part of Karralyka's business
- Large foyer spaces are required for multiple events and add-on activity
- Street frontage/ major signage is required
- Although not required regularly, a large orchestra pit with appropriate access and support area is recommended
- Planning/ programming during the redevelopment stage when venue is off-line will require significant resources to ensure loyalty of existing clients/patrons
- As functions are a major part of Karralyka's business, an increase in function capacity at Whitehorse may be seen as a threat to their core business

## 6. Conference and Convention Organisers

Four professional conference organisers were contacted to gauge the potential conference market for the Whitehorse Centre.

The conference market is predominately focused on the Melbourne CBD or larger regional centres where sufficient accommodation is available in close proximity to the conference centre.

One interviewee did indicate that over the next 2-4 years there will be a demand for medium size conference centres due to the fact the Sydney Convention Centre is closing for redevelopment and this will have a direct effect on the Melbourne conference market. A number of the larger conferences will be held in Melbourne and as a result, medium size conferences will be looking for alternative spaces. Although this demand may subside prior to the completion of the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre, it would allow for targeted marketing and promotion campaign while there is an increased interest in Melbourne conference centres. Conferences usually range from 50 to 400 delegates and the need for accommodation varies depending on the type of conference.

It was emphasised that venues need to have flexible spaces, up to date audio visual facilities and the ability to provide a series of break-out spaces.

# Appendix G: Whitehorse Centre Business Survey Analysis 2013

## Summary

Responses were received from twelve businesses, including:

- Three not for profit health organisations
- Three commercial businesses
- Two tertiary institutions
- One state government corporation
- One state government department
- One local government department
- One not for profit education service

Seven of these businesses were based in the Whitehorse City Council region, two were within a 15km radius of the Whitehorse Centre and three were within a 15-25km radius of the Centre.

The number of employees ranged from 1500 to one. See Attachment One for a breakdown of the number of employees of each business consulted.

## Current Venue Usage

All the respondents organised meetings for large groups of staff or members of the public in the City of Whitehorse and/ or surrounding areas. Of these, eight did not have or use their own facilities for this purpose. Four did have their own facilities.

Of the eight who did not use their own facilities, four used the Whitehorse Centre, with two using the theatre and two the Waratah Room. Other venues hired, and the purpose for use where this was provided, are tabled below. Note more than one venue was given by several interviewees.

Table One: Venue Usage - Business

Venue	Use
Crown Promenade, Southbank	Symposium
Melbourne Town Hall	Workshop
Dingley International Hotel, Dingley	First Aid Training Event
Whitehorse Centre, Waratah Room	
Whitehorse Centre Theatre	
Whitehorse Centre Theatre	
Whitehorse Centre, Waratah Room	Workshops
Kingston Arts Centre, Moorabbin	First Aid Training Event
Karralyka Centre, Ringwood	
Knox City Council Offices	Workshops, Seminars
Pakenham Tennis Centre, Pakenham	First Aid Training Event
RACV Cape Schanck Resort	Conference
Ballarat Learning Exchange	
Bendigo Club	
Brotherhood of St Laurence, Frankston	Workshops, Seminars

Venue	Use
Ramada Hotel, Dandenong	Workshops, Seminars
Lilydale Lakes Community Room, Lilydale	

### Parking

Four respondents indicated that they required parking at the venues they hired. One did not. The rest did not respond to this question. Of the four who did need parking, the amount of spaces required varied from 20-100. Responses were:

- 20
- 20-30
- 80-100
- Depends on venue hired

## Whitehorse Centre Requirements

Businesses were asked to indicate how likely they would be to use various facilities in the Whitehorse Centre, and their preferred capacities for these.

### Theatre

Only one respondent was quite likely to use a theatre with tiered seating, with this person indicating that they would need a 120 person seating capacity. The rest of the respondents were either not very likely, or not likely at all, to use this facility.

Asked about their likelihood of using a flat floor reception room for product launches, trade shows, conference events or catering-led functions, five respondents were very likely to use this facility. One was quite likely, and six were either not very likely or not likely at all.

Of the five who indicated they would use this facility, capacity requirements ranged from 25-140, with the following responses given:

- 25-35
- 120
- 60-100
- 120-140
- 100

### Training Rooms

Eight respondents were likely or very likely to use a training room. Three were not likely and one did not respond to this question. Of this eight, only four gave capacity estimates, these were:

- 20-30
- 80-100
- 40
- 20

## Small Meeting Rooms

Seven respondents were likely or very likely to use small meeting rooms, three were not likely and two did not respond. Again, capacity estimates for small meeting rooms varied, with businesses giving the following estimates:

- 5-10
- 80
- 25
- 20

## Marquee/ Function Space

All respondents indicated that they would not be likely at all to use an open air space where they could erect a marquee. Four respondents were quite likely to use a function space with a dance floor. The remaining eight were not likely at all. Two respondents gave capacity estimates for the function space, with one giving 20 and the other 100.

## Catering

Those businesses who indicated that they would use Whitehorse Centre facilities were asked to identify what level of catering support would be required. Note respondents were able to choose more than one option.

Six respondents replied to this question, with three requiring tea and coffee facilities, light refreshments, and full catering support. Two respondents required only tea and coffee facilities and light refreshments, and one only required tea and coffee facilities.

## Other

Asked if there are any other facilities that would be beneficial to their business, two respondents commented:

- Loop system and excellent audio / visual for presentations
- Wi-Fi

Other comments provided by interviewees included:

*Venues that are close to public transport and cafes are always a bonus. Weekend access is also a plus.*

*We were using the Centre fairly regularly for training but this has now been outsourced, so we are using the Centre less now. We only hire the Whitehorse Centre really.*

*The most important thing for us when hiring outside facilities is catering, and having accommodation close to the venue. Ideally the venue would have accommodation as well as function rooms.*

*We don't need to hire the venue as we have our own facilities, but if we can't accommodate an event that asks to be held on our campus, we do refer them to Whitehorse Centre and other venues in the area.*

*Redevelopment is a good idea but it does not really affect us as we have our own facilities.*

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