



# Whitehorse Centre Business Case

## Part C: Community Consultation

Final | October 2015



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Concept Design, Building Components, Budget Considerations

Williams Ross Architects in association with  
Positive Solutions and Artefact Consulting

Final Issue

October 2015

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Document ID: 1306 Part C Community Consultation - FINAL Oct 20151202  
Project No: 1306  
Issue No: Final  
Date: October 2015



IDENTIFYING INFORMATION HAS BEEN REMOVED  
WHERE IT IS CONSIDERED IT MAY IDENTIFY A PERSON

## 1 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an analysis of the outcomes of the extensive consultation process undertaken to gauge the community response to the proposed redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre.

In addition to the data received from the on-line survey, a large number of responses were provided either as part of the survey or as separate submissions. Section 6 summarises the most common responses.

The car parking was identified in the consultation process as a concern to local residents and Council have already responded to this by advising residents that the northern boundary site (Option 2) will no longer be considered and that other car parking options will be explored.

## 2 Key Findings

A total of 619 people directly provided feedback during the consultation process. This included 559 on-line/hard copy surveys and 60 submissions or letters directly to Council. In addition, a petition with 106 signatures requesting an alternative plan for the car park was received.

During the formal consultation period from May 4 to May 29 2015, 578 people provided feedback and in addition 41 late submissions were received and these have also been included in this final report.

Of the 559 survey responses the key findings include:

- Over 73% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the Council has an important role in providing cultural facilities and that the Whitehorse Centre is a valued asset.
- Over 50% strongly agreed or agreed that the centre required redevelopment and 37% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the centre requires redevelopment.
- 45% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the improved scope and size met their expectations and 40% strongly agreed or agreed that the improved scope and size met their expectations
- 78% of the survey respondents are residents of the City of Whitehorse.
- 26% highly supported the redevelopment as currently proposed, 18% supported the proposal and 10% somewhat supported the proposal. 45% do not support the proposal. Less than 1% had no opinion.
- 56% of respondents indicated that the redevelopment was an important project for the City of Whitehorse.
- 35% of respondents had attended an event at the Whitehorse Centre, 26% were a subscriber and 9% had never attended the Whitehorse Centre.

## 2.1 Individual Comments

There were 441 individual comments provided in the survey. The comments included a range of issues however there were a number of recurring themes.

The primary themes and issues in the survey comments were:

- the condition of the current facility and the need for the redevelopment
- opposition to the cost of the proposed redevelopment
- concerns as to the previous consultation processes
- comments on the car park options or parking generally
- a preference for a refurbishment only
- comments on the design and wanting to ensure there was appropriate accessibility
- the impact on the rates
- effect on local amenity
- general comments on programming

## 2.2 Submissions

Sixty (60) submissions, letters and direct email responses were received. Themes of the responses were:

- the majority of the detailed commentary expressed concern as to the cost of the redevelopment
- hirers and users provided letters of support
- there was objection as to the expenditure of rates on the project and also a number of issues as to the earlier consultation processes
- there was support for a refurbishment of the existing centre
- requests for further work to be undertaken on the car park options
- concern that ticket prices would rise
- concern that the hire rates will increase
- questioning of the attendance and usage figures

## 2.3 Car Park Petition

A petition was received with 106 signatures. The petition requested that Council remove the considered car parking for the green nature areas from the proposed redevelopment and develop alternative plans for a new car park on the existing parking areas and return the plans for consideration by the community.

Council has since responded to this by advising residents that the northern boundary site (Option 2) will no longer be considered and that other car parking options will be explored.

### 3 Consultation Process

The consultation process and communications strategy was developed to attract the broadest possible range of views and feedback from City of Whitehorse residents, Whitehorse Centre patrons, hirers and other key stakeholders. In total over 700 people provided direct responses during this process which, as a cross section of the Whitehorse community, is statistically high.

The process included:

- A formal community engagement and consultation program between Monday 4 May until Friday 29 May 2015
- Additional late hard copy surveys and submissions were received and included in the evaluation
- A full colour brochure detailing the key issues and concept drawings
- On-line survey and hard copy surveys
- A total of 5096 letters to patrons, clients, stakeholders, including local residents within a 300m radius of the Whitehorse Centre
- 1027 Electronic E-news emailed to patrons
- Leader advertisement (council update) for the 4 weeks during consultation period
- On-hold phone messages for May on Council's phone system
- Distribution of brochure to key Council sites – Customer Service Centres, Libraries, Box Hill Community Arts Centre, Aqualink, Whitehorse Centre and Nunawading Community Centre
- Displays on both the Council and Whitehorse Centre websites (with advice on translation services available online)
- Advertised consultation in the Asian Press
- Two drop-in information sessions on Thursday 14 May (6.30-8pm) and Monday 18 May (11-12.30pm)
- Brochure and large scale plans displayed in the civic centre foyer
- Hardcopy surveys were also available in Chinese

## 4 Survey Results

The on-line and hard copy surveys attracted 559 responses. In addition to the direct questions in the survey, respondents were also invited to provide additional comments.

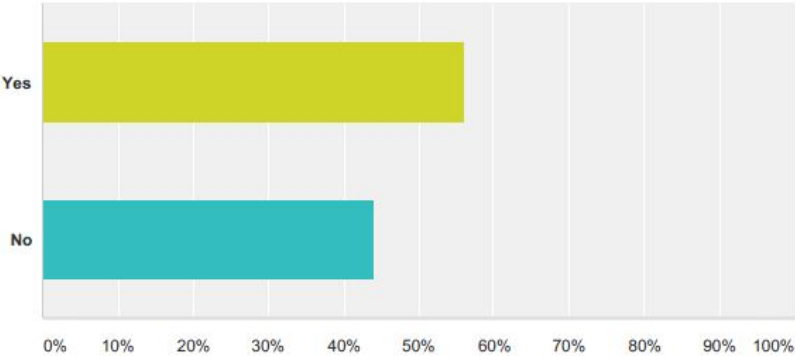
The survey findings are as follows.

### 4.1 Question 1

Of the 559 responses, 56% indicated that the redevelopment was an important project for the City of Whitehorse.

#### Q1 Do you believe that the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre is an important project for the City of Whitehorse?

Answered: 559 Skipped: 0



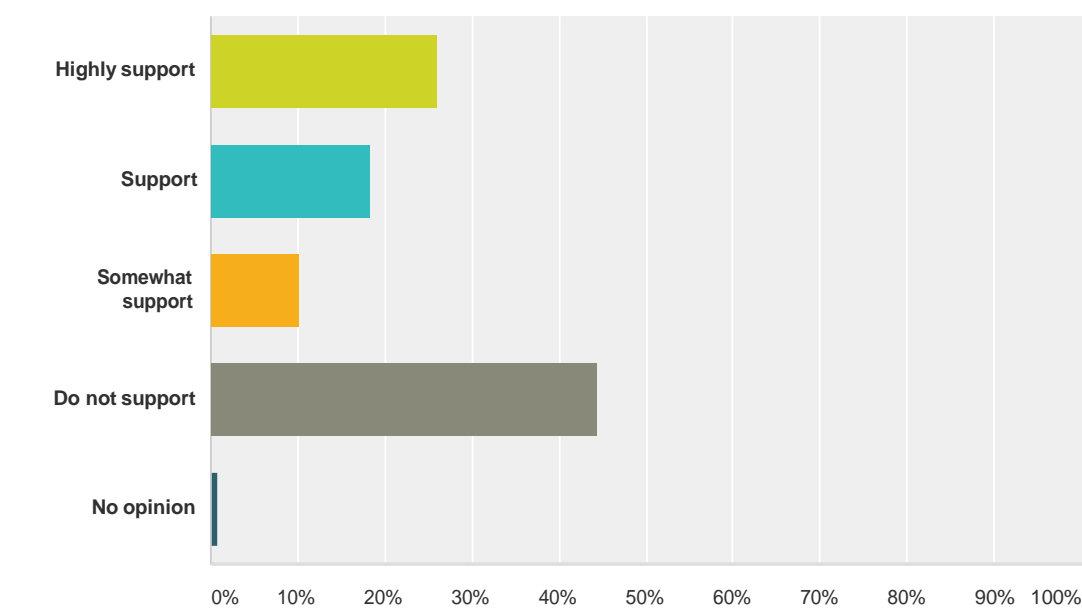
Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	55.99%313
No	44.01%246
Total	559

4.2 Question 2

Of the 559 responses, 26% highly supported the redevelopment as currently proposed, 18% supported the proposal and 10% somewhat supported the proposal. 45% do not support the proposal. Less than 1% had no opinion. The total of overall primary support (highly support and support was 44%).

Q2 To what extent do you support the redevelopment as currently proposed?

Answered: 559 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Highly support	26.12%	146
Support	18.43%	103
Somewhat support	10.20%	57
Do not support	44.36%	248
No opinion	0.89%	5
Total		559

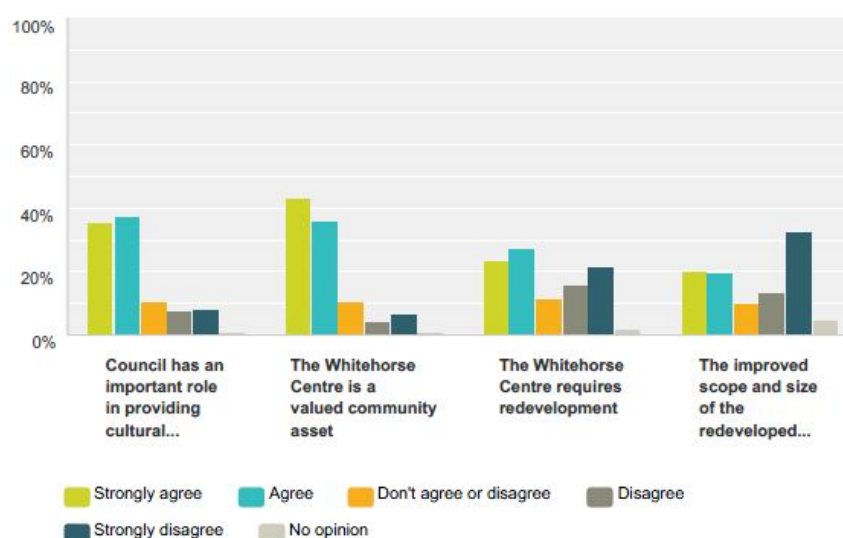
### 4.3 Question 3

The purpose of question three was to gauge an overall view of how the respondents viewed Councils role in providing cultural facilities, if the Whitehorse Centre is seen as a valued asset, if there was a view that the centre required redevelopment and if the proposed redevelopment met the expectations of respondents.

The majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the Council has an important role in providing cultural facilities and that the Whitehorse Centre is a valued asset. There was also a high agreement that the centre required redevelopment however 32% of respondents strongly disagreed that the improved scope and size met their expectations.

#### Q3 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Answered: 559 Skipped: 0



	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion	Total
Council has an important role in providing cultural facilities	35.60% 199	37.75% 211	10.55% 59	7.51% 42	8.05% 45	0.54% 3	559
The Whitehorse Centre is a valued community asset	42.93% 240	35.78% 200	10.73% 60	3.76% 21	6.26% 35	0.54% 3	559
The Whitehorse Centre requires redevelopment	23.61% 132	26.83% 150	11.27% 63	15.56% 87	21.47% 120	1.25% 7	559
The improved scope and size of the redeveloped centre meets my expectations	20.21% 113	19.68% 110	10.20% 57	13.06% 73	32.38% 181	4.47% 25	559

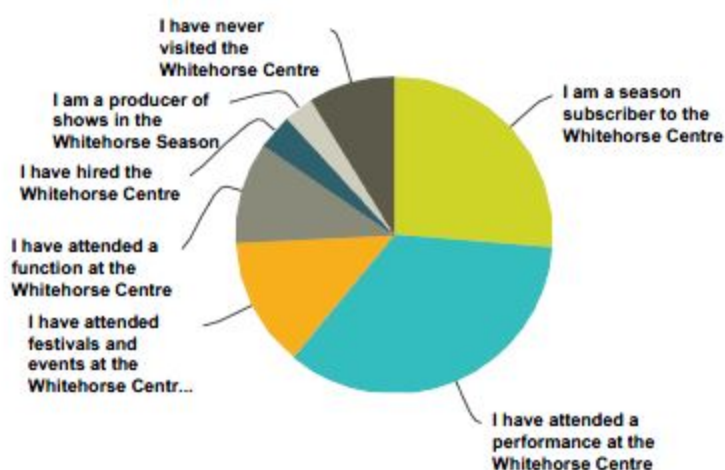
#### 4.4 Question 4

The purpose of question four was to gain an understanding of the profile of the respondents.

35% of respondents had attended an event at the Whitehorse Centre and 26% were a subscriber. 9% had never attended the Whitehorse Centre.

**Q4 Which description best suits you?**  
**Although you may attend the Whitehorse Centre in more than one category, please choose the one that would be your primary contact with the centre.**

Answered: 559 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
I am a season subscriber to the Whitehorse Centre	26.30%	147
I have attended a performance at the Whitehorse Centre	34.70%	194
I have attended festivals and events at the Whitehorse Centre soundshell (amphitheatre)	13.24%	74
I have attended a function at the Whitehorse Centre	10.38%	58
I have hired the Whitehorse Centre	3.58%	20
I am a producer of shows in the Whitehorse Season	3.04%	17
I have never visited the Whitehorse Centre	8.77%	49
<b>Total</b>		<b>559</b>

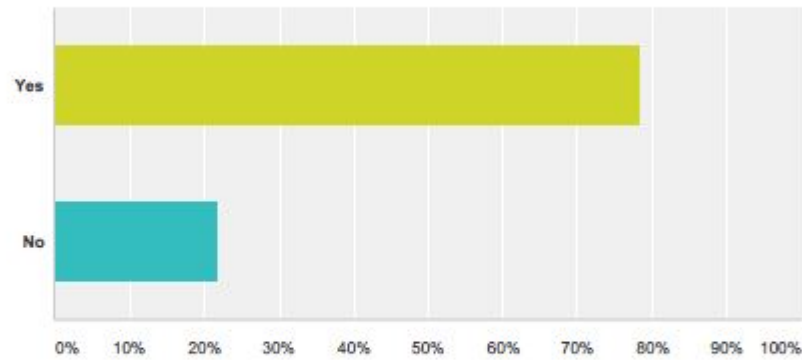


4.5 Question 5

Of the respondents, 78% were residents of the City of Whitehorse.

Q5 Are you a resident of the City of Whitehorse?

Answered: 559 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	78.35%438
No	21.65%121
Total	559

## 4.6 Question 6

Question six provided an opportunity for respondents to include additional comments.

There were 441 individual comments provided.

The comments included a range of issues however there were a number of recurring themes, which were:

- the condition of the current facility and the need for the redevelopment
- opposition to the cost of the proposed redevelopment
- concerns as to the previous consultation processes
- comments on the car park options or parking generally
- preference for a refurbishment only
- comments on the design and wanting to ensure there was appropriate accessibility
- the impact on Council Rates
- effect on local amenity
- importance of future planning
- general comments on programming

## **5 Information Sessions**

Two drop-in information sessions were held on Thursday 14 May 6.30-8.00pm and Monday 18 May 11.00am-12.30pm in the Whitehorse Centre and over 110 people attended.

The first session took the form of exhibition and informal discussion and presentation with attendees.

Concerns expressed in the informal discussion (paraphrased) include:

- The cost will inevitably blow out
- Opposition to a 3 storey car park in the garden, especially the Option 2 northern boundary location
- Noise, light spill and air pollution from the car park (numerous comments)
- Increased vandalism and crime as a result of the car park
- Height of the building and the fly tower – being visible to surrounding residences, when the existing centre is currently not visible to some
- Utassy concerns about locations for their storage and existing shed operations
- That the parkland setting is not appropriate for the centre, or a larger centre, and an alternative site should be found closer to local population centres, such as Box Hill Town Hall
- Why not share with existing surrounding facilities?
- Why does it cost so much – comparison with Our Lady of Sion College theatre at \$4.5m for a 350 seat theatre.

### **Consultant interpretation of discussion**

There was very strong negative reaction from adjacent residents to Car Park Option 2, located near the northern residence boundary. For many, this response overshadowed their opinion about the redevelopment proposal itself. Some of those residents supported the Whitehorse Centre redevelopment but not the car parking.

An alternative site for the car park was suggested, on top of existing car parking between the Police Station and Civic Centre.

Other residents were strongly in favour of the development.

There was a clear divide between those who attend the centre, who were largely positive, and those who did not. The latter tended to consider the centre operations not relevant to council operations or not 'core business'.

## 6 Analysis of Responses and Comments

In addition to the comments provided in the surveys and information sessions, feedback and submissions were sent directly to Council.

As with the survey, the feedback provided a range of views and in some cases repeated what had been previously provided through the on-line survey. However, a number of the respondents and submissions provided very detailed responses commenting on a range of issues and in some cases representing specific interest groups/associations.

For the purpose of analysis, the primary issues raised in the surveys and submissions have been identified below.

Issues and themes of the responses and submissions included:

- General comments on the importance of the facility
- Need for improved facilities
- Support for a refurbishment
- Requests for further work to be undertaken on the car park options
- Concern that ticket prices would rise
- Concern that hire rates will increase
- Concern of the overall cost
- The impact on rates

The following table summarise the themes and issues raised by community respondents, and responds to these concerns with further explanations.

## Consultation Themes and Responses

- During the consultation process, a large number of comments were received. There were a number of common themes and the following table summarises, and responds to, the major themes raised.

### Summary of key comments and responses received during the Community Consultation processes

#### 6.1 The proposed Centre Cost is too high (\$78m) and is high relative to other recent, nearby projects.

The Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment provides five facilities serving the Whitehorse community, all larger than the existing four venues in the centre. The cost estimate for these components in 2014 costs is:

Main building components and proscenium theatre	\$36.04m
Functions centre	\$5.89m
Rehearsal and meeting rooms	\$1.73m
Studio theatre (but not backstage)	\$5.77m
Sound Shell stage and backstage	\$2.34m
Access road works (car park and loading dock alterations)	\$370,000
Demolition of existing building	<u>\$377,000</u>
<b>Total End Cost – Redeveloped Whitehorse Centre 2014</b>	<b>\$52.48</b>
Total End Cost – Car Park, 3 levels, approx. 200 car parks	\$9.5m
<b>Total End Cost – Total Redevelopment, 2014</b>	<b>\$62.01m</b>
<b>Cost escalation – four years</b>	takes it to <b>\$71.34m</b>
Council management costs	\$1.99m
Project Contingency	\$4.65m
<b>Total Proposed Project Budget</b>	<b><u>\$78.00m</u></b>

These costings include design and construction contingency allowances of 20% and allowances for other project costs such as professional design fees, authority charges, furniture and equipment, \$3.45m theatre technical costs and ground condition contingencies.

The development would take a minimum of four years after a decision to proceed. Therefore, cost escalation has been allowed for this timeframe at 3% per annum compounding. Council costs of managing the project add a further \$1.99m (project and cost management, probity advisers, legal fees, etc).

For prudent financial management Council has allocated a further contingency allowance of approximately 6.5% (\$4.65m), taking the total projected cost estimate to \$78 million in 2019.

Performing arts centres are a high-cost building type. Theatres are complex, large-span volumes with extensive structure and dynamic live loads on the stage. They must be entirely fitted out with equipment and furniture to work for the community and they usually have above average quality finishes in the public spaces. In the parkland setting the building is seen 'in-the-round' and thus has no lower cost 'rear end'. The building would be expected to have a life of at least fifty years.

#### 6.2 There is a risk of the project cost 'blowing out' beyond the \$78m figure

Given the generous contingency and escalation allowances made in the estimate and with sound project and cost management the project should be delivered within +/- 1-2% of this figure. While cost blow-outs occur occasionally, a well-managed and thoroughly researched process should prevent this happening and would deliver the project on budget and program.

### 6.3 The proposed Centre Cost is excessive relative to other recent, nearby projects such as school theatres.

A municipal performing arts centre is usually the “peak” facility in its area in terms of providing the highest level of technical capability and performance opportunity. They usually provide a higher level of functionality and amenity than most school theatres. Therefore, their size, technical installations, backstage facilities and so on, are more extensive than school theatres.

Importantly, municipal theatres offer professional theatre experience for school participants when they present their major productions in the municipal theatre setting.

The proposed Whitehorse Centre includes five facilities, as well as the car park, whereas a school theatre is usually just one theatre. School theatres often do not provide the full range of necessary facilities as they can use adjacent classrooms. Therefore, comparison between municipal performing arts centres and school theatres is a case of ‘apples’ and ‘oranges’.

It is very difficult to directly compare theatre developments because of so many variables such as alterations to existing buildings versus new buildings, heritage buildings, the number of venues, site-specific costs (eg ground conditions) and changes in cost over time. However, some recent developments of municipal theatres include:

Geelong Performing Arts Centre (master plan)	\$140m	4 venues, 3 rehearsal, 3 functions, existing
Melbourne Theatre Company 500 seat theatre, 200 seat studio	\$65m, 2009	2 venues, new
The Cube Wodonga, 400 seat studio theatre	\$11m, 2011	1 studio venue, new

For example, comparing studio theatres the standalone 400 seat Wodonga Cube, including support facilities, cost \$11m in 2011. The Whitehorse studio theatre at 200 seats is projected to cost \$5.77m.

Given cost escalation over time, the component costs of the Whitehorse Centre venues are consistent with these examples.

### 6.4 Why should Whitehorse ratepayers pay for this facility when a large number of users are outside the municipality?

The primary audience and usage of the centre is for the residents of the City of Whitehorse. The major community hirers are all based in Whitehorse.

The breakdown of ticket sales shows that over 51% are Whitehorse residents and of those outside of the municipality, many of the sales would be to family and friends attending the concerts of local schools and community groups.

Although ticket sales are one measure of usage, the domicile of many visitors, such as to functions and meetings, is not captured in ticketing data. Ticketing data only identifies theatre audience members. A very large number of participants and performers in the local dance schools, theatre companies and school productions are local residents. Thus the overall number of users are predominantly Whitehorse community members.

As with most Council facilities, such as aquatic centres and sports grounds, it is common for them to be used by people from other suburbs. Similarly, Whitehorse residents visit and use facilities provided by other municipalities.

It should also be noted that venues such as the Whitehorse Centre provide an economic benefit to local businesses by attracting hirers, their staff and visitors to the area, using local facilities and businesses.

### 6.5 Concern about the size of Council Rates increase, partly to help pay for this proposal.

#### Rate Increase

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of household costs and is not an appropriate reference point when evaluating Council rate increases. Council's costs are predominantly made up of infrastructure construction and maintenance, service provision salaries, materials, contracts and utilities, all of which generally exceed other cost increases in the economy. Research and analysis undertaken by the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) indicates that local government costs therefore typically increase by about one per cent above CPI. The CPI also does not take into account increases in demand resulting from demographic changes, increasing population, new regulatory and statutory obligations imposed on councils, cost shifting by other levels of government and any further superannuation defined benefits calls.

The state government's policy is to introduce rate capping from 2016/17 and is expected to establish a cap rate based on CPI. The impact of using CPI alone as the cap would mean that in real terms, Council revenue available to fund services and capital infrastructure would be going backwards year on year. The Essential Services Commission has been appointed to develop the framework under which councils will operate, which is to be recommended to the State by 31 October 2015.

Council's Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) rate increase was further reduced from 5.8% to 5.6% for 2015/16, having previously reduced from 6.0% to 5.8% in 2012/13.

## Funding Strategy

Two major and much used community facilities – Nunawading Community Hub and the Whitehorse Centre – have been under feasibility review for several years and are now ready for funds to be committed and project commencement. This requires careful planning and significant investment over the next five to six years.

While long term loans and drawing on Council reserves and assets form approximately 77.0% of the proposed funding of these projects, rates income is an important contributor to ensuring renewal of these much used community facilities can proceed. Therefore, a one-off Whitehorse City reNEWal fund of 2.0% is included in addition to the general rates increase of 5.6% for 2015/16.

Council will also seek funding support from State and Commonwealth Governments and other potential sources. Other municipalities have received government grants in the past of up to \$12.5m for community facilities.

### 6.6 Why should Council spend \$78m on this project rather than essential services such as roads and so on?

Council has a responsibility to provide services that contribute to the health and wellbeing of local residents, and performing arts activities are recognised as a significant contributor to community engagement and development.

The majority of Victorian and Australian Councils recognise their responsibility to support community cultural activity as well as other activities such as sports and recreation, children's services, age and disability services.

Council has made other provision in its budget for such works as roads as part of a broad distribution of investment across the many different areas of Council responsibilities.

### 6.7 The proposed development impacts excessively on the site, is too large or too high and will affect local residents properties and their value.

The existing centre occupies 1,938m<sup>2</sup> or 3.51% of the total 55,286m<sup>2</sup> (5.5 hectares) of the civic precinct site (including the civic offices and library building).

While the proposed redevelopment requires 6,668m<sup>2</sup> floor area, by adopting a two storey layout the 'footprint' of the indicative design is around half of this at 3,403m<sup>2</sup> or 6.16% of the site, thus minimising the use of additional parkland.

As previously noted, the final design is likely to differ from the concept design. Council would require the future design team to ensure the building is no larger than necessary for specific functional elements such as the fly tower, and would require the facility footprint to be minimised.

### 6.8 The facilities proposed are excessive for Whitehorse community needs.

The proposal has been developed in response to findings from the consultation and research process. As identified in the business case, the size and scope of the redevelopment is tailored to meet the needs of community hirers, provide increased programming opportunities and attract new business to Whitehorse.

The proposed facilities are based on the minimum recommendations of *Oh You Beautiful Stage: Australian Design and Technical Benchmarks for Performing Arts Centres*, Edition 3, VAPAC, 2013. This document is the Australian reference guideline for performing arts centre design. People who are not familiar with performing arts design are generally not aware of the extensive backstage facilities required to properly accommodate and present these activities. The design 'rule of thumb' is that the amount of space behind the proscenium curtain (that is, out of sight of audience members) should equal the amount of space in front. Inadequate provision of backstage facilities is the most common design mistake that permanently restricts theatre facilities, to the detriment of their communities.

The recent consultation process also identified numerous limitations and dissatisfaction experienced by many of the hirers and users currently through aging facilities and limited backstage area.

Council has a responsibility to provide facilities that are safe for the public, users and staff, and fully accessible for the 18.5% of the Australian population who have a long term disability (ABS, 2009). The current centre has OH&S and disability non-compliances in all areas of the building. Many of these require demolition and reconstruction to meet current standards.

### 6.9 The proposed size of the Auditorium at 600 seats is unnecessarily large.

The research and consultation findings indicated that a larger seating capacity than the existing 408 seats is required. Although not all performances are a full house, the larger capacity allows for future audience development.

A number of respondents in the recent consultation process felt that the events they attended were not at capacity and therefore could not see the demand for more seats. It should be noted that the audience numbers vary depending on the type of event and also the day of the week. No theatre is always full. The larger capacity will assist in meeting the demand in tickets during the peak days of Thursday to Saturday.

Seating capacity over 500 seats is attractive to a range of commercial hirers for whom less than this is not commercially viable. The seating increase will therefore help attract events that currently choose not to use the centre, even though they could attract an audience.

An increase in seating capacity also will enable community groups to reduce overall hire costs by increasing potential ticket sales whilst hiring the theatre for less time.

### 6.10 The proposed size of the Auditorium at 600 seats is not large enough.

The consultation and research identified the preferred seating capacity was 400–599. Although there was a small number of responses indicating a preference for a larger seating capacity, there was not sufficient support or demand to warrant seating in excess of 600. During the consultation process it was proposed that some schools would prefer a 1,000 seat theatre. However, averaged over a year of usage, there would not be enough hiring to justify this capacity, nor the associated capital cost or operating cost.

### 6.11 The second, smaller theatre is not necessary.

A second smaller theatre provides an opportunity for a range of programming and hiring that is currently not catered for. In particular for young people's theatre and creative development programs. This also provides an opportunity for lower hiring fees to broaden the access of arts facilities in Whitehorse.

The consultation process identified user demand (26%) for a venue of 100–199 seats.

The second space also maximises the flexibility of the venue, will complement the larger theatre and functions centre and can be used as a gathering and rehearsal space for the larger casts typical of community hirers.

The combined provision of capacity with the theatre, studio, function and rehearsal rooms will enable the Whitehorse Centre to attract medium sized conferences and trade show events, where the plenary capacity of the 600 seat theatre is matched by adjacent spaces enabling, workshop break-out, hospitality and trade shows.

Melbourne has few good small studio theatres: this facility will give Whitehorse a 'market edge' that could attract hirers (and thus revenue and Whitehorse audience opportunity) from a wider market.

Refer also to Part B: Facility Planning, section 2.3.2 Multi-venue Centres and 2.3.4 Studio Theatres.

### 6.12 Why not use other existing facilities nearby, such as the Box Hill Town Hall or other school facilities?

The City of Whitehorse provides a significant number of facilities for a range of purposes. The Box Hill Town Hall is a highly valued community asset and is in demand for largely flat-floor events and presentations — a different type of event than performance.

The Town Hall is a historic building that is unsuited to the requirements of live performance events. (Performers who use it, such as the Wiggles, do so because of its larger audience capacity, at the cost of poor audience sightlines and experience.) It does not have the necessary infrastructure for theatre performances and to introduce such functionality would destroy aspects of the heritage fabric and make it less usable for its current users.

Retro-fitting the town hall for performance would require considerable compromise by current users and would reduce overall usage and performing arts activity in the City of Whitehorse.

In addition, the Box Hill Town Hall would not be suitable for the range of festivals currently staged at 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.

Reliance on school venues would significantly reduce the number of opportunities for participation in the arts, both as



performer and patron.

In addition, the school theatres do not have the performance capability, technical facilities and professional staff of the proposed centre, and thus would limit the type of events presented even more than is currently the case.

### 6.13 While the development is supported, perhaps it should be located elsewhere, in a more suitable location than this park?

The current site has been the centre of cultural activity for 30 years and is recognised as the primary hub for cultural celebration in Whitehorse. It is also the most suitable site to support the large and very successful festivals and outdoor events occurring at the Whitehorse Centre.

### 6.14 Why not keep, maintain and refurbish the existing Centre — it is adequate now or just needs a refurbishment?

Community respondents who use the Whitehorse Centre identified numerous inadequacies and limitations with the centre, although most of these are not apparent to audiences. The performance culture of “the show must go on” tends to hide these problems, with staff working around them. This is a hidden cost as it means staff activities are made inefficient: time is lost struggling with the building.

The Facility Space Program shows that the existing centre is 39.5% (just over one third) of the size of facilities needed to serve into the future (not counting the new studio theatre). Such substantial discrepancies in functional space indicate that the existing centre suffers from operational inefficiencies, confirming community and staff comments. With such substantial under-provision of functional space, it is very difficult to retain major portions of the existing facility to create the proposed facilities.

The existing centre was reviewed in engineering, theatrical and functional terms. The findings were that little of the existing building could be retained without substantial alteration or reconstruction due to required upgrades. The building fabric (roofs, walls, windows, floors), building services and theatrical infrastructure would have to be entirely replaced or reworked for either functionality, disability or OH&S compliance, building code compliance, energy efficiency and sustainable design reasons.

The Quantity Surveyor found that retaining half of the existing structure would save about \$500,000. However, retaining some or all of the existing building would constrain the future facility from providing optimal functional relationships, sustainability and operating efficiency, all impacting on future operating cost. The small capital cost saving would not justify the long-term detriment of inefficient operation.

The maintenance costs of the existing centre are estimated to be \$6.66m\* over the next ten years without improving the functionality or capacity of the centre or providing a full cosmetic refurbishment. Without quality upgrades, the centre will become less attractive to people and hirers. This is likely to lead it into a spiral of increasing cost and reducing revenue. Major components, such as the mechanical ventilation systems, are at the end of their working life (normally 25 years) and could fail at any time. This could lead to unplanned closure of the centre until repaired or replaced. Years 2017/18 and 2021/22 are expected to require maintenance of \$1.29m and \$1.63m respectively in those years alone.

It is highly likely that, if not redeveloped in some way, the Whitehorse Centre would be permanently closed sometime in the next five to ten years.

\* This figure is an update of the previously reported estimate of \$5.2m, including cost escalation over the ten years.

### 6.15 The existing centre has many functional inadequacies and limitations that detract from performance and audience experience, and reduce occupant safety.

During the consultation process, many patrons and hirers strongly supported the redevelopment and identified the limitations of the current facility ranging from parking, crushed foyer space, difficulty accessing seats to inadequate stage and backstage facilities.

Community users were particularly concerned with the lack of backstage facilities and the inappropriateness of children using the centre often having to share inadequate dressing rooms with other users (strangers).

Community hirers noted that the current stage facilities limit the nature of performances and events they can present, reducing opportunities for both their participants and audiences.

There was also considerable feedback on the needs of users wanting to ensure that the redevelopment will take into consideration the views of current hirers.

If the redevelopment proceeds there will be further opportunities for hirers and community groups to provide input and feedback at various stages in the design process.

### 6.16 What will happen to existing Users and Hirers, especially community groups, during the redevelopment process?

During the re-building program, Council will continue to offer a range of theatre performances and special events at other facilities and sites. Partnerships will be developed with other venues within the city to provide residents access to the high quality theatre productions that have been the hallmark of the Whitehorse Centre, as well as providing assistance to the many schools and hirers to identify other spaces to use during the building works.

Although there will be some compromises made during the construction period, all endeavours will be made to provide an on-going program at other venues.

### 6.17 There has not been sufficient community consultation for the project

In the lead up to such a project, a significant amount of consultation and research is undertaken over a period of time. In 2010, an independent telephone survey involved 500 households in Whitehorse. This was followed by 200 person Whitehorse Centre user survey and focus group sessions.

The next consultation process was undertaken to assist with developing the business case. This involved users, local businesses and the wider arts industry.

Prior to the concept plans being developed, over 800 community members and key stakeholders provided input.

In 2015 the most crucial consultation process was undertaken, involving multiple opportunities to provide feedback on the concept plans. Over 700 people provided feedback.

In total, over 1,500 people have contributed and this does not include the hundreds of people represented by specific users groups who responded through their representatives. Although it may not appear a large number in comparison to the total population of Whitehorse, as a cross section of the Whitehorse community, the ratio of people consulted is statistically high.

It should be noted that the most crucial process was the recent consultation when the community had a concept plan to respond to and the future possibilities were tangible prior to any final decisions being made by Council.

### 6.18 The operating costs of the new centre will be too high.

The financial modelling for the new venue shows that increases in operating costs will be off-set by increases in usage. In addition, as the new venue will be far more environmentally sustainable than the current venue, in some cases, operating costs will be lower.

Compared with the 2014/15 actual subsidy of \$1.19m the projected operating subsidy in Year 5 after re-opening is conservatively estimated to be \$1.22m (2023/24). If usage is higher than the very conservative assumptions, the operating subsidy could be lower than present.

### 6.19 The hire costs and ticket prices of the new centre will be higher than now and will not be affordable.

The business case modelling is based on the current 2014 hire charges with a modest 4% per annum adjustment taking into account CPI and other typical cost increases.

The model assumes that a three-tiered hire structure applies: 1) commercial, 2) community, and 3) community subsidy rates. The tiered hire structure enables Council to provide some community groups, such as local performing art groups, with the most subsidised rate.

As the proscenium theatre is a larger capacity venue with increased technical capacity and installations available for use, it would attract a higher charge rate. However, the tiered hire structure enables this to be managed for community groups. In addition, due to the increased seating capacity, it is projected that many community groups will be able to increase their revenue by selling more tickets to performances that are currently sold-out, and may not need to hire the venue for so many days, thus reducing their total hire cost.

## 6.20 There is not enough car parking at the centre, especially for elderly and disability access parking.

The surveys of existing car-parking during performances showed that there were about 34 cars parked illegally on grass areas during the day.

The proposed parking increase includes 34–36 car parks to meet this current shortfall, together with 173 car parks required by the Planning Scheme due to the increased capacity of the building. The Planning Scheme parking provision is for all users of the building including patrons, performers and staff.

The new car parks would include at least four (4) accessible car parks, as required by the Planning Scheme, in addition to existing accessible car parks.

These early estimates would be reviewed in more detailed traffic analysis and surveying, at which time the number of accessible car parks may be increased.

The proposed redevelopment includes a drop-off / pick-up area at the main entry that would enable patrons to drop people at the front door.

## 6.21 The additional car parking is inappropriate in the park setting, or will have excessive amenity impact on the park and adjacent neighbours

During the recent consultation process, significant feedback was received on the car park options, with concern about the potential impact of a multi-level car park on the amenity of the park, neighbours, community safety and loss of green space and trees.

Council responded to the car parking concerns expressed by local residents and advised residents that the northern boundary location for the car park (Option 2) has been ruled out.

Other car parking options will be explored, such as building the additional car parking over existing car park areas, recessing some parking under-ground, changing the staff-only designation of existing parking (for after-hours events) and other possible locations in the precinct.

Design of car park facilities will be required by the Planning Scheme to integrate measures to control noise and light emissions. Also, it would be appropriate to integrate art work into the structure to make it attractive.

## 6.22 The new facility design needs to address particular functional requirements, amenities and accessibility.

Many respondents supported the redevelopment proposal and requested that the facility address a wide range of functional and other factors, such as user consultation in design process, accessibility, hearing assistance, adequate toilets, ventilation, room acoustics, intimacy of the theatre, access to seats and seat comfort, orchestra pit access, sufficient exits and adequate backstage accommodation.

The centre will be required to comply fully with the building, disability access, OH&S and food handling regulations. Public buildings are required to comply with the full extent of AS1428 Parts 1-4 *Design for Access and Mobility*.

The redevelopment proposal includes such measures as: lifts in the foyer and backstage, toilet facility provision 50% higher than code for men and 100% higher for women – as per the performance benchmarks. Hearing assistance systems would be installed in the foyer, box office, theatre, studio theatre, function rooms, rehearsal rooms and Sound Shell.

New ventilation standards are substantially higher than the levels the existing centre provides. The provision of circulation, access, exits and so on would be governed by improved functional design, disability access and building code requirements.

## 6.23 Environmentally sustainable design

All new Council projects are required to meet the energy efficiency requirements of the Building Code, however most projects exceed these basic levels of performance.

Council's Sustainability Strategy 2008-2013 and Energy Action Plan 2009-2014 identify targets for reduction in Council greenhouse emissions, water and energy consumption and waste production.

The redevelopment project would typically be designed to deliver sustainability performance equivalent to 5 Star Green Star or similar rating systems. The design process would include ongoing review of sustainability performance throughout the process.

## **A Consultation Feedback and Submissions**

Commercial-in Confidence: the names and addresses of some respondents are identified in the following documents. There is some repetition as respondents provided feedback in more than one submission and method.

The feedback comprises:

- Online Survey Question 6 responses
- Written submissions made directly to Council
- Petition submitted to Council

## Q6 Are there any other comments you would like to provide?

Answered: 441 Skipped: 118

#	Responses	Date
1	I have attached a document setting out the essential issues that need attention, and my serious concern about the financial cost. (Other aspects are also raised), in relation to the benefits expected.	7/10/2015 2:00 PM
2	Rates are very high + alarming to residents	7/10/2015 1:54 PM
3	see attached	7/10/2015 1:43 PM
4	There seems to be no consideration for storage for any of the tenants who regularly use this place. For whatever reason the WHC has an aversion to providing storage for community groups – Why? How much of the targeted \$78m is attributed to consultants?	7/10/2015 1:42 PM
5	I have a daughter who is at the Utassy Ballet School and I regularly attend theatre shows. I live in Ringwood.	7/10/2015 1:41 PM
6	I accept that some redevelopment may be required although I have no experience or personal knowledge of the need. The centre has been quite adequate for functions and forums + volunteers concerts I attend, although foyer is a bit tight. I think \$78m is an excessive expenditure + I wonder if a lower cost solution couldn't be found. Box Hill is better served by public transport so could not more functions be located in the Town Hall with some redevelopment as required.	7/10/2015 1:40 PM
7	I have several friends who whom are ratepayers in the City of Whitehorse that are female; to help pay their bills. I feel a decrease in their rates would better serve these women. Thank you.	7/10/2015 1:39 PM
8	What we have already is good enough. Where do you expect rate payers to find \$78 million? I'm a pensioner so don't have excess money.	7/10/2015 1:38 PM
9	The current centre suits my needs and I feel there is no need to further develop the centre.	7/10/2015 1:37 PM
10	Please give some consideration to provision of a café open during normal library, council office and centre operating hours. This could be outsourced to a private provider as an income stream and something that would be utilized by the local community. Today's community enjoys safe, well located meeting points and I feel a café would be well supported.	7/10/2015 1:36 PM
11	Have concerns that the centre re-development may cause our rates to increase.	7/10/2015 1:35 PM
12	It may well be that such a facility would be a valuable asset to the community but why can't it be built in Box Hill where access to public transport is considerably better. This would make it necessary to modernize or build a new bus terminal to replace the current one which is a disgrace + must present difficulties entering + leaving for the drivers. It would be interesting to know how long this has been in the council planning + budgeting!	7/10/2015 1:34 PM
13	Option 2 for the car park. This plan places all the buildings in open area leaving maximum open space towards the road. Plus the car park is closer to the theatre for patrons with disabilities or when it is raining.	7/10/2015 1:32 PM
14	The proposed development looks superb. Not being a resident of Whitehorse I am most impressed with your council facility/theatre, even in its present state. Its staff and the programs that are staged are excellent. The proposed development looks wonderful and is exciting to think what new programs could take place in a larger space. I would imagine that with new theatres prices would increase, but hopefully not too much and hopefully car parking charges (if applicable) would not be too excessive.	7/10/2015 1:31 PM
15	Redevelopment proposal looks wonderful. Make sure to include plenty more toilets (there's never enough!)	7/10/2015 1:30 PM
16	Love the staff and very much enjoy the productions and activities.	7/10/2015 1:29 PM

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

17	Cost of tickets etc. for performances and functions should remain the same as at present to continue to serve the local community at an affordable expense for the community. I prefer to attend events/performances at WHC instead of commuting to/from city for similar performances because of convenience regarding parking, value for money and good quality productions & opportunity of keeping in touch with the locals.	7/10/2015 1:28 PM
18	Would like to see an improvement in acoustics if the project is to proceed, as the current system is not satisfactory at times. Have assumed that free parking will still be available, as this is a further incentive to attract patrons.	7/10/2015 1:27 PM
19	As long as this will not put up our rates – as they are too high already. Council in general are costing too much.	7/10/2015 1:25 PM
20	Leave everything just the way it is. I have lived in the area all my life. More monitoring needed for unleashed dogs in the area. Two footballs got chewed during play with my children by friendly dogs just wanted to play.	7/10/2015 1:24 PM
21	It is irresponsible for the council to spend so much of ratepayers money on one asset.	5/29/2015 5:52 PM
22	In an era of exploding entertainment choices, council provided entertainment is an extravagant anachronism - roughly \$1,500 / ratepayer. Money that won't be used for essential services, particularly given the 8-9% rate increases of recent years are no longer permitted. It appears much of the consultations were with those seeking to indulge or advance personal interests at the expense of others. The Federal government is trying to cut costs and talking austerity, not profligacy. Whitehorse should follow. I'll spend my entertainment dollars where I want. I don't need you to provide third rate wannabes and has beens.	5/29/2015 4:53 PM
23	The huge capital cost over a short period x the extra burden on rate payers seems inappropriate. Suggests to me that an "alterations and additions" option should be considered. This means the redevelopment could be done in stages - still resulting in an up to date project, at less cost and less burden to the rate payers.	5/29/2015 4:36 PM
24	I strongly object to a project of this size being funded out of rates for use by a very small percentage of the areas ratepayers. This, if viable, should be a private enterprise.	5/29/2015 4:33 PM
25	My concern is that the cost of hiring will rise due to redevelopment and as a consequence community groups wont be able to raise the funds to cover costs. I understand a lot of current community groups cannot afford to present their performances at the current venue. Perhaps the smaller studio may assist with this although I believe it will continue to be cost prohibitive. My concerns also lie with relocating performances by community groups. If they are unable to find venues then they may loose their audience base and performers. Both of which may take a while to rebuild impacting on long term viability. I certainly hope that this does not impact negatively on small community groups and that costs are kept to a minimum to ensure their prosperity.	5/29/2015 4:25 PM
26	it is an outrages waste of money --- there are other schools which have facilities which should be shared --- if there is a need then the state govt should coordinate a centre for the eastern suburbs	5/29/2015 4:11 PM
27	Redevelopment proposal looks wonderful. Make sure to include plenty more toilets (there's nver enough!)	5/29/2015 3:31 PM
28	It's a great theatre already. Don't spend 72 million changing it. Just build another one somewhere else. Preferably at Blackburn High school. They have room and parking and need somewhere to perform as their amazing music program has to perform in the schoolgym.	5/29/2015 2:57 PM
29	Put a vote to the residents of Whitehorse on the redevelopment project - would rather see this money spent on improving infrastructure and services in Whitehorse.	5/29/2015 2:35 PM
30	See attached	5/29/2015 2:14 PM
31	whilst the redevelopment for the most part is adequate consideration should be made as to the size of the function centre./kitchen This should be increased substantially more ( 450 plus) to meet the size of the main theatre space (divisible space to make it more functional) this will enable corporate groups, Rotary groups etc a space where they can use both the theatre facility and function area simultaneously which is seriously lacking in the region. Currently the only facility that can be used in this way is the Karralyka theatre/function centre. It should be an important consideration for the future developing needs of the region	5/29/2015 1:24 PM
32	I attend the Whitehorse Centre both as a season subscriber + for children's shows. In all of these I am the sole Whitehorse resident so why should Whitehorse residents pay for it. I think the present set up is adequate. Also if redevelopment there would be a ??? period of having to use other venues which in all likelihood would be inferior both in standard of facilities + parking.	5/29/2015 1:23 PM
33	child care is more important.	5/29/2015 1:20 PM
34	Current theatre has excellent acoustics + viewing from all seats + is intimate. This needs to be maintained in the new theatre. As many elderly people attend the centre, car parking needs to be near the centre. Current parking is insufficient for popular shows + daytime performances when council staff also require parking resulting in patrons having to use Walker Park.	5/29/2015 1:10 PM

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

35	The centre is important, but there are other matters that should have priority including review of staff levels and excessive remunerations being paid to staff - not all staff, mainly executives level, salaries paid are ridiculous for responsibilities. Rate increases are too high and could be contained if council cut unnecessary expenditure.	5/29/2015 1:06 PM
36	It is a lot of money and I am not sure it is worth it. We live on the outer council boundary + find it is not central enough for us. I would like to see more money put into caring about our properties, new houses too big, fences on the lean (possible injury for pedestrians) improve nature strips, provide more leaf-sweepers in autumn. Ensure footprints are free from rotting leaves.	5/29/2015 12:59 PM
37	Historically - Cost blow outs occur with most projects. stressed this is only in concept phase, I suspect \$78 m is only a starting point. I am disgusted with the projected huge rate increase driven by this project. Every year council ignores the plight of ordinary people battling to maintain a dignified lifestyle. With respect to a cap on the head of oldies is comfortable, but a cap on council rates would wear much better.	5/29/2015 12:56 PM
38	The proposed re-development is TOO LARGE. The fly tower will be a beacon visible from all surrounding houses - Car parking at present is a problem with council workers at present parking in local streets. The multi level car park in option 2 cannot be built. An Option 1 - we use this public open space to walk in. It is open space not for a car park. And to build this you will be cutting down mature trees for a concrete car park. This parkland is well used. Have you considered using Walker Park for parking and redesigning the car parking in there. That area is already bitumen and that would leave our open green parkland and our mature trees - trees that provide habitat for animals. The plans do not clearly show how much bigger the footprint of the new building will be (the dashed line showing existing building is too faint). Maybe this is intentional - I think it is deceptive. To build the new building you will be removing mature trees. That have been there for 20+ years. I do not agree to this. Recently I had in my letterbox a postcard from council "10 reasons to plant more trees" and yet this proposal talks about removal of 9 trees for the building and many more for the car parks. Whitehorse Council talks about being sustainable and proud of it. I cannot see any of that in this design.	5/29/2015 12:51 PM
39	I am fine with the development but do NOT have crammed seats and also do NOT have no room for the seats in front.	5/29/2015 12:49 PM
40	Don't worry about the \$78 mill. Don't care about the Gov funding still too much. Drop the rates! As for the car park, the one at Mitcham shops looks like crap and now you want another one in beautiful parkland. Sack the councillors and put in a Administrator. The rate money is ours not yours!	5/29/2015 12:37 PM
41	We are concerned that the size of the project is so big that the community feel will be lost and that it will introduce more traffic & parking congestion to an already crowded space. Our children are students at the resident ballet school (Utassy) and we are concerned about where the school will operate from during construction and whether the school will be able to continue using the centre as its base when it is completed.	5/29/2015 12:33 PM
42	I would much prefer to have the centre renovated in view of the massive cost of a completely new centre. I'm in my 20s and still working part time trying to keep up with the rising costs of everything. The thought of the high council rates we'll be paying for evermore is really worrying.	5/29/2015 12:30 PM
43	A waste of money	5/29/2015 12:27 PM
44	Residents who do not attend the centre should not have to fund such a large project for those who want it.	5/29/2015 12:22 PM
45	Feel that the present centre upgraded would be adequate	5/29/2015 12:21 PM
46	A regional Performing Arts Facility should be suitable for school Speech Nights where the whole student body, parents and family can attend live concerts and presentations in a building designed for acoustic performance, that is with the minimum of technology. Small theatrical type performance spaces are spread throughout the municipality, but 1000 seat spaces dedicated to acoustic performance such as The Melbourne Recital Centre do not exist in Whitehorse.  These are two community performing arts events that the City of Whitehorse can provide.	5/29/2015 10:30 AM
47	Car Parking is a problem	5/29/2015 9:50 AM
48	This is an example of reckless spending. I support a more modest investment but it is unreasonable for councillors to put this sort of investment onto rate payers.	5/29/2015 8:26 AM
49	The cost of this proposal is outrageous, as is keeping our council rates at 7.8% to pay for it. I have only attended the Centre for Council meetings. Don't compare to a site in West Australia, look at the Cardinia Centre in Pakenham for comparison, As usual, I am sure there would be insufficient parking for such a grand development, even with the proposed increase. The cost of this proposal makes it prohibitive.	5/29/2015 5:00 AM

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

50	<p>Think about the money that you are spending on this project. Is it necessary to spend so much? Parking in the streets will be so flooded with the increased number of cars for the larger theatre which will impact on residents in local streets. Will the lighting at night disturb the residents?. But an underground car park would be better This survey is not a very reliable survey. The data here should not be considered valid because there is no section that requires a resident to include their name. Why didn't the survey ask for this? The IP address is not sufficient. When a different browser is used it is possible to redo the survey. That means it is possible for one person to enter data 3 times through Internet Explorer, Mozilla and Google Chrome. Not very impressive research Whitehorse for such a serious issue!</p>	5/29/2015 1:22 AM
51	<p>The proposed amount for this redevelopment seems to be quite excessive. There are other amazing theatres that have been built for far less cost. e.g. Sion College's new development. Has the Council considered using the former Nunawading Primary site instead so that there would be sufficient car parking without an awful 3 storey concrete lump that residents have to look at? I would like to see open space throughout Nunawading given a greater priority.</p>	5/29/2015 12:59 AM
52	<p>I have a great concern about the surveys and who you survey; particularly on this issue. Community groups that used to be in Humphreys Ave in weatherboard houses were relocated to Silver Grove to provide open space for the community and housed there. Now you want to take the open space and develop a 3 storey car park that will reduce the amenity of the area. The car park is on the plan as either on the border of Knightsbridge or behind the police station but above ground is not appropriate. Underground parking would reduce the eyesore and although this would cost over \$2 million it would be less of an impact on the community. A monstrous 3 storey eyesore is an expensive price to pay for just 200 odd car spaces. When the Springvale Rd Police Station is opened it is likely that the Police station at Whitehorse Rd may be vacated and levelled because a retro-fit of the station is not possible because of the multi-level rabbit warren construction. This would leave a car park built behind the police station as a terrible eyesore to Whitehorse Rd as well. Have the users such as the Babirra players and Nova theatre been consulted properly as to exactly what they require? There still seems to be no provision for sets to be built in one piece before transferring to the theatre space. Will the increase in the size of the theatre mean an increase in ticket prices? The last three performances at the centre that I have attended have not been fully attended. You say that the second theatre with 200 capacity will be for youth theatre but which groups will use this? Going on the things that appear on the wishlist it seems there are many things that could be recycled from the existing theatre. I'm not saying that the development is not needed but I would hope that there would be smarter use of the ratepayer's money. Where is the consideration for the environment through use of solar energy, water and green energy features? The development does not seem to be sustainable and there doesn't seem to be much "green thinking" happening. If this is just a concept plan as there are no dimensions given, when do we see the blueprint with actual heights and measurements?</p>	5/29/2015 12:41 AM
53	<p>The proposal for the redevelopment of Whitehorse Centre is a good idea, however the car park</p> <p>It would also greatly increase environmental pollution, and noise pollution as well due to the the 9m high car park. It would be a good idea to build the new carpark building by using the space currently being used as a carpark, as it would be very close to the Whitehorse Centre, as well as the library and would provide great access to the main Whitehorse Road.</p>	5/29/2015 12:14 AM
54	<p>1 We do not support the Whitehorse Redevelopment. Of all the neighbours that I have spoken to I have not found one out of 15 who support the redevelopment. 2 Please keep what we have and maintain it. We do not have to live outside of our means. 3 If there is such an urgent need, then let the private sector fund it and run it. 4 Any Increase in rates, or any special levy, is a totally unfair financial burden on the ratepayers of Whitehorse. 5 Who's ego is the Council trying to satisfy???? We are not cows to be milked for every cent we have , just to satisfy a few gigantic Council ego's, or have something grander than the other councils. 6 I suspect that the council has already made a decision , and this survey is just an appeasement. Put it to a referendum with all of the facts and financials.</p>	5/28/2015 11:39 PM
55	<p>Money to be better spent on maintaining and improving roads, footpaths and parks for the benefit of the wider Whitehorse residents andcommunity.</p>	5/28/2015 11:25 PM



## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

56	<p>The \$78 million plan is a tremendous sum of money to invest in a large facility that is poorly situated in terms of public transport and serves a minority of the public when compared to the Rooks road rail crossing removal which provides a huge benefit to a huge cross-section of the local community. It's time that the local council concentrated on providing essential services and withdrew their rate increase in recognition of the tough economic times we are currently in where the burden is placed on the lower end of the economic spectrum.</p> <p>Wake Up please &amp; realise that there will come a time when the worker has nothing left to give! Your rate rises are contributing to the general economic slowdown as people have finite funds, so money spent on rates is not going to be spent in the retail sector!</p>	5/28/2015 10:57 PM
57	Cut rates, don't approve newspending	5/28/2015 9:27 PM
58	I support a modest investment for this type of facility but this proposal is well beyond the scope for a local council	5/28/2015 9:26 PM
59	<p>My wife and I have lived in Whitehorse and enjoy the location and facilities. As a retired couple with limited income we find this venture an extravagance and an impost on our capacity to pay. Such a venture should be budgeted from existing rate revenue without any additional loading. If this is not possible we consider a new facility is unaffordable. The current venue may not be current 'state of art' but it is functional up to a point. From that point of view it is a worthy venue that can be maintained for many more years. A theatre of the extent proposed will probably be better equipped than many existing theatres in Melbourne CBD! Do we need it – we don't think so because if we want to go to live theatre we attend the productions at the major theatres in the CBD. The example used in your material to cost a new facility is in Albany WA which is a one day drive from Perth CBD where there may be major theatres. On that basis there would be a good argument for such a facility in Albany. That argument does not apply for Nunawading. The economics for a demolition and rebuild to the extent proposed are not detailed and the questions asked are based on generalities. There is very little information about the cost of basic ongoing maintenance of the existing complex. There are expressions of need for upgrading to meet current standards but are these compulsory or necessary? I doubt it and the claims are only to build the argument for a new facility. The proposed Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment is a reckless extravagance and appears set to service only an elite section of our community. In a domestic environment such expenditure would be seen as 'living beyond your means'. From our point of view and probably the current State Government's point of view, the Whitehorse CC is currently 'out of control' promoting this venture and we object to the promotion of this project. The new State Government's requirement for financial limitations to be placed on councils is an opportunity to require this proposed project to be reviewed by an independent body that would take into consideration the views of this community. With this proposal the Whitehorse CC is demonstrating the ultimate in uncontrolled bureaucracy. Elected councilors, as a body, seem to blindly follow the fantasies of Council officers who appear to be answerable to nobody. General oversight of local government is absolutely needed as councils operate with impunity at the ratepayers cost.</p>	5/28/2015 5:47 PM
60	<p>No specified parking for Performers If parking is going to be charged for, do performers have to pay? Dressing Room for large Stage, only accommodates approximately 70 people - not enough space for a large Dance School.- would there be an adjacent "overflow" area, such as the current "Soundshell"? Stage &amp; Dressing Room space in small Theatre are too small for a Dance School Production, yet seating may be adequate. Concern regarding costs of hiring large Theatre for non-profit groups - most Dance Schools would need the larger stage, but not necessarily the increased seating. Major concern regarding the cost and real need to the Ratepayers of Whitehorse, especially when the majority of users are local community groups. This kind of development is unnecessary for a suburban Performance Centre - the Centre as it is caters very well for Local Groups.</p>	5/28/2015 5:28 PM
61	<p>On one hand, I do support the Council with the redevelopment as it will bring many benefits to the local community as well as bring non-locals to the area. On the other hand, being a Not-for-profit making Organisation, I have the following concerns:- (1) The continuity of running our shows at your theatre during the redevelopment period. How is the Council going to assist us? Will there be a cost rise on temporary arrangement. Will the temporary relocation disadvantage us in relation to attracting patrons to our show? (2) Is the Council going to raise new theatre hiring fees? For a Not-for-profit Organisation, we are constantly running on a tight budget, so inflated costs can disadvantage us in the future. I would appreciate the Council to take very serious considerations on the above matters and come up with a solution which will benefit organisations like ours, the community and the Council.</p>	5/28/2015 5:28 PM
62	just concernd that the rates of home owners will be increased to cover the cost of tis redevelopment	5/28/2015 5:24 PM
63	A council has no business to be involved in the arty farty. The council to stick to roads / rubbish / recreation (parks , gardens and libraries ).	5/28/2015 4:59 PM

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

64	We would like to ensure the continued community theatre whilst the redevelopment is on The stage is too small, fly tower insufficient, lack of space in the wings of the stage, shared facilities with ballet school unacceptable, dressing rooms need to be larger and more comprehensive, more toilets required , higher height spans to allow for large sets, bigger doorways and loading bay to allow for larger sets, bigger foyer area, more visibility lighted signs from the main road to direct traffic. larger orchestra pit with more than one entrance Thank you	5/28/2015 4:30 PM
65	The proposed re-build is far in excess of the requirements of hirers of the centre. The backstage proposals as listed are a dream wish list for a commercial development and far in excess for a community facility. The cost to build it is an imposition on ratepayers. The present annual subsidy for existing centre is high and the proposal will require an ongoing increase in the subsidy as nothing council provides for community use breaks even. That's why we pay rates. I object to the re-development as proposed.	5/28/2015 4:27 PM
66	Current seating in theatre is shabby and worn and is in urgent need of replacement	5/28/2015 4:22 PM
67	there are other venues which can provide for more people. Total waste of RATEPAYERS money!!!	5/28/2015 3:48 PM
68	The proposed new centre would be an outrageous burden on our Whitehorse community at a time when many ratepayers are being squeezed by rising prices and lower incomes. I think the current 30 year old facility should be maintained and used for much longer. New building regulations should not be used as an excuse to require an expensive replacement.	5/28/2015 3:42 PM
69	The Whitehorse Centre is a really great venue for shows + theatre with good parking. As a resident + ratepayer in the City of Whitehorse I find it has the advantage I don't have far to travel to get first rate and affordable entertainment, which I appreciate as an aged pensioner. The staff at the centre are always friendly + courteous, both at the Box office + during performances. My grandchildren also like to go there. The plans for redevelopment look really good + I hope that the project will go ahead and the council is to be congratulated on spending + supporting an improved facility for the performing arts + other community activities.	5/28/2015 3:26 PM
70	I strongly object to the projected spend on this when other services are in need Maybe a refurbishment could be done at a reasonable cost. Should be a poll of all ratepayers	5/28/2015 3:20 PM
71	I'm a ratepayer I think it is too much money Revamp what's there	5/28/2015 3:18 PM
72	The money would be better spent feeding, housing our less fortunate residents in Whitehorse. Let's really think how many people would use this new centre against how many need a roof over their heads, warmth, clothing and most of all FOOD!!	5/28/2015 3:15 PM
73	Must still have space for the monthly Farmers' Market.	5/28/2015 2:35 PM
74	What a totally inadequate questioner for a \$74million project. Are we to believe this is a genuine attempt to find what the community wants. Why does the questioner not ask for a name and address? As it stands I do not think the council are genuine in having this survey a a real feedback. I get the feeling the decision has already been made and this "survey" is just going through the process to tick the boxes. For the simple reason I could print 10,000 of them and have them all in the negative (or positive depending on my point of view). Then the council would have to decide to abandon the project. Take question 4. I am not a subscriber but attend many performances throughout the year. Yet the question asks if I have attended "a" performance. I have also attended festivals, events and functions. So no one answer would best describe my use of the venue. I also believe a phone survey was done 3 years ago but no one seems to know who was surveyed. So when the question was asked at the recent meeting no meaningful answers could be given. Of all the plays and musicals I have attended it is the actors and their talent that has shone through. The seating is very spacious and comfortable. And I have never had a problem with the sound. If an upgrade is needed I am sure renovations can be made to the existing building at a much lesser cost to the ratepayers, without knocking the whole lot down and beginning again from scratch. Also the council should ask surrounding councils to share the cost of upgrade as I am sure many people from those areas come to see the plays, musicals and other events at the centre. Regarding the 3 story car park for council workers, we have been given two choices with only one really plausible option. Has that area adjacent to the police station been considered, as no one uses that area. Whereas the 2 proposed site are used by resident (walking dogs etc.) and by the famers market. I would have thought that the police will also be obsolete in the not too distant future and an update station plus car parking for council workers could be incorporated.	5/28/2015 1:53 PM

# Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

75	<p>I believe this will be an excellent development for the City of Whitehorse generally and for the performing arts in particular. The limitations of the current theatre are well known and include: The relatively small stage. The size and capacity of the flying tower and space. The small orchestra pit, which has only 1 entrance/exit door. The severe lack of wing space, particularly on the OP side. Height restrictions imposed by the doorway from the workshop to the wings – every set piece must be able to fit through that door which is less than 3 metres high. Limited dressing room space, particularly upstairs where the facilities are very limited also. Shared spaces and access backstage for theatre productions and the ballet school, meaning compromises for both parties that often create difficulties. Insufficient car parking space. Insufficient foyer space when a performance is fully (or heavily) booked. Our designs and our ability to stage high quality productions are always compromised by these various limitations. If theatre is to grow and improve in Whitehorse, these limitations must be addressed. It is clear that the proposed re-development does address all the issues and will allow and encourage all types of performance to flourish in Whitehorse. This in turn will ensure that it becomes unquestionably the premier performing arts facility in the eastern suburbs, and that we and other users of the centre will be able to present theatre of the highest quality. Our biggest concern with the development is continuity of our operations. It is not at all clear what would happen (where we could go, how we might operate) if there were to be no theatre for 2 years or more. We have built our reputation on presenting musical shows of the highest quality and to do that we need at least the level of facilities we currently have (fly tower, orchestra pit etc.). I would urge Council and the developers to do everything possible to keep the existing theatre running for as long as possible while building takes place around it, thereby reducing the down time to a minimum. Ideally, the new main theatre would be completed while the current theatre continues to be usable, leading to a smooth transition to the new theatre. Another concern for us at this stage is the likely cost of hiring the new theatre. We would be particularly interested in the option of using just the downstairs section of the new theatre at a price that still makes that economical and viable for us, and I urge Council to ensure that community groups like ours are not disadvantaged by higher prices or the need to suddenly find additional patrons.</p>	5/28/2015 1:46 PM
76	<p>The proposed facilities look nice to have. But at \$78 million (and likely to increase?) are extremely expensive!!! What benchmarking have Council or consultants done? I have read of similar slightly smaller projects at substantially lower cost. Another example of higher costs in the public taxpayer sector? Council rates have climbed out of control over recent years!! Way in excess of CPI!!! Why not user pays? There are 124000 users, they will enjoy the facilities, but many of them would not be council ratepayers!! If, as claimed, the operating costs for the new centre are the same as for the existing centre, and the capital and interest cost is covered by the rate increase, then there ought be no increase in entry / usage fees? If so, users from outside the city pay nothing extra?</p>	5/28/2015 1:33 PM
77	<p>I have perused your redevelopment brochure and feel the concept design is excellent. However, I am apprehensive as to how handicapped patrons will cope with alternative venues during construction, particularly with car parking. big problem is car parking. Even in the present situation, arrive at least an hour prior to a performance, particularly when there is more than one function held in the building. I would point out that a large proportion of patrons at performing arts are elderly + handicapped and their needs should be carefully considered, with more allocated handicapped parking spaces. I note that an additional 173/211 parking spaces is considered adequate for the new complex - this needs to be substantially increased, particularly as multi activities are proposed to occur simultaneously. One other suggestion is for a "crying room" included in each theatre to prevent performances being interrupted by crying children or handicapped adults. Best of luck!</p>	5/28/2015 1:26 PM
78	<p>We as senior ratepayers are of the opinion that Council is taking advantage of the opportunity to raise rate yet again, way above the C.P.I. to build this elitist project for the use of those citizens who can afford to use it. Once again Council is pushing well above the reason for their existence! It is all very well to provide cultural facilities and we are not against that, but have we forgotten those who are struggling at this difficult time? We note that a small survey has been conducted, but with a city population of approximately 150,000 is that adequate? Or is it a matter of pushing the project through this year before rates are possibly capped by government? We believe it is time to rework the budget without the inclusion of this proposed seriously expensive project.</p>	5/28/2015 1:16 PM
79	<p>I believe that a building that's 30 years old should not be viewed + classed as OLD! There are many other very famous buildings in the world that still cater for performances though they're heaps older than the Whitehorse Centre. Some refurbishments are due, but not a totally new building which would end up costing well over the current estimate of \$78,000,000! In this difficult economic times it would be extremely inappropriate of council to burden the rate payers with extra costs.</p>	5/28/2015 1:11 PM

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

80	This is a disgraceful proposal, you should be ashamed of yourselves. To suggest that Whitehorse ratepayers need a \$78 million dollar facility just to please a select few is showing ratepayers what you really think of them. At a time when people are finding hard to just pay their basic water, gas and electricity you propose to increase rates by more than 7% (7.6 to be exact) and then to show your contempt you want a \$78 million facility. Keep the old one & spend a few million to make the necessary maintenance work. May I also suggest you cut your executive salaries. Shame on you.	5/28/2015 1:06 PM
81	With the cost involved in both the construction and ongoing operational expense I would have thought all rate payers would be surveyed not a select few. The cost impact is huge and without a business case where profits are made I do not see the benefit to all ratepayers. While the intent is commendable State + Federal Taxes pay for the 'Arts' not local councils who would be better served attending to the needs of all rate payers not just a few. Following on from Para 1 The ongoing operational losses are greater than the \$5m spend on updating the existing centre over the next 10 years where is the economic benefit?	5/28/2015 12:58 PM
82	As a resident of Whitehorse my wife and I have enjoyed many shows at Whitehorse Centre This year as I age we are not attending as I'm disabled + find walking difficult. The centre is a good place for shows but it is getting a little tired. We both look forward to attending many shows in future in 'New' centre.	5/28/2015 12:53 PM
83	The benefits obtained from the redevelopment can not justify the \$78 million proposed. Higher rates and admittance prices will mean that many patrons will not be able to attend functions nor performances - they will be out of reach of the average person - thus numbers of patrons will definitely fall.	5/28/2015 12:50 PM
84	Not an important project (where will the money come from?) but a great concept for the future. Maybe the State Government could help out with funding.	5/28/2015 12:46 PM
85	I believe the size of theatre and car park is no longer conducive to the area where the proposed new building and especially car park are to be erected. I believe the 2 options given by the council for the car park are totally without care and attention to local residents. I believe the erection of car park is totally for the employees of council use and council is using the theatre as an excuse to build. As more high density living is occurring in Whitehorse therefore no gardens we need all the park to cater for people, family's moving into townhouses and apartments in the area, especially now council has approved moon scaping of properties. Also this questionnaire is inadequate for the seriousness of this venture.	5/28/2015 12:34 PM
86	The cost of the development seems excessive and the proposed "one off" levy of 2% to kick start the redevelopment will very likely become permanent because the estimated \$78 million will undoubtedly rise. A 7.6% rate rise for 2015/16 (Leader May 11th) is already excessive and the pressure on house prices will mean that many people will not be able to continue to live in Whitehorse - especially the older people who would be a large group of potential mid-week users of the facility.	5/28/2015 12:23 PM
87	A waste of rate payers money. City of Whitehorse should have no business in having, running an entertainment centre. Get back to basics.	5/28/2015 12:12 PM
88	While estimates are for a \$78 million expenditure, before long with rising costs, changes of plan, the ratepayers will be looking at maybe \$100 million. The councillors seem determined to build the biggest + the best entertainment centre rather than committing themselves to just upgrading & refurbishing the existing facilities.	5/28/2015 11:35 AM
89	1) Views of the residents and Ratepayers Association on the additional rate increase of 2% in 2015-2016 for the purpose of paying part of the cost of the new building, is a serious factor for me. 2) Will the rates for the next year be held below inflation when inflation when this limit becomes the limit to rises in 2016-17 in the following year? 3) \$78m is the largest project ever undertaken by the shire even though it is partly financed by same element of the large reserves taken over from Box Hill, together with the property acquired, for which no credit is given. 4) If 5.2 million funding required for renewal work on the present structure over the next 10 years. This is much to be preferred then this project to more than double of the present facility for which no business case has been made. 5) Let us remember the poor state of Nunawading finances when it was ??? able to take over Box Hill Council in 1994! 6) LET US HEAR THE BUSINESS CASE!	5/28/2015 11:32 AM
90	1) Build car park in Walker Park on old netball courts, *1 near other tall buildings *2 used for parking already *3 football has bigger crowds than Whitehorse Centre *4 leaves parkland in tact. 2) Add gate to entry Walker Park near cricket nets.	5/28/2015 11:07 AM
91	I do believe that some upgrade of the centre is needed. A 200 car multi-storey carpark is over kill and will detract from the actual and visual amenity of the council area.	5/28/2015 8:44 AM

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

92	Any such development means further loading the Ratepayers. Is this project going to serve solely the ratepayers. When Box Hill, Whitehorse and Ringwood, why can't the three Shires join in providing one large up to date facility as it is residents in these areas patronise adjoining centres anyway. This business of each Shire providing its own facility does not make good economic sense I do not agree in the provision of prestige projects. Council's are for ever complaining of escalating costs in providing basic services to ratepayers which is essentially the Councils main task. Here they go planing up market projects for which they seem to find the funds. I am of the strong view that Councils should stop smoking dream pipes and concentrate on maintaining rates at an affordable level. I am not sure what sort of survey was conducted to determine the scale and purpose of this project. Most of the residents in Whitehorse in my opinion are economically struggling middle aged and retirees. The design of this project belongs somewhere in Toorak not in Whitehorse. I agree the facility might need renovation and some upgrading, but a brand new project of the scale proposed in somewhat extravagant considering the economic circumstances of the residents of Whitehorse.	5/27/2015 11:42 PM
93	We are new owners in Whitehorse and are very happy with the council and services it provides. Ongoing updating of important community buildings is important and encouraged.	5/27/2015 11:30 PM
94	Yes, it needs some maintenance but think that the scale and cost is way over the top	5/27/2015 11:20 PM
95	A significant financial outlay for the Council. This proposals provides no details as to how the Council will meet this cost. State/Fed Government funding ??, rates increase ??, loan ??	5/27/2015 11:05 PM
96	Source: Whitehorse Leader, 2015-05-25 p. 5 ...smaller groups that could not fill the main auditorium. So why does the main auditorium size need to be increased, in actual fact, a number of recent performances have seen the auditorium less than half full (following a trend of the last couple of years. As a matter of fact - I am beginning to wonder why there is currently such a grandiose edifice that serves only 124,000 patrons. The refurbishment should follow current tends of smaller audiences in intimate spaces - two smaller performance areas that can be opened to one large playhouse, would appear to be more appropriate. The citizens of Whitehorse are proud of their 'green leafy suburb.' So why is the little green open space available, about to be eroded with a larger building footprint, plus more car parking spaces (including a three story building) when to flog the point the auditorium is not currently filled with patrons and to ...smaller groups that could not fill the main auditorium. With a \$78 million guesstimate, one has to really wonder why the current councillors wish to put their own constituents into debt.	5/27/2015 9:33 PM

# Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

97	<p>Over many years, my wife and I have enjoyed performances, at the Whitehorse Centre, through theatre subscription packages. We consider our cultural experiences to be a significant advantage, of living in Whitehorse. I can see that the centre is tired and worn. It has given good service and could do with some renovation and refreshment. However, I object to the enormous impost, of a \$78mil redevelopment, on the ratepayers of Whitehorse. There has been some argument, that the redevelopment would be financed from savings and loans and not from rates. But this is a fallacious argument, based on an accounting deception. Whitehorse City revenue comes broadly from rates 60%, fees and charges 27%, grants and subsidies 10%, and interest and other income 3%. So no matter where the finance, for the development, comes from directly, indirectly it will come mainly from ratepayers. Savings will have come mainly from ratepayers. Loans will have to be serviced mainly by ratepayers. This burden on ratepayers is evident in the council's proposal, to add a 2% impost on 2015/16 rates, to bring them to a shocking 7.6%. I cannot afford such high rate rises. My pension is indexed to CPI, only, and every time costs increase, more than CPI, we become a little poorer. We cannot afford this unnecessary expense. The redevelopment, of the present 2390 square metre centre into a multi-theatre complex of 6400 square metres, 2.7 times larger, is not justified. We have attended some shows, in the centre, which have been sold out. We have attended some shows, also, which were only half full. While not perfect, for every event, the size of the current theatre is right for most events, in Whitehorse. The eastern suburbs already have a larger theatre, next door, the Karralyka Theatre in Ringwood. The oversized redevelopment brings a new set of problems, which require expensive solutions. • The proposed design recognises that the larger 600 seat theatre will be too big for many performances, by adding a studio theatre of 200 seat capacity. So we would go to enormous expense, to produce two theatres, which will be only partially used. Almost every seat, in the current theatre, has a good view. This will not be the case, in the back rows of the balcony of the larger theatre. Why destroy what we have, when it works well? • The redevelopment will bring problems of greater traffic and car parking needs. Yet the larger building will encroach on existing car parking and open space. The proposed solution is to build a 3-storey carpark, which will take away further open space and produce an eye-sore next to Walker Park, no matter how it is dressed up. Though, to meet the increased car parking capacity, there is no increase in exiting capacity. There is no public transport solution. We will still only have the carpark exit to Whitehorse Road and Murpheys Avenue, which block up badly under current traffic levels. • The expanded theatre complex and concrete carpark will severely reduce the outside space, available for family festivals, farmers markets, etc. Local residents will lose out. • Not only will the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre cost at least \$78mil to construct, it will subsequently bring greater recurrent costs of running it into the future. All such performing arts centres run at a loss and have to be subsidised. The bigger the centre the bigger will be the subsidy. The multiple facilities will require more staff and greater management overheads, at the ongoing expense of the ratepayers. Is that the true purpose of the project; to build an empire for management? For whom is the proposed redevelopment meant to cater? Not the residents of Whitehorse, who are well catered for by the current centre.  said that Melbourne and the eastern suburbs needed more theatres. I do not think that Whitehorse ratepayers should pay so dearly, to meet the needs of the broader Melbourne community. Already the Whitehorse theatre program is attracting outsiders, to performances.  Catering for others is reasonable, when there is a balance of cross subsidisation. For instance, we can attend the Karralyka theatre in Maroondah. But building a wonderful, multi-theatre complex in Whitehorse, as a shining light to the eastern suburbs, will cater less for Whitehorse residents, at their greater expense. There is no justification in spending \$78mil on a theatre complex redevelopment, when there are greater needs, in the City of Whitehorse. For instance the money could be better spent on acquiring more open space. With high density development rampant, throughout Whitehorse, there is less and less private open space around residences, whilst the population is increasing. Whitehorse desperately needs more public open space, to meet the growing population needs. The millions would be better spent, purchasing the old brick quarry site, to relieve the pressure of the high density housing, around Mount Pleasant Road.</p>	5/27/2015 8:44 PM
98	<p>\$78mill (which will likely be more in the final analysis, is an enormous sum. Granted sporting facilities create set up and ongoing costs and cultural facilities are similarly required for those not interested in sports e.g. our senior members, but this cost can not be justified with rate increases causing residents undue distress. It is just far too much to spend and I'm very surprised Councillors don't realise that before even contemplating these projects.</p>	5/27/2015 6:57 PM
99	<p>Would like to see the car park moved closer to Whitehorse Road ie on current sight near industrial zone, using land near Polic St. You could bus workers to and from Council Buildings or an arrangement could be made with Amart/Harvey Norman as generally through the week the Amart car park is empty. When deciding on voting - ALL COUNCILORS - ask yourself whether you would like such a large development  no security and no piece of mind. Please do not proceed with current concept plan. Wrong for the area, which we currently love.</p>	5/27/2015 6:04 PM

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

100	Please ensure you have a sit down organised meeting with the theatre companies (NOVA + Babirra) to discuss what is required when it comes to the stage/wings/dressing rooms etc. Their input into your design would be invaluable.	5/27/2015 5:56 PM
101	I do agree the theatre complex does need updating, however, I am quite sure it could be refurbished without spending \$78 million, which by the time the complex is finished the figure will be much higher. We would very much like a new theatre, but this is not the time to spend such a large sum of money when there are many other projects within Whitehorse which are in need of urgent help especially housing for the many families that are homeless.	5/27/2015 5:53 PM
102	With the proposed increase in the annual rates, myself I feel this increase should be spent on more immediate needs which benefit the majority of residents in the Whitehorse Municipality. If rates must increase in-order to increase salaries + absolute essentials, how much will they be increased in coming years to pay for monies borrowed for proposed redevelopment?	5/27/2015 5:48 PM
103	I am concerned that a large number of trees will need to be removed for either 3 tier car park options. I would hope a decent landscaping effort will be made to remediate the site when construction is complete, including trees. I hope there will be helpful arrangements made to enable the Farmer's Market + the Craft Market to continue as usual.	5/27/2015 5:43 PM
104	The Whitehorse Centre needs to be re-branded upon re-opening. Currently many people are confused and cannot distinguish the Civic Centre from the Whitehorse Centre. I suggest "Whitehorse Performing Arts Centre" and "Whitehorse Civic Centre" for the offices. Rebranding once complete allows the new centre to be distinguished from the old and will distinguish it from the Council Offices.	5/27/2015 5:40 PM
105	Some consultation!  The size you are looking at is too large, too expensive. Truck turning circle will be a nightmare unless it is only used during business hours. Careful planning CONSULTATION is needed to ensure you get it right without further wasting our rates.	5/27/2015 5:37 PM
106	As a resident I would agree with the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre only if there were guarantees that community theatre i.e. NOVA and Babirra etc. were protected i.e. that they wouldn't be forced to pay more to use the upgraded facilities in turn forcing them to increase their ticket costs which may price out many patrons especially pensioners. I also strongly believe the leadlight feature in the Whitehorse Centre should be protected and integrated into the new building as this was the result of a community project and is significant.	5/27/2015 5:30 PM
107	I would question if the 580-600 seating in the theatre is of sufficient size and could be large for future use. I would also like to see more than one meeting room. Currently I see this as a limitation. I would have at least two if not four. The document that I have seen does not indicate disabled accesses to the various venues and floors. No indication of elevators or other means of moving between floors for disabled.	5/27/2015 5:01 PM
108	The proposed Centre Development looks amazing and without doubt will turn out to be a major asset to the already vibrant council. I am however very concerned about both proposed car park options. What concerns me is the following: • Loss of current lush grassed areas • Car parks are never pretty • Most importantly- Potential to attract unsavoury people. Especially late at night  This development really should happen, but I believe the car park issue needs to be addressed. I offer the following suggestion. The high rise car park is built across the road in the shopping precinct. What benefit will this offer? • Greater access to car spaces for shopping precinct • Increased revenue for proprietor's • If cost to park is envisaged then increased revenue • More space around the new centre for trees, grass and families to enjoy • No ugly car park near residential area I also suggest an over pass is built to avoid over use of Maroondah Highway lights and increase pedestrian safety. I believe in progression, but I want everyone to benefit. Business, community and families I believe will all benefit from this exciting new development!	5/27/2015 4:30 PM
109	The redevelopment is unnecessary and a disgraceful waste of money. I attend many event at the centre and it is excellent as it is.	5/27/2015 3:24 PM
110	We prefer the option No 2 development.	5/27/2015 3:22 PM
111	The project is too costly . Ratepayers shouldn't be expected to pay for this extravagant build . Some people are already struggling to pay their bills. It's not the role of Council and ratepayers to build state of the art entertainer centres. I strongly object to thisproject.	5/27/2015 3:02 PM

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

112	I do not support this redevelopment. I requested for a detailed business case for this development but to my great disappointment or to be expected that there was no final business case until the feedback. This is a \$78m investment that requires ongoing operating expenses and there is no business case for it!!! This shows that COUNCILLORS have no accountability for the way the rates are being raised and spend. I fully support the current Victorian Government for capping the rate increase to bring sustainable transparency and accountability to the way decisions are made by	5/27/2015 12:40 PM
113	This is a gross waste of money as the current centre is capable of serving the numbers who regularly attend events there. There is no business case that building such a edifice will encourage more to attend the events that are held. once again the councils is hell bend of spending money on things that do not benefit the majority of rate payers. Furthermore it is testament to the council inability to come to grips with the real community needs.	5/27/2015 11:04 AM
114	The Whitehorse Centre is tired and needs updating.	5/27/2015 11:02 AM
115	I suspect your figures for attendance are misleading, how many people a year actually go inside? Whitehorse festival doesn't use the inside but suspect you have included those numbers too... It isn't well known or easy to locate, it is an extraordinary amount of money, and frankly the council has form for getting very poor value for money. Look at the massive building Trinity Grammar built, less than 50 mil, but you want to spend \$78 million on a renovation of a small building....why do you get such poor value for money....just nonsense. Spend some money on upgrading the old town hall, it is easier to find, doesn't need much money spent	5/27/2015 10:22 AM
116	I do not think that the residents of Whitehorse are really in a position to fund this costly project.	5/27/2015 8:38 AM
117	120 million to build the tax office building, housing 1200 people, 20 stories...you want to spend 78 million for performing arts hall....there is not compelling value for money...rip off of ratepayers	5/27/2015 8:28 AM
118	The carpark should NOT be built on parkland. Every council in Melbourne is looking at reclaiming road space to expand park areas yet you build concrete slabs on prime land? Have it underground, it does cost more but the open space it would save is worth more than that.	5/26/2015 10:23 PM
119	I attended the information evening to explain this proposal which was the first time I had attended the Centre. they seemed pretty happy with the way the Centre is now rather than making it larger.	5/26/2015 10:07 PM
120	Have to say that the car parking plans are crazy - taking away open green space. Why not develop on the already large car park, or maybe reduce the amount of free parking to council people?	5/26/2015 9:11 PM
121	The Whitehorse centre need refurbish only.	5/26/2015 8:33 PM
122	I attend functions in the Centre frequently and support a refresh/updating of the facility, including increase in dressing rooms and an upgrade of the stage features. However, this proposal is a rebuild and massive expansion, which I cannot support given that it is our rates that will be increased to pay it.	5/26/2015 6:17 PM
123	this is a waste of rate payers \$ in the current economic climate	5/26/2015 6:16 PM
124	As a performer at the Whitehorse Ctr I agree that there needs to be improvement in the backstage area, but is it necessary to have such an extensive renovation. It was stated that millions of dollars could be spent over the next five years or so but that is a far cry from the \$70 plus which would be spent on this venture.	5/26/2015 5:11 PM
125	I strongly oppose the carpark development. It is not necessary and holds more disadvantages than advantages. The grassed area is constantly used by myself . A concrete carpark will only attract negative people to the community and be a major hindrance on those who use the area to walk through our play.	5/26/2015 4:42 PM
126	At least it is the Council Offices this time	5/26/2015 4:28 PM
127	Not sure why you need to spend 78K when already looks good	5/26/2015 4:07 PM
128	Scale of development not suited to current location. Such a facility needs to be closer to train station/bus hub, preferably in Box Hill.	5/26/2015 3:59 PM
129	The current Whitehorse Centre meets my expectations - some changes in acoustics/IT should suit evolving needs. We are surprised that the Whitehorse Council wants to undertake 2 mega projects, namely Whitehorse Centre and Nunawading Senior Citizens Centre redevelopments in the same period, with \$78m + \$30m capital outlay. This is when rate capping will be in place from 2016 plus funding from State + Federal Budgets have dried up. Also, Whitehorse Council has not prepared any Plan B - any alternate to entire redevelopment - such as Acoustics, IT etc. City of Whitehorse Council is doing a great job + we are proud to live here. However, we should not be over ambitious with cultural projects in a volatile + vulnerable economic climate.	5/26/2015 3:21 PM



## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

130	This proposal is a complete waste of ratepayer funds. given the disgusting high salaries of senior staff and the large number of them, a salary reduction would be more in order than the proposed rate increase in any case.	5/26/2015 3:13 PM
131	Absolutely ridiculous redevelopment. What about some consideration to the large community of elderly residents who have trouble paying your rates. The stupid rate increase this coming year is putting a big strain on all these residents.	5/26/2015 3:13 PM
132	Council should be more concerned about its many ratepayers who are struggling with the current costs of living in whitehorse instead of coming up with these grandiose schemes	5/26/2015 11:34 AM
133	It's time for council to start living within it's means. This building is unwarranted and unnecessary. We do not need community spaces, we need lower rates. Give our money back.	5/25/2015 10:10 PM
134	1) REDUCE SIZE OF NEW CENTRE Eliminate (a) small theatre + (B) rehearsal room. Both functions could be carried out in the large theatre as it will never be used 24/7. 2) CAR PARK 1. To remain as free parking. 2. Consider changing the 3 level concept to a single level "underground" at oval (east) end graduating to above ground towards present theatre + extend under new complex at present ground level catering for 300+ spaces. Then put another car parking layer on top of the remaining open area as "open parking".	5/25/2015 5:30 PM
135	I love your productions at W/H - especially those by NOVA. It will be great to do so in this improved place (e.g. suitable foyer size + better parking).	5/25/2015 5:21 PM
136	All that is needed is some refurbishment of the seating which is getting a bit worn. The redevelopment as proposed is "over the top". There are many more important things on which money could be spent. The increased in rates to pay for the proposed redevelopment is unacceptable.	5/25/2015 5:18 PM
137	Please discuss with theatre production companies exactly what is needed to make the use of the theatre, stage, wings, dressing rooms etc. etc. into the future of production at the venue.	5/25/2015 5:15 PM
138	If this extravaganza was a viable proposition, private enterprise would take the opportunity to build and operate it as a commercial business. The City of Whitehorse has to concentrate on core Council responsibilities and realise that it is not there to deaden ratepayers' senses with entertainment while perpetually raising rates and building its own empire. A proposal to demolish a building less than 30 years old should be a cause of great shame to Council. Building standards and regulations will always change - does Council propose to demolish all its buildings (including Box Hill Town Hall) whenever new standards are introduced? Under no circumstances, should this "Taj Mahal" be built by Council.	5/25/2015 5:14 PM
139	strongly urged inclusion of a 200 seat theatre for screening films to audiences greater than the capacity of the Willis Room. I do not see any mention of a screen nor quality video projection equipment. Retractable seating is a poor compromise and unsuitable for watching movies.	5/25/2015 5:03 PM
140	Although I recognise that the Whitehorse Centre needs redevelopment, I strongly disagree with the car park plans. My choice would be car park (1) I strongly reject the car park 2 that is proposed.	5/25/2015 4:56 PM
141	Although agreeing to the redevelopment of the Arts Centre - does it need to be so large and take so much of the budget. I strongly disagree with car park concept plans. car park 2 should never be considered.	5/25/2015 4:53 PM
142	There are more important needs in society than a Civic Centre.	5/25/2015 4:51 PM
143	I believe that the council could achieve an upgrade to the existing facility without incurring costs of \$78 million and adding to the financial burden on the council and ratepayers. The proposal to build a three storey car park in parkland is abominable.	5/25/2015 4:51 PM
144	I agree that some refurbishment and further development is needed to ensure future needs are met. However, I have noticed that for some theatre performances not all seats are filled. Has this been taken into consideration? Backstage facilities certainly need to be modernised. Parking: I understand that houses on the boundary with the proposed parking have not been consulted about the impact on their properties. Full consultation and opportunity for translation to other languages if required.	5/25/2015 4:45 PM
145	I feel that car park option #2 would adversely affect local residents and devalue their homes. Option #1 would have the least impact.	5/25/2015 4:41 PM
146	Do not build. Far too big an impose on rate payers. You are spending our money not yours. Paying the bills is hard enough without having unnecessary costs.	5/25/2015 4:39 PM

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

147	By all means refurbish but Do NOT spend \$78 million of rate payers money on an unnecessary project. Get your priorities in order. Some of the footpaths around Vermont South are dangerous. Spend more money on essentials NOT Empire Building. We are self funded retirees - It's hard enough now with gas + power prices increasing. We don not need unnecessary rate increases. Remember we voted you in - we can vote you out.	5/25/2015 4:36 PM
148	it is hidden away, not many people even know it is there, and the millions it is a tough time out here, not the time to be forcing massive increases onto people, perhaps give the town hall a face lift for a 100th of the cost... it prob gets more use anyway	5/25/2015 4:34 PM
149	I feel this project is far too large. The centre is a local/neighbourhood venue. It doesn't need to be a Melbourne City venue. While some refurbishment may be necessary, it is not meant to service greater Melbourne. As the centre is at the moment it has a low-key environmental impact on its surrounds. The main auditorium is a nice size and I wouldn't like to see it any bigger. A larger room will make it harder for patrons at the back to see the stage. Surely the main theatre could be utilized as a rehearsal room - it isn't occupied all the time. We all know there will be cost overruns and \$78 million will not be the final cost. Some of us in the suburbs are struggling. A 7.6% rate rise will not be happily received. Most times when I attend the theatre at the centre the car park isn't full, even for PM shows. If more parking is really needed, consideration should be given to underground parking instead of going up. When council made alterations to the front of council offices, the Sunday (monthly) Market was changed for ever (and not in a favourable way). Many of the good quality merchandise merchants left. Extra rooms could be added on and if parking went underground (for some spaces) the car park could be partially utilised. I use the centre to see theatre but a lot of rate payers don't. Some aren't interested and some don't drive. I feel the size and the expense are just not warranted.	5/25/2015 4:19 PM
150	The redevelopment is extremely important to the community of Whitehorse and surrounding areas keeping Whitehorse on the cutting edge of today's arts culture and prepared for its future. I am excited about the changes and am looking forward to experiencing their result. What a gift for the generations! Thankyou Whitehorse Council and its supporters for your vision and dedication.	5/25/2015 2:58 PM
151	Larger?	5/25/2015 1:39 PM
152	Make sure there is sufficient parking, particularly for older people who support the theatre program.	5/25/2015 1:38 PM
153	The scale of the project appears over ambitious. More modest options should be considered.	5/25/2015 1:37 PM
154	Have you considered using the money on the former Nunawading P.S. site?	5/25/2015 1:35 PM
155	Bigger?	5/25/2015 1:33 PM
156	The proposal is a gross waste of ratepayer funds and is completely unnecessary.	5/25/2015 1:32 PM
157	The Whitehorse Centre and the Box Hill Community Arts Centre both play vital roles in developing further the importance of arts as a means to social cohesion. My main concern is that the new development may lead to considerably increased hiring fees and, consequently, ticket fees. It would be terrible, and counterproductive, if community groups and audiences were priced out.	5/25/2015 1:29 PM
158	Both the rate rise and the redevelopment of the centre is despicable and outrageous.	5/25/2015 11:31 AM
159	Given such a huge cost for the project, I think careful thought should be given as to whether this is the right location for such a venue. Box Hill with it's transport options, and being in the midst of a construction boom, would seem the more obvious choice. Please consider.	5/24/2015 10:44 PM
160	The idea of a redevelopment has some merit but providing an exemplary performance centre is not core business for Council. Taking on a \$78M plus project (without fail they always go over budget) is not ideal for Council when rate capping is about to be introduced and other more critical services may need to be cut. Where is the business case for this facility? The community and ratepayers are entitled to view it. The model requires a much greater commercial usage than 20%. Council is not a benevolent society!	5/24/2015 10:26 PM
161	A complete waste of money. Whitehorse has no need for these venues. I'm sick of having council money wasted on this sort of fluff.	5/24/2015 7:35 PM
162	I feel option 2 for the car park is the most appropriate as it is closer to the centre. There is certainly a need to add additional car parking - we attended a show last week and even allowing extra time for parking, found nothing left and had a long walk back to the centre.	5/24/2015 1:10 PM
163	We don't need this.	5/23/2015 11:35 PM
164	I am disappointed that the redevelopment will have to be funded by an increase in our Rates. Surely it could be managed on a smaller scale within the Council's present budget.	5/23/2015 10:54 PM

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

165	Ridiculous the cost of this project. Why do the whole of Whitehorse ratepayers have to fund a project that only benefits the minority. DONT BURDON RATEPAYERS TO SATISFY ONLY A FEW. Spend money on projects that help all in Whitehorse and definitely don't raise rates to this exorbitant extent on waste of time projects. The current amenities are sufficient for the minority of locals. I repeat don't raise our rates for such a useless project!	5/23/2015 12:47 PM
166	You do not ask about preferred car park! I would prefer the Option 2 as it is closer to the theatre and would not be too obvious from Maroondah Highway.	5/23/2015 1:26 AM
167	We do not need a new facility. We need lower rates.	5/22/2015 10:49 PM
168	The cost to ratepayers, whether direct or through rent, is going to be really excessive. Whereas the building may need upgrading, the current proposed increase in rates (and doubtless in other charges) is going to hit current ratepayers who may never see the completion, or even attend. What benefit is there to them now for the increased heavy sacrifice? I think the cost is too much to bear.	5/22/2015 5:42 PM
169	I have attended the Centre on numerous occasions since it was opened in 1986. Until I read this brochure I hadn't really thought about re-development, but now I can agree the foyer is not big enough for comfort. Also I like the idea of a Studio Theatre. Also a bigger stage + back stage for big musicals like "Cats" + "Phantom Of The Opera" would be welcome.	5/22/2015 5:38 PM
170	Funds should be put to services for the people living in Whitehorse. \$78 million is an extravagant amount to spend on rebuilding the WhitehorseCentre.	5/22/2015 5:34 PM
171	Having worked in the theatre (Mitcham Repertory Group) on the first performance, I would like to know that the time capsule + the glass in the current foyer be preserved.	5/22/2015 5:32 PM
172	Is any survey going to make a difference to the outcome? If you need a larger venue why not use Box Hill Town Hall or the Besen Centre?	5/22/2015 5:30 PM
173	I truly support the redevelopment. There have been feasibility studies in the past which have come to nothing - I hope this does meet the same fate! The 'back-stage' facilities are very substandard. The main theatre is a nice size, but more rehearsal space is needed.	5/22/2015 5:29 PM
174	I don't use the Whitehorse Centre as a retiree on a declining income. I do not feel it is fair to ask me for a contribution for a facility which I will never use.	5/22/2015 5:25 PM
175	Do the required maintenance at the Whitehorse Centre. Do not pull down + rebuild. If smaller theatre space required within the City of Whitehorse it doesn't need to be at current Whitehorse Centre. Investigate other sites for smaller theatre space + maintain current Whitehorse Centre. i.e. Do 2 complimentary projects 1 - new 100 seat theatre space somewhere 2 - maintenance on current White horse Centre	5/22/2015 5:23 PM
176	I have concerns about the ongoing costs to ratepayers of the running costs of the proposed enlarged facility (especially as the current facility runs at a loss). Larger is not necessarily better. Keep what we have - certainly paint, refurbish maintain the centre at your estimate of \$5.2 million. Even if costs go to \$10-\$15 million that is better value to rate payers than \$78 million. I love what we have.	5/22/2015 5:15 PM
177	Not deserving of an increase in rates. I like the current size of theatre.	5/22/2015 5:11 PM
178	Best of luck!	5/22/2015 5:08 PM
179	Just improve what is there now please.	5/22/2015 3:31 PM
180	I think that the size and scope of the new proposed redevelopment needs to be looked at to see if it fits the needs of the Whitehorse residents rather than fits the needs of the people hiring the centre. \$78 Million I think is an excessive amount especially with the new restraints on council budgets. I also think that making sure that the facilities needed in assisting residents like meals on wheels and the facilities in silver grove should be in front in priority to what may be wanted or liked.	5/22/2015 12:23 PM
181	It was mentioned in the Whitehorse Leader article (May 11) that the council had "carried out extensive consultation both with the general community and with groups that regularly used the centre." Where was this extensive consultation with the community when the reference in the article was the first that we had heard of this. The Council should not be wasting rate payers money on these arts facilities. There is a big difference between \$5.2 to \$78 million dollars. If the sitting councillors want to spend \$78 million then THEY PAY it out of their own personal funds. A few want arts but the majority of the ratepayers are struggling to pay for the basics.	5/22/2015 10:31 AM
182	Excessive price. Rate payers already pay top rates with out putting the cost on them. CEO overpaid. Well above average for the job.	5/21/2015 7:04 PM
183	Where's the business case for this grandiose proposal?	5/21/2015 6:19 PM

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

184	The current Whitehorse Centre is an excellent facility, superior to other suburban theatres I have visited. It is a big asset to our community. I have enjoyed many great performances, as well as functions, festivals and events over the years. I was unaware that it was in need of upgrading, but, this being the case, I support the redevelopment. I would ask you to please avoid the ugly, cheap looking architecture that is abounding at present, and stick to neutral, tasteful tones that blend well with the environment. The current Whitehorse Centre has a very good appearance in this regard - dignified and unobtrusive in its parkland setting, we don't want it replaced by a garish eyesore. I am pleased to hear that costs will be contained as much as possible without sacrificing quality. Thank you for the informative booklet, which I read with interest.	5/21/2015 5:58 PM
185	I really didn't think that any changes were necessary, although the foyer is rather crowded before shows but I am most impressed by what is proposed and feel it will be a wonderful asset to East Melbourne not just Whitehorse.	5/21/2015 5:50 PM
186	I know of many senior people both living in and outside of our City whose highlight of the year is attending performances at the centre. They find it so easy to park and non-threatening because they do not need to travel into the city or a place they are unfamiliar with.	5/20/2015 10:00 PM
187	We do not need this sort of facility. It serves very few people and the money could be better spent elsewhere. This is not a valid reason to increase our rates. Please live within your means Whitehorse Council.	5/20/2015 9:04 PM
188	Council said could not afford to buy Nunawading Primary site but suddenly has money to build this huge venue. Our children do not have enough to sporting facilities, stadiums and courts will get much more people attending than concerts.	5/20/2015 8:58 PM
189	Probably could be upgraded but not to the extent of a complete redevelopment and huge cost to ratepayers.	5/20/2015 5:42 PM
190	From the external view the stage void is too prominent. It is important to consider changes as time affects buildings as it does for us. The proposed multiple sized areas for different uses is necessary.	5/20/2015 3:29 PM
191	Where will it be funded from. Needs state or federal funding Should not be taken from rates!	5/20/2015 1:54 PM
192	Rate payers SHOULD NOT be expected to fund a project of this financial magnitude, only with state/federal funding the project should proceed.	5/20/2015 1:52 PM
193	You are putting our rates up 7% and the poor old pensioners have to struggle to pay that + you want to spend \$78,0000 on updating your centre. Don't know why I am wasting my time answering this as you won't take any notice of what the public think. All my friends disagree. Why didn't you send this out to all the ratepayers instead of having to go up to the council office.	5/20/2015 1:49 PM
194	Initially I thought it was overkill + too expensive. After reading your material + acknowledge that we do have a wonderful centre here - I have changed my mind & agree it would be wonderful to develop along the lines you have proposed. Good luck - but be prudent with cost management delivery. Best wishes.	5/20/2015 1:45 PM
195	The cost to an aging community is what bothers me - you have only to see the demographics at the various events most will soon be dead. I do not see many young folk attending for whom presumably the place is being built.	5/20/2015 11:15 AM
196	Keep rates low. This is just wasteful and unnecessary spending.	5/20/2015 12:49 AM
197	The council should stick to roads and rubbish. I am delighted that the State Government is putting a cap on rates. Council bureaucrats and certain Councillors irresponsibly throw money around without doing proper cost-benefit analyses. The present facility is adequate.	5/19/2015 11:28 PM
198	If you can do the improvements without lifting our RATES! - by all means go ahead :)	5/19/2015 8:57 PM
199	Whilst this facility would be a 'nice to have' if we had surplus of funds, this redevelopment is not necessary and is a waste of money that could be better spent on essential services. I do not support this development in any way.	5/19/2015 6:45 PM
200	The financial burden on the community is FAR TOO GREAT. THE GRANDIOSE PLANS NEED TO BE GREATLY MODERATED. We are not all millionaires, or have the large pay packet	5/19/2015 6:44 PM
201	Issue fines for people who dump rubbish on nature-strips and then you won't have to put up our rates to waste on things like the proposed development.	5/19/2015 6:17 PM
202	I have a strong connection and varied use of the facilities. This is a fantastic concept not only the increased auditorium but also the studio space will be great for smaller community groups	5/19/2015 4:21 PM

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

203	The design of the building is boring - you want to attract people outside of box hill to use your new centre, your building needs to draw other visitors besides the residents to use your building. The architecture of this building does not attract visitors - \$78 million for a 60's glass wall and a building the shape of a box? The building needs to be different, the architecture needs to attract and inspire people who visit, not just another boring building in a suburbs. The design of the building needs to change.	5/19/2015 2:00 PM
204	The proposed development reduces the current available park and grassland setting which we believe is a valuable asset to the area with the ever increasing housing density levels.	5/19/2015 1:24 PM
205	When I read how few people will use the centre, why as a rate payer should I fund it. There is no public transport with the proposal. It relies on cars.	5/19/2015 11:31 AM
206	The size and cost of the proposed redevelopment is disproportionate to the Council's activities, particularly in the current economy, when Gov't is examining the prospect of capping rate rises proposed by Council. The associated carparking facility proposed is excessive and would remain vacant most of the time.	5/19/2015 11:08 AM
207	The existing centre is perfectly adequate for this City's requirements and is not currently in need of replacement. Normal maintenance is all that is required. Anything else is an unwarranted waste of Ratepayers' funds and the current proposal demonstrates fiscal irresponsibility by Council on a scale warranting the appointment of a Government Administrator.	5/18/2015 11:40 PM
208	This is a complete waste of ratepayers money and does not justify an increase in rates. This type of service should be provided by the private sector. It's a vanity project that will be used by an extremely small elitist portion of the community. This adds nothing to the city. never once visited the current centre or the civic centre. Why not spend money where it's needed on garbage collection, footpaths and road repairs. It was bad enough when you wasted millions on the Aqua Centre. And if you want to raise money try implementing an efficiency dividend on 2.5% on yourselves - like Commonwealth public sector agencies have to endure.	5/18/2015 9:57 PM
209	Careful consideration must be given to only renovating the existing facility, and not expanding it. It would appear that the expansion decision has already been made, placing a significant burden on rate payers.	5/18/2015 9:55 PM
210	Have been to many productions and feel it is very appropriate to now proceed with the redevelopment. With regard to car parking would prefer the car park option closer to the proposed theatre.	5/18/2015 7:16 PM
211	We have always found the staff very friendly, helpful and ever so patient. The facilities are always clean. We have no gripes and we do realise that the theatre is looking a little worn. We are not residents of the City of Whitehorse and we are very impressed with the proposed development.	5/18/2015 5:40 PM
212	I would not support the building of a new Whitehorse Centre unless the cost is funded entirely by Federal or State Government grants/funding. Given that Whitehorse rates are being increased by over 7% this financial year, I do not want to have to pay extra rates or a surcharge to pay for the construction of a new Whitehorse Centre. The rates in Whitehorse are high enough now. Until a clear funding process, at no extra cost to Whitehorse residents, is produced, and given to residents, I will not support a new Whitehorse Centre being built. The residents of Whitehorse cannot afford to pay \$78 million for a new Whitehorse Centre with inflation the cost is likely to end up at at least \$90 million. State and Federal funding of at least \$60 million is needed. The proposal should not have been circulated without information about funding sources.	5/18/2015 5:36 PM
213	Please improve on toilet area. Women have to suffer the indignity of queuing for the toilet. If you park in the extreme areas there is no covered walkway for shelter. There is no cloakroom (in the proper sense) for wet coats + wet umbrellas. The foyer at present is far too small. In recitals there should be a baby grand piano.	5/18/2015 5:29 PM
214	MOST IMPORTANT We must have lifts to get to upper floor as many of our residents can't use stairs. The population in Whitehorse at present is aging. STAIN GLASS WINDOWS IN FOYER Under no circumstance are these windows to be dumped. They must be found a new home as they are a part of our art history Please treat them with respect. We have to get it right!! It's a lot of money so let's leave our grandchildren something solid that doesn't need to be demolished in 30 years time.	5/18/2015 5:22 PM
215	The proposed amount of \$78 million can be better used for more populated amenities/services. It's unlikely that the \$78m will be met as the final figure.	5/18/2015 4:59 PM
216	I presume a thorough market research of attendees, age, race and preferences has been done. Adequate toilets are essential. Parking for matinees at present is inadequate. Would prefer a slightly scaled down version - say \$50m.	5/18/2015 4:57 PM

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

217	Car park - Option 1 Nunawading Primary School Site.	5/18/2015 4:53 PM
218	We don't need this redevelopment. Please consider all the elderly residents who are having trouble paying the rates. The 7% increase is entirely out of order.	5/18/2015 4:52 PM
219	A total waste of our money. Spend it on the old school around the corner in Springvale Road to use as possible U3A site etc.	5/18/2015 4:50 PM
220	CONGRATULATIONS	5/18/2015 4:40 PM
221	Is parking space for 220 cars sufficient when auditorium will hold 580-600 people?	5/18/2015 4:37 PM
222	Deplorable that Council is spending all the Ratepayer \$ reserves and placing Ratepayers in debt for decades. There is nothing that \$1-2m wouldn't fix as far as lobby space and offices.	5/18/2015 4:32 PM
223	1) Residents are paying increase in rates for people coming from other municipalities. Can rate payers get some benefit for paying for the centre? 2) Aging community = increase disabled parking 3) No proper communication with residents 4) No public transport near centre. 5) Don't need such an expensive structure. Rates increase (used up arrow symbol) every year and previously discounts where (sic) given for theatre goer who live in Whitehorse. Will (memorial) be relocated?	5/18/2015 4:29 PM
224	Build It!	5/18/2015 4:20 PM
225	\$78 Million now - who pays for the inevitable blow out in costs and is it an open tender for all contractor and do we know when the contractor is chosen and will it be publicly announced and the rate payers of Whitehorse? While there are a lot of ratepayers who have no issues with higher rates such as business and owners of rental housing for whom rates are a tax deduction there are plenty of us with no income other than pensions and families who are already stretched paying large mortgages - we do not need this next rates hike to satisfy the few who can afford to use it and the ego of the person or persons who came up with the plan.	5/18/2015 4:19 PM
226	We need more sporting facilities for young people in our municipality. Teams are looking for match and practice places. We need both - theatre and sports. I think we should support our young people - health, social opportunities rather than older people (like me) going to the theatre, however enjoyable that may be.	5/18/2015 4:13 PM
227	Development of Aqualink is going well.	5/18/2015 4:10 PM
228	From any appoint view: 1) Digital time 2) current perfect use also condition of centre. 3) Busy street parking rise. (200 parking does not solve problem of street parking) 4) it is a residential area. I do not support redevelopment Whitehorse Centre.	5/18/2015 4:09 PM
229	Attended festivals (a long time ago) I'm living in this beautiful surroundings due to quite and peaceful. I hardly use the centre and do not support redevelopment. Very difficult to have clear vision of on coming car when we get out the drive way. It is digital era, why waste money on this project? Current theatre is perfectly functional and not even fully used. I do walk's passing by and noticed.	5/18/2015 4:07 PM
230	Refurbishment only	5/18/2015 4:03 PM
231	The redevelopment costs seem excessive to upgrade the existing site. Provide more detailed information on upgrade to existing site rather than full redevelopment. Concerns of additional costs to rate payers. What other venues / options for theatre shows during the redevelopment upgrade. Adequate disability parking and access to venue. What will happen with local farmers and craft markets during the upgrade?	5/18/2015 4:02 PM
232	- Redevelopment cost is too high as opposed to re-fitting or upgrading existing facilities. - would like to see alternative plans for smaller upgrade. - do not like above ground multi-storey car parks as they are very ugly. Underground car parking would be better but more costly. However cost for this could be offset against an upgrade of existing facilities rather than redevelopment. No details given on where theatre performances will be held during construction.	5/18/2015 4:00 PM
233	I am disgusted at the waste of our rates for an edifice to the ego of the executive. The existing centre is adequate for most of the performances which I attend. Some are part empty. I do not wish to subsidise a facility which will cater for the greater needs of Melbourne. The expanded centre only creates the problems of greater running costs, greater car parking, loss of open space and loss of facilities for the locals, as outside groups will find it more useful. The \$78m would be of more value to the ratepayers if used to buy open space which is desperately needed in Whitehorse, as housing density increases. My pension increases by CPI only, not 7.8%!!	5/18/2015 3:40 PM

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

234	My main concern is the way that it is to be finished. It should not be a burden on ratepayers by financing the re-build over a short period of time by an excessive rate increase. Proposed rate increases for higher than the inflation rate, will become difficult for Whitehorse residents to accept.	5/18/2015 3:34 PM
235	whilst I can see the desire for such a development, is the need there and how would the cost of attending be affected.	5/18/2015 3:30 PM
236	I believe the centre should be refurbished and updated but not redeveloped. I don't agree with the redevelopment.	5/18/2015 3:20 PM
237	Council cannot afford this biggest investment in council's history. Why does council have such grandiose ideas. This is one of 80 municipal councils in Victoria and not all these require these facilities. A refurbishment of %5.2 million is a much better option to \$78m redevelopment. I attend performance here both theatre and ballet (Utassy) and they are never full so why a bigger theatre. Costs of running a bigger centre will increase so prices will also increase - result: people will find alternative venues. It will be a white elephant!! Schools were given money to school halls and can hire those out for performances. I am absolutely against this redevelopment.	5/18/2015 3:18 PM
238	Please use present site - not Box Hill.	5/18/2015 3:11 PM
239	During the week why is the car park so full, even before 9am? Of all the show I attend only about 10% would have a full house so why do we need such a large new theatre?	5/18/2015 2:52 PM
240	Very happy with the present site....NOT Box Hill.	5/18/2015 2:50 PM
241	An upgrade of existing facilities could be achieved and spread over several years. This would enable the part use of the building as it now stands. If this was done the cost to ratepayers could be better controlled. Architects are creative people and I know this can be achieved. The current rate rise is outrageous and unfair on the older ratepayers.	5/18/2015 2:45 PM
242	This facility needs to be constructed at a much larger site. Ground car parking only. This site is used for small organisations as well, they will not be able to afford or fill a larger complex.	5/18/2015 2:41 PM
243	I know costs would increase but consider having a basement level for the car park (preferably behind the police station) with only a ground floor and 1st level, which would match the height of the proposed to-be developed centre. A fixed charge for parking \$2.00 - \$5.00 should be considered down the track, which would almost be considered nominal, since the cost of everything (ticket prices, food, council staff wages) would all have risen over the 30 year life (to date) of the current Whitehorse Centre.	5/18/2015 2:40 PM
244	Additional usage requires more car parking; not sure if this is what the community needs with existing car parks at home HQ/Harvey Norman area. Also the current road infrastructure in and out of the existing car park can't handle it.	5/18/2015 2:35 PM
245	The \$78 million just cannot be justified. Why are existing arts centres in the CBD not used? Following the intended rate rise for 2015/16 will the rates drop back to CPI rises? Why such a grandiose design for performances that can function in a less costly centre.	5/18/2015 2:32 PM
246	The main theatre would attract more commercial hirers if it had a capacity around 800.	5/18/2015 2:29 PM
247	- Query location: what about public transport access. - Can we afford this> - Will parking cars incur a cost - When will we have a cost/benefit analysis	5/18/2015 2:28 PM
248	why does the council feel a need to build a world class events centre, wouldnt it be better to put the money into multipurpose venue at a school, so it gets used every day rather than just be tucked away at the back of the council building? It is just way too extreem an investment.	5/18/2015 1:50 PM
249	My wife and I live locally to the Whitehorse Centre, which we attend from time to time. We have benefitted from the Centre and we recognise and support the Centre as an important venue for the community to express itself artistically. The plans for the new centre look good although we feel renovation would be a more prudent step in the present economic climate. We strongly object to the proposed locations for the car park (option one and option two). These green areas behind the Police Station provide the community with a pleasant place for walking and recreation. Even though they are flanked by the fenced sports section of Walker Park and the Concert Lawn, it is these areas that locals use and appreciate, particularly over the summer months. This is likely unseen, unless one lives locally. These are high-value areas! We urge Council to shift the location of the proposed car park to the western edge of the Police Station, adjacent to the service lane that runs parallel with Whitehorse Road.	5/18/2015 12:05 AM

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

250	The centre is far too far to the east for most of the population of Whitehorse council. Those in the west are going to be expected to pay for a building they NEVER use and cannot access	5/17/2015 1:04 PM
251	Way too expensive	5/17/2015 12:16 PM
252	It is a waste of ratepayers money, it should be used for more necessary items, there is so much waste being undertaken by council in the name of environment etc. which is doing nothing. If the expected costs for maintenance of centre is \$5+m that's a lot cheaper than \$78m. Perhaps centre should be heritage listed	5/17/2015 10:29 AM
253	\$78 million. I support the arts and visit museums and galleries all the time. This development is totally out of scale with demand, and with the environment it is in (i.e. outside a major activity centre). Whilst it is next to a Smartbus route, it is remote from trains and easy access. Such a development should be built near a major activity centre, eg in central Box Hill or near Blackburn Station and tied-in to demand. What is the cost-benefit analysis of this project? How could \$78 million be better spent? I struggle to pay my rates. I see streets with potholes, many streets without footpaths, virtually no expenditure on bike paths. Whitehorse does not need all the cultural facilities of central Melbourne. Maybe we could support, with other councils, a regional arts centre for the whole eastern suburbs in BH or Ringwood. Alternatively construct a much smaller facility near where existing demand is - eg possibly linked to Blackburn High School's performing arts programs.	5/16/2015 4:45 PM
254	Love theatre and to have the quality of the shows locally is great and I love the Australia Day concert and fireworks	5/16/2015 1:18 PM
255	It is a very large sum of money, that if spent in other ways could have far wider community benefit, for example, scout halls are all run down, many sporting fields used all year round need renovation, re- turfing, traffic lights...this old centre is hidden away many people don't know it is there, we saw tree house there and felt the facility was fine. There is a real sense that the council is being extravagant. I note that consultants have already been appointed so suspect this is faux consultation, and you'll go head regardless. In sense a real conceit has crept into your executive ranks and councillors. Leave these sort of facilities to schools to build and hire out	5/15/2015 7:29 PM
256	2014 survey showed approximately 165,000 business and household ratepayers in the City of Whitehorse yet:- External Consultations: 1. Only 500 independent households were telephone surveyed = 0.30% and a total of 800 shared their views = 0.48%. Both less than 1%. How is this a representative survey, and what was the outcome of these surveys? 2. Only 200 patrons / clients surveyed. What portion does this represent of the total patrons / clients, and what was the outcome? 3. What were the focus groups and what was the outcome from them? 4. What were the results of the surveys of hirers / local arts groups and local businesses and the outcomes? 5. What surveys were conducted to determine likely usage of new facilities by existing and particularly new businesses? 6. The facility would need to generate a lot of new business if it was to be worthwhile, and some existing business would drop off as costs would become prohibitive to some existing organisations. Research: 1. The current facilities are massively underutilized. What research has been conducted to ensure the new facilities will have a considerably higher utilization / cost return? 2. Benchmarking with other performing arts centres is a useless exercise. You need to determine what is required in the market that no other facility is providing and serve that interest wholly or partially. Make a point of difference so that business and external organisations will want to use the new facilities. 3. Preliminary cost estimates of \$78M. Councils are well known for exceeding times and budgets. What will this really cost and how will you control the costs? Is this a cost of \$78M just for the building and you still need to pay for the car parks and fit out etc.? 4. One of the parking proposals will utilize the area currently occupied by the very popular farmers market once per month. What will you be doing about that? Will you be charging out the multistory car parks during the week to recover revenue? 5. What will happen to current permanent, part time and casual staff, who rely on their work at the centre for an income, during the time it takes to build the facility? 6. I believe this is just another council sink hole for ratepayer funds to get lost in. Type of centre user: 1. Do all users pay? 2. Do payments received cover all costs and even make a small profit? 3. If income does not currently match costs how will this be dealt with by the council for the proposed new facility? 4. How long after the new facility is constructed do you expect it will take before the income will cover the costs? 5. I believe the existing facility could be adequately refurbished for a fraction of the cost.	5/15/2015 4:57 PM
257	unnecessary extravagance!!! total waste of ratepayers money money which should be used for the betterment of the majority ratepayers and not an elite minority our community would be better served by by improvement to essential services and on-going maintenance of existing council facilities how will the project be serviced if future annual rate increases are restricted to CPI by Govt ??? obviously by increasing council charges/levies(tip fees,parking/fines inflating property valuations ,etc.) surprisingly I do not support this proposed venture. regards p.s find attached a recent Herald Sun article referring to the role of local councils in our society *Attachment #1 Newspaper article Herald Sun	5/15/2015 4:47 PM
258	The two car park options are the high of madness. A third option is needed.	5/15/2015 3:20 PM



## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

259	<p>The current option 1 (at the rear of the police station) and option 2 for car park is not appropriate, where presents the following issues: 1) Air pollution to nearby residents when car ignited, especially after a function. 2) Safety / privacy and vandalism. Even though CCTV suggested to install around the car park. The CCTV doesn't help the victim nor stop the crime. 3)</p> <p>As a consequence council loose income from rate collection. If a 3 stories car park has to be build, it is suggest to buil in the open area next to Civic Centre / Library, ie on the right hand side of the library. Benefit: a) easy access from the carpark to either library and concert lawn areas. b) relatively minimize the impact listed in points 1, 2 and 3.</p>	5/15/2015 3:15 PM
260	<p>Car Park Option 2)</p> <p>Poor option because: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- noise pollution (cars, open doors, engines starting) - air pollution / light pollution -</li> <li>- security concerns - more opportunites for unscrupulous individuals to loiter</li> <li>- more rubbish / refuse (eg: glass bottle)</li> </ul> <p>(following text highlighted by respondant in pink....) NOTE:</p> <p>was NOT drawn in or made clear in the brochure "Proposed Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment" on page 10 . THIS IS MISLEADING. Whitehorse Residents need to be made aware of this. Without this information we cannot make an informed decision. There needs to be a follow up publication that highlights this (close highlight) Option 1) better considerations but was there consideration for the following car park location (respondant hand drew a map of their suggestion: a car park situated between the Library and Police station at the southern entrance to the precinct, with the comments...) Will provide undercover access to library / civic centre and walking distance to Whitehorse Centre can be shorter.</p>	5/15/2015 2:26 PM
261	<p>- We are the resident ballet school here (Utassy Ballet School) and we would like to believe that council will continue to support our cultural and arts based education of local children and families. - We hope that council will commit to ensuring we (Utassy Ballet School) does not lose the valuable and much needed spaces that we currently use and NEED. - We hope that the council will consider the safety of the children/students who attend Utassy Ballet each night of the week - in terms of external/internal access - and whilst there are other users in the theatre. For example: if our children (Utassy Ballet) need to go from one studio to another, whilst there is another company hiring the stage venue, then how do our children or students cross the venue inside the facility? Thank you -</p>	5/15/2015 1:51 PM
262	<p>Appears expensive (cost overruns inevitable?) Are there viable alternative options at considerably reduced cost? Vehicles leaving site at end of performances already have long ques (sic) and with estimated additional 173 car spaces, appears essential that traffic management seriously address peak exit vehicles to Whitehorse Road.</p>	5/15/2015 1:40 PM
263	<p>Missed a number of shows as theatre was fully booked.</p>	5/15/2015 1:35 PM
264	<p>I am not opposed to the renovation of the Whitehorse Centre itself. In fact I think an upgrade of the complex would be terrific but I do oppose having a car park Noise, polution, crime, obstruction of light and reduced privacy are strong factors.</p> <p>One level below ground and 2 above, behind the police station would be much better.</p>	5/15/2015 1:34 PM
265	<p>Go for it! The City needs it. Would change places with you for quids. Can't believe the negativity to the cost and the hip pocket nerve. So sad.</p>	5/15/2015 1:29 PM
266	<p>Too expensive and ambitious. Where will the funding (TOTAL COSTS) come from? Increased rates? More expensive tickets? 1. I understand the W.C. needs "renovating" to meet building standards. 2. I am not sure that Council needs such and expensive and grandiose project. Will we rate payers have to cover costs? Price of tickets to rise? The benefit of local performances is that they are affordable. Our rates are already HIGH. 3. I would rather see the car park in Scenario 2, Option ONE (so the farmer's market can still hold it's spot) 4. If the theatre accommodates more seating, is 211 car parks really enough. I have had to park on the other side of Maroondah Highway and its a long walk for less "able" seniors. 5. How much commercial (PAYING) use would be made of the bigger and more expensive Whitehorse Centre? 6. "External consultation" of local residents is VERY SMALL (see p. 5) 7. Are these meetings, brochures, just a "feel good" stunt or are you seriously interested in our concerns?</p>	5/15/2015 1:25 PM
267	<p>Where is the business case for spending \$78M on a larger facility? I don't believe that council needs to replace the existing Centre. It is reasonable for funds to be spent on upgrading the Whitehorse Centre. The community consultation sample size is hardly representative of City of Whitehorse rate-payers.</p>	5/15/2015 1:18 PM
268	<p>Too much money!</p>	5/15/2015 1:12 PM

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

269	The Centre requires renewal. It does not require such a massive redevelopment. It does not require two theatres. The existing theatre needs to be renewed and utilisation increased. The recurrent cost of the works are unacceptable and do not include borrowing costs. If the theatre was renovated and only one theatre provided to the community then there would be no need to erect a three storey car park. The take home message is "Renovate rather than Redevelop". Spending \$78M is too expensive. Maximum \$20M.	5/15/2015 1:11 PM
270	The proposed sites for the car park will impact areas of high amenity for local residents. These are the green areas of walker park that are most accessible and used most for walking and playing. The farmer's market is held on these two sites. The car park should be placed on the western edge of the police station to cause least offense.	5/15/2015 1:07 PM
271	Consultation has been biased, it is a huge amount of money that as I understand will run at a loss.	5/15/2015 1:04 PM
272	Neither agree or disagree to "meets my expectations" as I need to know more about the building. Please consider a portico for all weather drop off. Maintaining access "step free" from carpark to Row G. Preserving the stain glass in the entrance and re installing it in the new building. Generous disability car parking close to the door. Consideration re heavy rainfall and access to the building, at the moment the rain can pool near the front door. Coffee shop opening from 8-4 for general daily use by the general community, perhaps the non theatre goers helping to make the centre more a hub for community. A note: one of the joys of the Whitehorse Centre is the ease of parking and access, please preserve.	5/15/2015 1:00 PM
273	Whilst I agree that the centre needs redevelopment, I strongly disagree with the Car Parking approach.	5/15/2015 12:57 PM
274	Was there any plan at all to consider moving the centre to closer to Whitehorse Road and build the card park underground?	5/15/2015 12:54 PM
275	my paramount concern is for accessibility to all the facilities of the theatre. A current difficulty is the limitation of wheelchair "seating", Given the growing aged population, as well as the increase in mobility for individuals with a disability, increased "wheelchair seating" (or flexible/removable seating arrangements) ought to be a huge priority for a community event centre. Balcony seating for wheelchair users would be a rare enjoyment, and I hope this is a possibility.	5/15/2015 12:43 PM
276	"Phantom" and the Babirra Company demonstrated the ability of an amateur company to present a professional show within the limitations of the space. The season, it should also be mentioned, sold out full houses across an atypical 3 weekend season. A larger audience would certainly have sold out most if not all shows, supporting local companies and their patrons. Revamped facilities in the theatre, stage and backstage areas of the Centre will provide greater opportunities for companies to rehearse, prepare and produce their various shows and possibly be home to a new or established company. Thank you.	5/15/2015 12:39 PM
277	I have been involved with Utassy Ballet School I agree the theatre is too small and out-dated and does not comply for disability. We have little opportunity to perform on a stage and at festivals there is a stage on the back of a truck which is difficult for dance groups. A new smaller area and 2 level soundshell would provide for musicians with microphones and still allow for a dance area. The concept looks attractive with areas able to be used in different ways.	5/15/2015 12:33 PM
278	This project is too large and takes up too much open space especially the car park. The park is for all residents this is orientated towards theatre only - not the locals who use the park. Also no info given to locals.	5/15/2015 12:29 PM
279	Utassy Ballet School utilises ~50 hours at dance spaces. Utassy is an important ballet school that pushes boundaries is unique. (sic) No tinsel and top hats! I am concerned Utassy will lose its home. Also, I would like some storage space factored in - even as a commercial arrangement.	5/15/2015 12:26 PM
280	I strongly disagree with the car park plan No 2.	5/15/2015 12:22 PM

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

281	<p>Firstly it can't be a striking Civic building of pride as it is tucked away. Raise the soundshell stage 2 metres and widen it (as proposed). Put a few rows of permanent seats in front for aged, infirm and early comers. This would allow people up the grassy rise to actually see the stage. I couldn't see the main performers from 1/2 way to 1/3 back on Aust-Day;</p> <p>Recover or replace auditorium seats; seem to be getting a bit old.</p> <p>Too many theatre style auditoriums in district, Sion, Mt Scopus, Deakin, Aquinas, Karralyka; to warrant further multiplication and cost recovery to complete. Council not expected by residents to be "cultural leader" of the State. Such is centred on Melbourne proper with historical and state funded facilities. Empty space and vaults not needed - a bit for raising and lowering props only. \$5M would fix the whole thing to extent needed.</p>	5/15/2015 12:04 PM
282	<p>I can see you are looking to the future. I know I shall not be in the audience in 30 years' time. I think the council is obsessed with big buildings lately. After many years of attending the centre, I have rarely seen the theatre filled. Currently the audience is made up of grey/white haired clients. Young people these days have entertainment at home – electronically etc. or prefer to dine out and go to hotels. The predominant attendees are Anglo. I cannot see the Chinese/Asian population becoming patrons. Prices are already rising too high and no doubt will not decrease. Plans do not show proposed number of toilets here – currently there are “just enough”. Seating in the foyers needs to be returned so elderly citizens plus others can wait for admittance. 580-600 seats in auditorium are excessive and no isle in centre is annoying. At times it is impossible to exit. I assume there would be lifts to 2nd floor although not shown. More staff are required inside the theatre to handle complaints at intervals. Already the ease of recording devices and mobile phones in program times is increasing. At \$59 per ticket these are not wanted – drinks also are being carried into seating. Please make new and large signs more obvious and spread about foyer and stage.</p>	5/15/2015 11:56 AM
283	\$78m is too much to spend on a cultural facility although the car park is a good idea	5/15/2015 11:49 AM
284	Seventy-eight million will end up over one hundred million by the time the Centre/Theatre is fitted out. Does this amount include the car park? Where does the farmers market go? The Centre could be updated for a lot less.	5/15/2015 11:47 AM
285	I would like to suggest a walk-way over Whitehorse Road, people will use the car park if attached to the centre and it would help with pedestrian traffic. Outdoor entertainment is very important and facilities for catering for community groups. Cinema would be ideal.	5/15/2015 11:30 AM
286	A restaurant within the complex to provide pre-show meals would be a great asset.	5/15/2015 11:27 AM
287	Extra exits are needed to move the crowd after the performance - for safety and convenience. A multiple story car park will not enhance the look of the area.	5/15/2015 11:25 AM
288	Lots of disabled parking please.	5/15/2015 11:23 AM
289	Redevelopment cost is too high. Money would be better spent on other community facilities. A multilevel carpark does not fit into the surrounding residences. There is no information on how this would be funded.	5/14/2015 9:56 PM
290	It's time retirees on fixed and declining income were considered before lumbering them with increased rates from which they will receive no benefit whatsoever.	5/14/2015 9:24 PM
291	Please do not proceed with this development. It is not warranted. It is too expensive. You can make better use of our rates on more necessary projects and services	5/14/2015 6:57 PM
292	Venues such as The Whitehorse Centre provide valuable access to the performing arts to local communities. The CBD is not always preferable to everyone.	5/14/2015 5:01 PM
293	Get on with it.	5/14/2015 3:39 PM
294	Renewal work of the existing centre for \$5.2 million over the next ten years would be adequate. It has been too easy for councils to enforce rate increases to cover their grandiose plans. We strongly believe rate payers should not be forced to pay for projects that should be planned statewide by state government or private development.	5/14/2015 3:29 PM

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

295	Some improvements to the centre are warranted. Spend about \$5m and all that is needed will be done. Council's role is not to be the lead enforcer of cultural experience in the State, but provide a modest balance of opportunity to experience some culture along with other Council services. Hence \$78m minus \$5m for Whitehorse Centre up grade is appropriate and keep rates affordable. Specifically raise the soundshell stage about 2 metres so crowd from about 1/3 the way back to rear near the offices have a chance of seeing the stage. Eg. was impossible to see on stage on Aust. Day from half way back. If pushed down a bit to catch a glimpse, Then I couldn't get an angle to see any accompanying performers. Therefore simply lift the stage to make it "accessible" - very politically correct and hence an attractive option. Provide a few rows of seats in the front for aged, infirm and early arrivals. Plus enclose all that part with concertina doors when not in use. As for the auditorium, it doesn't need a big open space walled vault. You can't do anything in a vault except pay for it. People can look at that portion of open space by looking into the sky when outside. Perhaps a couple of modest small rooms for performance practice, but every school has a modern hall now so hot competition will increasingly ensue to lease out 2nd level ( just below Whitehorse auditorium standard) as well as auditorium standard eg. Box centre at Aquinas College, Mt Scopus, Sion College. Hence an extravagantly upgraded Whitehorse centre will have to compete at loss making prices to attract any significant uptake.	5/14/2015 2:44 PM
296	I attended a ballet performance at the Whitehorse Centre. The performance was fairly average, not because of the performers but because of the small and noisy stage. It is fantastic that Council is allocating resources to arts and culture in Whitehorse. Arts and culture has a very important role in a vibrant and healthy community. Good luck with the project and I look forward to seeing the new centre.	5/14/2015 2:26 PM
297	I would prefer the option of the carpark development being at the rear of the police station rather than behind the residential properties. Will there be a cloakroom facility in the new building for coats and umbrellas?	5/14/2015 12:58 PM
298	Especially over the last two years the street standards of our municipality have deteriorated. I can only guess it's because of an influx of people whose way of life does not include caring for the appearance of gardens and nature strips. Thank you for the opportunity to put forward my humble opinion.	5/14/2015 12:28 PM
299	I have attended many functions, performances, festivals and events at the centre. It would be nice if the glazing at the entrance to the centre could be retained as it gives a pictorial sketch of the history of Whitehorse.	5/14/2015 12:23 PM
300	I strongly disagree that so much money is to be spent. I am disgusted at the rise in rates. The wages of council are disgraceful. How can you allow so much high rise development.	5/14/2015 12:21 PM
301	Providing safe + ease of use parking facilities are vitally important as I note the age of attendees at performances.	5/14/2015 12:15 PM
302	We are very happy to return this form but as we live in Glen Waverly we can only say we have always been more than happy with facilities you have provided.	5/14/2015 12:13 PM
303	It is important that elderly people have a community place to see shows and also a day out and a price that is within their reach for shows.	5/14/2015 12:11 PM
304	Support the increase in size of main auditorium. The seating - no central isle and poor exits in the existing auditorium and are inadequate, unsafe, limited disabled provision, with such a large row of seats feels very claustrophobic. Technical apparatus needs improvement/updating. I like the provision of a smaller theatre as an important provision for 'start up' or 'try out' small performances with lower 'risk' of requiring large audiences & costs. It is pleasing that the new buildings will not have a big impact/footprint on the area. Option 2 - prefer-leaves a larger garden space. I think Whitehorse council provides a rich cultural life for its residents. This will enhance this reputation for years to come.  The staff attitude is very positive & very willing to encourage live performances. I hope this exciting venture goes ahead and keeps Whitehorse up to date in the future.	5/14/2015 12:07 PM
305	Council should stick to providing it's core services to ratepayers and let state gov provide other services	5/14/2015 11:32 AM
306	On the same page of the Whitehorse Leader where the proposal was discussed was a report of Lady of Sion's new Performing Arts Centre, which cost only \$3 million. \$78 million is just plain absurd in comparison. The Whitehorse Centre could be re-developed, or even upgraded for under \$10 million.	5/14/2015 10:42 AM
307	Why are you sending this to me? Surely you should be surveying ratepayers and residents i.e. people who pay the bill and people who live nearby. As a non-resident who only attends various performances over the year why should I get such a say?	5/14/2015 10:26 AM
308	Due to the huge increase in flats & units in the City of Whitehorse, maybe it should be larger to cater for increased usage.	5/14/2015 10:23 AM
309	It is over the top, too expensive	5/14/2015 10:22 AM

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

310	The Whitehorse Centre is now one of the best theatres in our area. It is well known that the actors are of a very high standard. We attend the theatre regularly and enjoy the shows. Anything that is going towards buildings etc. to make this wonderful theatre even better should be supported.	5/14/2015 10:20 AM
311	I didn't see any specific details of Rest Rooms (toilets). I trust there will be a sufficient number (esp for the ladies).	5/14/2015 10:17 AM
312	78 million the opportunity cost is staggering...it seems this is a sop to the arts people, perhaps the money could be split between all the sporting groups, more people would benefit, this thing is hidden away. You claim 120000 or more people use it, I bet that includes the Whitehorse festival, and the building isn't part of that. Thing you need to reign in you spending habits. Sorry	5/14/2015 6:27 AM
313	The idea that ratepayers can just keep affording increased rates for the development of an asset most of us never use is a joke. This is just a ploy to get a large rate increase locked in before the State Government limits increases to CPI. Perhaps you should focus on other assets such as better roads, street trees and services. Woops I forgot that the City of Whitehorse doesn't know much about the residents west of Elgar Road	5/13/2015 8:49 PM
314	I believe we should improve the centre, but not 78 million dollars, that's way too much.	5/13/2015 8:46 PM
315	I will submit separate detailed comments by 29th May	5/13/2015 3:51 PM
316	It is way too expensive. The current centre is adequate. The funds should be used on more pressing projects	5/13/2015 10:26 AM
317	I frequently visit the City of Whitehorse, as from experience your staff are more understanding of difference compared with those in the and your arts centre is accessible by public transport. The performing arts centre is inaccessible by public transport by people who find it difficult to walk up a steep section It would be appreciated if your people at your centre would put on free children's performances. However, can ratepayers of the City of Whitehorse afford the \$78 million? Will your city have to go into debt to pay for it? If the City of Whitehorse does have to go into debt to pay for the redevelopment, I would respectfully suggest not going ahead with it, even though the arts are important. In addition I believe the arts are a luxury service. If the ratepayers can afford \$78 million, could this be spent on people in need to improve their lives and or necessary services instead?	5/13/2015 10:02 AM
318	time you lot stopped spending so much money, the rates are a disgrace	5/13/2015 9:51 AM
319	You need more seating at interval time. Please do not make car park smaller. If really adding on another section when something good on there is NO parking left. Another couple of Disable to please. Council has an important role in providing cultural facilities as it keeps people out of drugs and jail. My daughter loves the theatre as it is cheaper than the city or Rod Laver Arena. came out crying as she was so overwhelmed with the beautiful music - unfortunately IO could only get one ticket. Please do not make car park smaller.	5/13/2015 9:50 AM
320	What an absolute disgrace. Sadly, it is apparent the current councillors are more interested in building monuments to themselves than they are in giving ratepayers a fair go. Do the sums, \$78mil, divided by 124,000 visitors (and i question the veracity of that) means that each visit in the first year of operation is going to cost \$629...hardly value....over 10 years no account for inflation or interest its \$63 a visit what a waste.... Perhaps the users of the facility should pay the cost of the renovation rather than hit families and pensioners that never use it, lets see if those that get the benefit are willing to pay the cost or are more comfortable leaning on those that dont use it. Time the government stepped in an appointed administrators	5/13/2015 9:49 AM
321	I have been to numerous events at the Centre and think it is just fine for the area. The new proposal is overkill and the funds could better be used for more important Developments like multi level carparks in Box Hill Central.	5/13/2015 9:41 AM
322	The cost seems excessive and the existing facilities are still good, I do not believe a whole new centre needs to be built. May parents own a house in Whitehorse and are pensioners, they will find the increased cost to their rates too much to pay and they never use the facilities. My father cannot walk anymore so does not go out.	5/12/2015 11:24 PM
323	The current centre is satisfactory. The redevelopment is too expensive when there are other projects that need funding.	5/12/2015 10:33 PM
324	Lets save the Nunawading Primary School site from being lost to housing first.	5/12/2015 9:35 PM
325	I enjoy the intimacy of the theatre. It is not too large and parking on a sunday is good.	5/12/2015 7:45 PM
326	Yes. This is a criminally wasteful suggestion. The role of the Council is to provide services not run entertainment or art galleries.!	5/12/2015 5:57 PM

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

327	In the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre theatrette please provide more comfortable seating with wider bases, heavier padding, comfortable high backs similar to what cinema patrons enjoy at Hoyts Theatres, Arts Centre, Hamer Hall performances & please provide wider leg room between all rows & wheelchair accessibility. At soundshell & amphitheatre for outdoor performances please provide some bench style seating - picnic style & wet weather canopy for this area in event of wet weather so that the entire centre could be used to meet a wider range of events & functions & more night lighting throughout the garden area for safety purposes particularly leaving Christmas Carols & other evening festivals & outdoor summer theatre & films. Please provide more multicultural festivals, art shows, concerts, sporting interests, live stage performances all year round. I personally have enjoyed many of these events at the centre & wish you well with your endeavours.	5/12/2015 5:57 PM
328	I am hoping in amongst your plans you have increased your number of disability parking spots.  Live shows, musicals, films, morn & afternoon shows never disappointed. Thank you, good luck with the works.	5/12/2015 5:48 PM
329	1) When will this happen & how long will it take? 2) Will parking be free in the new parking structure or will I have to pay for parking? 3) Where will users of current centre be moving to while construction happens?	5/12/2015 5:44 PM
330	I find it difficult to make comment about the proposal based on the information provided. The \$78m price tag seems huge for a Council arts project and will impact my rates for many years. Is it expected that the new centre will run at a profit; no hint of this is provided? Is the current recurrent operating cost of \$1.3m after or before income received? Again, no mention. No financials, no business case make it hard to see the true worth of the project.	5/12/2015 5:43 PM
331	we attend many shows & performances as well as Australia Day celebrations/concert & fireworks often with extended family & friends.	5/12/2015 5:42 PM
332	I enjoy: * Convenient & easy access parking (with no fees otherwise adequate time allowed if fee is necessary). * Comfortable seating with clear view of performances * Clean functional toilets * Handy food/drinks bar Thank you for allowing me to comment.	5/12/2015 5:39 PM
333	The centre provides first class theatre performances. I hope this can continue after redevelopment.	5/12/2015 5:35 PM
334	Parking structure behind police station preferred as opposed to at back of block.	5/12/2015 5:32 PM
335	We support option 2 because parking is closer to theatre.	5/12/2015 5:31 PM
336	I note that increased parking is a part of the plan. However, if there are financial cutbacks or limitations which may reduce the necessary parking spaces, then the project viability is dubious. The Whitehorse Centre has no public transport hub. Patrons in this area will depend on their own transport to support this facility, requiring good and easy parking.	5/12/2015 5:28 PM
337	I fully support the re-development of the centre. Easy access with adequate parking to suit the demographic of the area. Congratulations on the forward planning/thinking for this facility.	5/12/2015 5:21 PM
338	Whitehorse is in desperate need of an innovative and cultural facility to meet the needs of a constantly increasing and diverse population. The existing "homely" facility is outdated and showing its age. I would like the existing stained glass windows, which have their own artistic history, to be used somewhere in the new facility. I support the project and look forward to commencement.	5/12/2015 4:09 PM
339	It is an extraordinary expenditure plan proving Council is committed to spending other people's money. Council must learn to live within its means.	5/12/2015 3:33 PM
340	The proposed rates increase to fund this project is unconscionable.	5/12/2015 1:23 PM
341	I choose to live in a peaceful environment here I do attend some Sunday Market. E It is much more rubbish now than before. By the way, I don't think it is fare to ask rate payer to contribute fund for this redevelopment. The funding can be spend more wisely if there are one come from Fed or State. It is still a residential area!	5/12/2015 11:12 AM
342	Thank you for this space, the Whitehorse Centre may need redevelopment, but at this time in the present economic situation we all face, we do not need this level of expenditure.  We do not need an increase in rates at this level. I live in Forest Hill, 3131, not Southbank / St Kilda, or the CBD where people pop out to the theatre. I do not wish our Whitehorse Centre to be the best in the east, I would like a centre which is appropriate for our community and its rates. Thanking you	5/12/2015 10:36 AM

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

343	storage for sets and props for groups using theatre	5/11/2015 10:27 PM
344	I really enjoy the shows I attend at this venue. This is one of the most expensive venues we go to. If the price of tickets increase because of the refurbishment my group will not be back. I dont know that bigger is better.	5/11/2015 9:50 PM
345	How can the council justify a \$78 million development? n absolute joke	5/11/2015 7:57 PM
346	Rates are too high as is without this extravagance. Make savings to pay for it. Sick to death of rates increasing. Do you job properly.	5/11/2015 5:10 PM
347	There are better ways the council could spend my rates.	5/11/2015 3:42 PM
348	I would like the council to stop wasting ratepayers money on unnecessary things!! Out rates have gone up over 325% wish my pay increased like that!!	5/11/2015 3:33 PM
349	As a regular attender of musicals, the plans do not show an orchestra pit in front of the stage as is the present arrangement	5/11/2015 12:11 PM
350	A good positive action on the part of City of Whitehorse.	5/11/2015 11:58 AM
351	The cost as indicated at \$78 million is far in excess of what is needed. A more modest building should be considered,	5/11/2015 11:57 AM
352	Waste of ratepayer's money. Spend \$\$ on public housing/homelessness venues.	5/11/2015 11:50 AM
353	This is very important. A redevelopment was proposed several years ago but I heard blocked by council. The Whitehorse Centre could sit side by side alongside the Arts Centre in Melbourne and other major venues and theatres. Will attract larger scale productions for the Eastern and Outer Eastern area. Just go ahead and do it!	5/11/2015 11:48 AM
354	Council's proposed redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre is neither desirable or necessary and a disgraceful waste of Ratepayers money. I have found the existing centre more than adequate when attending Performing Arts performances, various functions and "annual" festivals. Surely council could direct these funds to provide better services for those in need within the community of Whitehorse. Kind regards,	5/11/2015 11:43 AM
355	The capital cost is too high. I do not believe the council will receive 20 % of usage from the commercial sector and this I imagine has been built in to the financial modelling to help defray costs	5/11/2015 10:24 AM
356	The Council openly states this is the largest project investment in the history of the council wearing it like a badge of honour. At a cost of \$78million it seems like excessive spending of resident's rate money. While I agree it is important to have an arts and cultural centre it seems excessive to be again asking for a large rates increase , this time, of over 7% to assist with covering the cost of this project. Surely an upgrade can be achieved at a lower cost to Whitehorse ratepayers.	5/10/2015 8:26 PM
357	first-class, 1000-seat theatre is regularly hired out to communal groups. With this facility already in Whitehorse, I question the need for council funds to be used on developing a 600-seat facility.	5/10/2015 7:24 PM
358	The Whitehorse Centre is a wonderful facility which is a jewel in the City of Whitehorse and where my family, my friends and I have experienced many interesting events, great entertainment and happy times over the decades. Although functional now, it is necessary for a good government to plan long term for the future needs of the community and I support the redevelopment of this wonderful community asset. I look forward to attending one of the drop in sessions to learn more about this project.	5/10/2015 6:38 PM
359	no	5/9/2015 5:48 PM
360	I am excited about the prospect of redeveloping this theatre. Through this project of updating i would image many wonderful performances and artists will make this area of Whitehorse a great state of the art area.	5/9/2015 5:15 PM
361	Please do not do this - the overall impact is something we will regret in the future, which by then will be too late to fix the damage done to the areas as well as the trust that the Council acts on our behalf, not their own.	5/9/2015 10:45 AM
362	I would suggest there needs to be a central aisle in the theatre to allow for easier access for patrons. At the moment there are only side aisles which would make it difficult to leave in an emergency.	5/8/2015 6:15 PM
363	I think it is totally unnecessary for a new centre redevelopment when other more important things can be done with the money.	5/8/2015 5:50 PM
364	As I am a local resident I strongly oppose the building of a 3 story car park at the back of the residential properties. I would prefer it built at the back of the police station if at all.	5/8/2015 5:48 PM

# Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

365	I have attended a variety of performance -  I agree with all aspects of the proposed redevelopment, in particular the bigger stage, larger orchestra capacity and the 2nd smaller theatre. My only other addition I'd like considered, is a larger bathroom / toilet facility especially for girls/women - more toilet cubicles in particular. Thanks.	5/8/2015 5:34 PM
366	During the redevelopment, where is the temporary place for the center? Hopefully not far from current place. Thanks.	5/8/2015 4:05 PM
367	multiple ANS in No4 required. Covered car free area from car park (option 2) to theatre door	5/8/2015 3:35 PM
368	I feel the Council ignores the views of residents & will continue to do what they want regardless of residents concerns. We have had to endure massive changes to which many of us felt were unnecessary. There are still a lot of footpaths that need urgent attention in our area.	5/8/2015 2:34 PM
369	A proposed overall cost of \$78 million for this project is just too prohibitive at this point in time. Surely there are far cheaper options or to redevelop & extend the existing centre.	5/8/2015 11:30 AM
370	I think the existing theatre is adequate, with some modernisation necessary. I would be happy for you to pay the estimated upgrade costs, and continued maintenance costs. The proposed cost- \$78 million- is exhorbitant, and a multi storey carpark is totally out of keeping with the area, and unnecessary.	5/7/2015 8:48 PM
371	I think the current Whitehorse Centre is fine. Maybe it needs some maintenance. I'm not sure why it would need a large redevelopment.	5/7/2015 7:03 PM
372	Stop wasting rate payer's money and use it on projects that will be of benefit to all rate payers and not just a few	5/7/2015 4:42 PM
373	Maintenance and smaller upgrade to the centre is the better way to go. The proposed amount of money being spent is a massive amount that needs to be funded in large part by ratepayers. Please think of the cost to ratepayers before taking on major costly projects like this one.	5/7/2015 4:23 PM
374	My concern is that while the musical events are well patronised now if the centre is closed for a year or more to rebuild then it might take a lot to get people back to the centre. The productions that I have been to (many over last 10 years) are mostly attended by the middle and older age groups and they get choosy where they go to see musicals and the like.	5/7/2015 3:59 PM
375	I am incensed at the proposed rate rise to cover this unwarranted expenditure.	5/7/2015 12:00 AM
376	i'm not in favour of the massive amount being spent on the redevelopment. The current facilities and commercial venues are sufficient. Council is not required to provide cultural facilities for those outside our community. We are to receive a big rate increase so obviously council is spending beyond its means on projects such as this.	5/6/2015 10:25 PM
377	I am concerned about the lack of ventilation and emergency exit in the current facility. I would like some more information about the orchestra pit update in the new centre.	5/6/2015 9:59 PM
378	The plans look wonderful.	5/6/2015 8:48 PM
379	It is too big a project, too expensive. How will council fund the project? Have council been putting funds away for this 'rainy day'? If not start a building fund and do not borrow any more money. Repair the buildings that need fixing and upgrade gradually.	5/6/2015 7:06 PM
380	Whitehorse has given the surrounding communities great value and me and my family who live close by appreciate the forward outlook of the centre	5/6/2015 4:58 PM
381	Please ensure that the acoustics are as good as possible	5/6/2015 4:34 PM
382	Option 2 for the carpark. Consideration MUST be give to more disabled parking and parking nearer to the Centre itself. Rethink more than one event occurring at the same time unless the parking situation is greatly improved.	5/6/2015 4:27 PM
383	With the proposed new theatres, would you please ensure - mikes on actors	5/6/2015 4:14 PM
384	The theatre has many excellent shows and deserves to be of a calibre to match the superb performers. A theatre of excellent design is required.	5/6/2015 2:56 PM
385	Keep up the fantastic work, it is wonderful to have such a facility and I am extremely grateful to have the opportunity to attend.	5/6/2015 2:54 PM
386	It would be nice to be able to meet friends prior to the show for a light meal . Maybe similar to Frankston performing arts centre.	5/6/2015 2:50 PM



## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

387	I support this initiative, a sustainable and larger facility is and will be needed in the future.	5/6/2015 2:49 PM
388	Strongly support this initiative.	5/6/2015 2:45 PM
389	I think your programming is very narrow and basically shopped from RAV Showcase. This may appeal to a certain group of people but there are many of us in the community who would like to see stuff that is a bit more progressive and interesting, especially when it comes to music and comedy. There are so many fantastic artists in these disciplines in Melbourne alone and you programmed BABBA??? I nearly spewed when I saw that. Give your local audience more credit!!	5/6/2015 1:42 PM
390	More disabled parking places, please	5/6/2015 11:51 AM
391	Well done on embarking on this important project	5/6/2015 10:42 AM
392	Look forward to a new venue.	5/6/2015 9:28 AM
393	Love the fact I can get quality entertainment without having to go into the city.	5/6/2015 1:39 AM
394	Re development is well & good ,but not at the over & above CPI rate increases proposed.Only if within current budget.	5/5/2015 11:33 PM
395	FOOD - As a subscriber, it would be good if one could come before a show and have access to a light meal - finger food / sit down. PARKING - Could the car park have solar lit down lights -- there are different levels and it is very dark.	5/5/2015 11:03 PM
396	I believe the Whitehorse Centre should be upgraded, not replaced with a larger venue(s). Box Hill Town Hall exists as a larger venue and there are other venues and meeting/function rooms in the general, local area.	5/5/2015 11:00 PM
397	Please retain as much, or more parking as there is now,	5/5/2015 10:50 PM
398	When are you going to advise the residents that this redevelopment will affect. What is the big secret, what are you trying to hide. Graphic drawings not to scale, they show no legend where roads, paths or houses are placed. No clearly defined measurement about how big new arts centre would be or the accompanying car park. Why hasn't this been published in the Whitehorse News or the local paper like all the councils other initiatives????????????	5/5/2015 10:44 PM
399	Proposed car park is a monstrosity and should not be built	5/5/2015 10:06 PM
400	Concerned about parking as a library user - need to ensure more parking is provided if Whitehorse Centre is to be enlarged. Not keen on multi level carpark as will take away from current garden effect.	5/5/2015 9:42 PM
401	I love the size as it is, no matter where you sit, you know will be able to see everything on stage. Increasing the size will also increase the number of people attending and the number of cars needing to park making getting out onto Whitehorse Rd a headache and also exiting the Centre itself much harder. Bigger is not always better. I assume to cover expenses that rental costs will increase and tickets prices along with it. Also, being without the Centre for so long during redevelopment means patrons will find other places to go and may not return.	5/5/2015 9:37 PM
402	Council need to think long and very hard about spending \$78 million, is this project going to employ more staff that ratepayers have to pay for, our rates are way too high now, you try paying rates on a single pension in a unit or a family with children at school, all utilities are expensive, how about improving facilities at more sporting grounds netball, cricket, football, and basketball in whitehorse, and some facilities are awful or very over crowded, these facilities need constant improvement to keep children off the streets, and not obese, also what about nunuwading primary school site, all this money on the Whitehorse Centre, is so not right,	5/5/2015 9:23 PM
403	I think the Parking facilities need to be more streamlined and easier to access with more Disability bays. The sound system needs to be updated as it is often extremely loud and vibrates to the degree I have had to go out of the shows esp musicals.	5/5/2015 8:47 PM
404	In the present theatre I find it very difficult to access the seats nearing the centre of the row. I would like to see a centre aisle and enough room to move past people who are already seated. Most of the events I have attended have a majority of older audience members and moving past seated folk is almost impossible without stepping on a toe or two. I have been stepped on and also stepped on others.	5/5/2015 8:25 PM
405	Prefer the car park to be behind the Police Station.	5/5/2015 8:24 PM
406	I hope these much needed improvements will not result in patrons bearing the burden of an increase in ticket prices	5/5/2015 8:14 PM
407	Great design. Only one slight concern - the proposals for the parking.	5/5/2015 7:50 PM

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

408	<p>I've noticed that as most people who come are seniors, there should be improved access for people with mobility issues. Climbing the steps to go to the back rows is getting more difficult</p> <p>There isn't enough room between the rows, so when someone comes late, you have to stand to give them more room to move. Having an aisle down the middle would give easier access to seating. Parking too is difficult and while I applaud the centre staff for adding more disabled parking spaces for the concert, we still have to arrive an hour before the concert to get one. Improved parking would be very useful. I love the morning tea provided before each concert which gives you the opportunity of meeting old friends before the concert.</p>	5/5/2015 6:28 PM
409	Sadly by the time redevelopment is finalised I will be to old to attend. I hope there are NO plans to charge for parking in the future.	5/5/2015 6:27 PM
410	I think the Centre needs an upgrade. Routine maintenance is what is needed not a rebuild. If you have surplus funds reduce rates. I believe the current centre fills all our needs.	5/5/2015 6:17 PM
411	We have seen some very high quality shows at Whitehorse and am sure the re development will be a great asset.	5/5/2015 6:16 PM
412	No	5/5/2015 5:34 PM
413	It is a beautiful center and would greatly enhance the enjoyment of the plays and musicals; but it looks terribly expensive. I do not live in the city of Whitehorse so am not worried about my rates going up substantially to pay for it.	5/5/2015 5:17 PM
414	There should be more access in redesign is theatre seating. Currently there is not even a centre aisle!! I've often wondered what would happen if there was a fire or if someone became ill. You just need to experience the "bottle necks" at the exit doors at interval and end of event.	5/5/2015 5:13 PM
415	It is an exciting prospect for the wider arts community as well as the residents of Whitehorse and must embrace cutting edge design and facilities	5/5/2015 5:11 PM
416	It is alright as it is. It does not need any changes etc.	5/5/2015 4:40 PM
417	Car parking - we arrived 1/2 hour before morning show and drove round and round trying to get a car park and also when football is on a Saturday hard to get a park. As a lot of seniors go there is there a lift or easier access than stairs.	5/5/2015 4:17 PM
418	This sounds to be a magnificent development and we wish you well. In due course we would like to know what is proposed for the Whitehorse Theatre season during redevelopment.	5/5/2015 2:30 PM
419	<p>We are very lucky to have a cultural centre in Whitehorse.</p> <p>I can see it no longer serves the needs of the city adequately. I wholly support the re-development of the facility and urge the councillors of Whitehorse to vote for it in the budget.</p>	5/5/2015 1:55 PM
420	The improved scope & size question I don't really know as I haven't seen any redevelopment plans but I don't think it needs improving as it is	5/5/2015 1:43 PM
421	The redevelopment of the theatre space to the proposed technical specifications will allow the presentation of high level and large scale performances, which it currently does not have the capacity to deliver.	5/5/2015 1:12 PM
422	I feel the Whitehorse Centre has the potential to become a cultural hub in whitehorse and the council should council theatre projects for amateur youth in the area.	5/5/2015 10:44 AM
423	Needs to be information circulated on what alternative venues will be used for theatre during the redevelopment	5/5/2015 10:20 AM
424	I have not ATTENDED many performances, but I have PERFORMED in many over more than ten years... somehow that wasn't an option in your survey?	5/5/2015 8:37 AM
425	Hopefully redevelopment will not impact on current reasonable ticket prices. High standard of production at a local venue is an asset to this area.	5/4/2015 10:50 PM
426	My understanding is that this is NOT a community project but a commercial project. The construction of a 3 storey car park directly impacts the residents of adjoining properties and also creates an area that will arguably be unsafe at night.	5/4/2015 10:15 PM
427	Why Is Whitehorse Council so intent on Spending ratepayers money on a facility that does nothing but loose money year after year? The Councils own feasibility studies have shown a history of loss making by this venue going back at least ten years. At a time when Council is proposing Increases of the order of 7% in Annual rates, this is a slap in the face of residents struggling to find the money to pay.	5/4/2015 9:11 PM

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

428	Please inform as soon as dates for redevelopment are set	5/4/2015 8:51 PM
429	Fantastic move!!! Keep on the goodwork	5/4/2015 6:41 PM
430	Is there any scope for changes to the orchestra pit within the main auditorium? It would be wonderful if funding would permit access to and from the pit from a 2nd point, for obvious safety reasons. Also, if that entry could allow access to and from the pit during performances, without having to go through the auditorium it would be a real improvement. The present arrangement is somewhat scary in case of the need for evacuation. If another entry point were available, it would mean that somebody in the pit needing medical attention would be able to get it without having to halt a performance. All the very best of luck with this much overdue redevelopment.	5/4/2015 6:34 PM
431	Would like to see improved public transport access. The current bus stop on Whitehorse Rd is too far away from the centre to encourage strong patronage. Although currently wheelchair-accessible, the distance alone may discouraged both mobility-impaired and fully mobile patrons. Please ensure the orchestra pit is accessible as well; band members are subject to high risk of injury due to muscular/skeletal strain trying to enter the pit from the current door in the auditorium. Moving the door backstage eliminates this risk and allows musicians to take interval with more subtlety professionalism.	5/4/2015 6:32 PM
432	The Whitehorse Centre is one of the best managed performing arts centres in the country and as a direct result of this has a loyal subscriber base. That audience require, deserve, an upgraded centre	5/4/2015 6:20 PM
433	Well done Shire.....It's great that you are keeping up with the needs of the Community.....I don't think there is anything in the Eastern Suburbs that provide such great facilities for concerts and performances. Thank you.	5/4/2015 6:14 PM
434	It would lose it's 'family' atmosphere and go upmarket to compete with Melbourne Theatre's. The small theatre space is a good idea as an addition and an enlargement to the stage area and dressing room accommodation also an addition of a restaurant would be great.	5/4/2015 5:47 PM
435	Please note that the objection to the development includes the development of a car park. Planning shows one of the options building a 3 level car park in the areas around the center. This makes it the highest structure in the area and will be have a direct impact on the local area of park and sports oval. It will have an impact to areas used in local markets as well as having a direct impact on housing (both sound and privacy) as well as an impact on value.	5/4/2015 5:20 PM
436	As a parent of a student at the Utassy Ballet school I look forward to the improved facilities the proposed redevelopment will provide to children who use the space regularly. Especially in terms of safety and not having to go outside to move between rehearsal rooms.	5/4/2015 4:00 PM
437	It is galling to see car spaces at the centre completely full when a performance is on and the council car park virtually empty. Patrons have been obliged to park at Harvey Norman opposite. I have elderly people trying to cross busy Whitehorse Road. Parking is something that really needs to be addressed.	5/4/2015 3:57 PM
438	Please allow the redevelopment to proceed in an orderly manner without interference by council accountants so that a good and proper usage will ensue.	5/4/2015 3:55 PM
439	Please spend our rates wisely and not on projects that will increase them!	5/4/2015 3:36 PM
440	the proposed new design looks like an excellent, 21st century facility to continue to work with the City of Whitehorse to deliver high quality performances to ratepayers and residents.	5/4/2015 2:55 PM
441	The Whitehorse Centre redevelopment is a waste of ratepayers money. The 2.7million in losses each year could be better used in reducing rates or supporting other community activities	5/4/2015 11:56 AM

## Comments received via email or directly to Council

### Submissions, general feedback, letters and comments

1. I don't know what the proposed changes are so I can't express an opinion, except to ask what benefits they will provide. I'm just sceptical by nature and can't imagine how the Whitehorse Centre could be improved. It seems ideal for what it does.
2. I am an old bloke whose method of communication is to write letters and not waste paper. Many old people (and that's a high % of your customers) come to the Whitehorse Centre because of the comparably easy parking. If in your new plans there is any reduction in parking space (which is at present at capacity) events will suffer particularly the theatre. Many people come from outside of Whitehorse just because it's easier than other municipalities parking facilities (check this by the mailing lists of theatres). You do a great job, keep up the great work.
3. Appreciate you asking for input. I think a new Arts Centre is a good idea. Present theatre is small and shabby. Would like to see a discount ticket price for residents.
4. Request for centre aisle and more room between seats.
5. Easy & free parking is a big plus when visiting the Whitehorse Centre. So hopefully the re-development will not overlook this aspect of seeing a show at the Whitehorse Centre.
6. Will the Farmers' Market still be sited in this precinct? If so, Parking Option 1 would be the better option. Thank-you for keeping your residents informed.
7. As a long-term subscriber to Whitehorse Centre I am familiar with the current auditorium. It has its problems and the new design does not fix one major one - Access by patrons to their seats. To have long continuous rows across the auditorium with access only from the side aisles means that the last few in have to climb over many sets of knees to get to central seats. It also means that latecomers have to be held back until a reasonable break in the performance before being seated.
8. Most good theatres have at least one central aisle, or even two. The plan as published seems to have perpetuated this fault.
9. I agree with the development
10. Recent reports of a one off rate rise and \$78m overall budget to re-develop the centre hopefully won't materialize. Some upgrade is needed \$5m should do it. Specifically lift the sound shell stage approx. 2 metres so all can see from right back. I could only get an occasional glimpse from half way back on Aust. Day but then couldn't see accompanying performers - and this is our most showcased day for the sound stage. Plus but in a few extra some rows of seats in front for aged, infirm & early comers then enclose it all when not in use. Perhaps a couple of extra small performance essentially practice rooms. That's all that's needed as abundance of school halls exist since the school hall building program and high class school and tertiary theatres abound in the district e.g. Sion College, Mt Scopus, Deakin, Aquinas etc. So too much competition looms for a mega Whitehorse Centre that will have to compete at lower than marginal cost to attract funds. As for an expensive vault to look up at from inside, the same space would exist to look at free when it's outside should the vault not be built!
11. I am a resident of the City of Whitehorse and I have attended a performance at the Whitehorse Centre. Consensus of the open evening was car park should be behind police station with a level underground and it wasn't considered to be big enough for future needs as the car park is full during the day.
12. Need to consider the effect on the older retirees in Whitehorse. We are already affected by the government changes to the pension rules and the lower interest rates. It is unfair to increase the council rates to pay for a facility most of us won't use simply because someone thought it a good idea to upgrade the Arts Centre.
13. There are a number of other facilities and resources in the community – a couple of examples: Baptist Church in Blackburn, Springfield Rd Local Schools are undertaking infrastructure development for performing arts.
14. While the dossier is impressive, does it need to be so grand!!

15. To the councillors and administrators of Whitehorse City Council,

I feel compelled to question the viability and need for the size of the rate increase and a serious doubt how this new \$78 million plus redevelopment will benefit the community as a whole and not a minority of the residents. I also question the 'statement' made by that the general community had been extensively consulted – what consultation, whit whom, how many were consulted and were they the "minority" who currently use the facilities. I think ratepayers money at this time and with the clear uncertainty of economic times ahead that a more prudent approach to council spending would be more appropriate. Renewal work of \$5.2 million over the next 10 years would be the better option, less burden on an already struggling population trying to make ends meet. Use ratepayers funds wisely and what they are meant for i.e. Services and capital works. We would rather see our rates used in ways that benefit everyone and not just a few.

16. I attended the meeting last Monday morning and have already completed a survey form but someone come up with an interesting idea to me after the meeting which I have been thinking about and not sure whether it would work. If the Whitehorse council is able to get the Nunawading Primary School site could the Whitehorse Centre be re built there opening up the land behind the council offices and perhaps a small sports oval be put on the existing Whitehorse Centre site and with Walker Park next door could make a very attractive open area. BUT then comes the question of the NPS site with the parking which you would think would be an issue there unless you had the 3 storey car park on Springvale Road.
17. My daughter and I have enjoyed many years of Performing Arts sessions at the Whitehorse Theatre. We send our best wishes to the redevelopment program, and we hope that many valuable suggestions will be forth coming for you.
18. I am unable to be present at your meetings. However, there are only two matters that I wish to raise. Firstly, the sound system of the theatre we find is not clear as one moves further back in the theatre. It is often too loud and becomes distorted. Secondly, attention needs to be given to the manner in which the parking bays are planned. At present it is cumbersome and too few disabled spaces. In fact, when there is more than one function there is insufficient parking.
19. I have to inform you, for the record, that I object strongly to very large amounts of Ratepayers' money being wasted on a 'White Elephant' which will continue to be a drain on the City's resources for the foreseeable future. The Proposal is financially grossly irresponsible and should be abandoned now, before anymore of Ratepayers' money is wasted.

Furthermore, your claim that this Proposal is only in the consultation stage is invalidated by Council's current attempt to increase the City Rate by 2% in order to fund the proposed redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre. This rather suggests that Council has predetermined the outcome of these 'Consultations'.

20. The proposed Centre Development looks amazing and without doubt will turn out to be a major asset to the already vibrant council

I am however very concerned about both proposed car park options. What concerns me is the following:

- Loss of current lush grassed areas
- Car parks are never pretty
- Most importantly- Potential to attract unsavoury people. Especially late at night

This development really should happen, but I believe the car park issue needs to be addressed.

I offer the following suggestion. The high rise car park is built across the road in the shopping precinct.

What benefit will this offer?

- Greater access to car spaces for shopping precinct
- Increased revenue for proprietor's
- If cost to park is envisaged then increased revenue

- More space around the new centre for trees, grass and families to enjoy
- No ugly car park near residential area

I also suggest an over pass is built to avoid over use of Maroondah Highway lights and increase pedestrian safety.

I believe in progression, but I want everyone to benefit. Business, community and families I believe will all benefit from this exciting new development!

21. To put it simply we are against the project in its current Conceptual form.

Here is a list of concerns and questions that our family had when viewing the Concept Plans for the Redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre.

#### CARPARK

- Visually unattractive bringing with it extra cars therefore more air pollution. Noise pollution would also be worsened as the carpark would allow for many more cars and as the facility is also used mainly at night the noise would be carried further as normal day time noises peter out.
- Light pollution as the complex would be lit all hours of the night.
- 
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- We would lose important life giving trees for native bird life and human use.
- No accurate measurements were provided in Concept Plan.
- 

#### TRUCK TURNAROUND

- No accurate measurements were provided in Concept Plan.
- When would the trucks be likely to use the turnaround space ie. Would there be restrictions on time – only in business hours 9am to 5pm.
- What kind of damage would the trucks cause
- We would lose trees How many trees exactly once again we don't know.

#### ARTS CENTRE BUILDING

- No accurate measurements were provided in Concept Plan.
- Whilst destruction/building there will be noise, dust, rubble, rubbish, vermin. Will this work be done in business hours

- How much parkland will the new building take ie. how many trees and how much grassed area.
- Will the current paths be built over and if so will the paths be put back in the same direction/flow
- Where will the Construction workers park if this building goes ahead. In many of the meetings I attended parking was said to be a premium consideration for the building of the new carpark.
- Where will Council Workers, visitors to the Library and Council park?
- How high will the Arts Centre be?
- 
- Will users of the Arts Centre still park on the grassland to the rear of the building like they currently do. ie. Are we to lose yet more of our parkland. We would hope the parking at the rear would cease if/when the new carpark/Arts Centre is built. Many family groups use this parkland.

#### POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES for CARPARK

- Instead of either listed scenario place the carpark at the front right near Whitehorse Road. Build your three level carpark next to the current Police Station where the vacant land is situated. This area is presumable zoned as Industrial. Have a covered walkway down to the Theatre with environmental lights. This could also be used for Farmers Markets or Arts/Craft Market for the vendors to stand in on cold wetter days.
- Whilst building of the new carpark is undertaken in position next to Police Station Council Workers could be bused to and from work. Like Eastland and Knox Shopping Centre workers are for busy periods ie. Christmas.

Finally if the Whitehorse Council decides to proceed with the update to Arts Centre and the building of the multi storey carpark will any design changes and final designs be discussed and copies given to local residents and ratepayers?

We are also concerned about the size of the Whitehorse Centre. We were hoping the new Centre would be able to sit on the same sized land as currently is the case.

Also with the new

building being two stories we wouldn't want the building being more present on the landscape than the current Whitehorse Centre. It would be nice to think the Centre could be updated with a few items from the Council's list of theatres, studios, dressing rooms perhaps not all can fit in

Would there

be time restrictions on when trucks could deliver and take stage paraphernalia. Also with the enlarged truck turning area what size of truck would be accommodated by this? Would the trucks arriving in future be larger than the trucks currently using the present drive/car park area?

Please see my comments below relating to the Proposed Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment. We are firmly against the project in its current Conceptual Form.

Please help us to get the Redevelopment right not only for Residents and Rate Payers but for the users of the Centre as well. We as a family will appreciate your help in modifying the proposed plans.  
If there are further questions you wish to raise or in answer to my email I can be reached on the email address.

Thank you for allowing my comments to be heard, and hopefully you can help residents resolve this so the majority are satisfied.

22. As a regular subscriber to the Whitehorse Centre for many years I am amazed at the comment raised under the heading "Users should Pay". Many times the majority of attendees at the excellent plays are pensioners/grey power and so we are already paying the costs of keeping this important part of our community in operation. On several occasions it has been unfortunate for me to see that the performances are not always full to capacity – my friend and I have been attending both afternoon and evening sessions – so I do really question the necessity to spend so much money on re-building the Centre. I acknowledge that the Centre is looking very tired but surely a practical refurbishment plan is all that is necessary. I know that we do need to plan for the future, but surely we have to be realistic in our planning. After all, with the Electronic Age do we really know that patrons of the future will attend such centres for their entertainment? Councillors, please listen to what is being said and spend our hard-earned rates wisely.
23. We wish to object most emphatically to the Redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre due to the excessive proposed rate increase to fund this project.  
From what we have read an adequate business case has not been revealed. We would like to see the redevelopment modified to be funded exclusively by the reserves and long term loans.  
Our rates already increase significantly above CPI each year and we believe council should manage to contain spending and modify the proposal.
24. Thank you for your info for the building of huge complex , I am a very senior citizen pensioner and for that reason alone I am against the building of a theatre complex ,my main concern is that it will be an extra burden on all rate payers by increased rates and admin costs etc., and due to age I will not benefit as I would not be a user.I therefore wish you to cast my vote against such a building.
25. Thanks for your prompt reply. I have completed the council's online survey and I do believe that council has a part to play in providing arts and cultural facilities. I cannot come up with another example such as the Albany Entertainment Centre, but there are limits to everything. The Whitehorse Leader has a report (Mon 25 May) where interviewees suggest a new centre could be built elsewhere in the City. Perhaps that idea has value, and would remove the years of disruption. The multi-storey car park would seem to be too much, add to the cost, as you suggest, and would be visually detrimental to the whole area, and add to the traffic confusion which already exists. You mention Aqualink Box Hill... I see no multi-storey car park there!
26. It looks as though on this occasion we will have to agree to disagree – our democratic right. The answer to your question on choice – it goes without saying I would prefer that we have access to good plays. However, I am not convinced that a Centre of the size planned can/will be utilised to its fullest capacity. The last 2 plays which I attended – 1 on a Wednesday night and the other on a Saturday night were not fully patronised. I cannot speak for other events as I do not attend any.
27. How can anyone consider spending \$78m on new offices. With many streets having multiple units replacing homes we have a huge problem happening with these roads and infrastructure. As a pensioner, your desire to have big and better offices by imposing such a huge increase in rates is an impost we can ill afford. We cannot play sports or spend lots of money on so called arts, but we are a large voting part of your community. Just remember this when the time comes for re-election.
28. Regarding the proposal for the redevelopment of Whitehorse Centre, I think it is a good idea, however the car park

I believe the Council should take into account residents' opinions and also those who frequently use the Council area,

It would be a good idea to build the new carpark building by using the space currently being used as a carpark, as



it would be very close to the Whitehorse Centre, as well as the library and would provide great access to the main Whitehorse Road.

29. Don't need it. Don't want it. Don't do it. It is such a waste of hard paid rates. The whole Whitehorse Council is so out of tune / touch with the ratepayers it is ridiculous. You just shut out people calling for rate reductions. The Council is not in the business of theatre. There is nothing wrong with the present theatre. Be thankful for what you already have. Come off it.
30. I agree that doing nothing is not an option. Whilst I find the current complex comfortable and more than suitable at a personal level I can fully appreciate the ongoing maintenance issues and costs. Such a facility is needed in Whitehorse so letting it reach the stage where it is no longer tenable is not an option. I therefore support the proposal for a new facility at the current site. It will certainly be a major project for the Council but not beyond its capabilities with a good contract in place with a reputable architect and builder.

Regarding car parking, a multi-level facility is unavoidable and I have no preference for either option. Cost can be the main determinant.

31. **Do you believe that the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre is an important project for the City of Whitehorse?** This is a bit open + shut – Obviously this is inevitably needed as community expands + needs change.

**To what extent do you support the redevelopment as currently proposed?** Somewhat support. Depending on unnecessary extravagance to a non needed cost! It needs TIGHT contractual arrangements + use of alternative not **??? ??? construction** not open slather for construction to go overspend with public money.

**Council has an important role in providing cultural facilities.** Agree Of course but to what extent + cost?

**The Whitehorse Centre is a valued community asset.** Save **??? ???** It should not blow out costs of performances – it should remain budget entertainment for all incomes.

**The Whitehorse Centre requires redevelopment.** Like most facilities overtime – watch the actual cost + resultant costs to patrons – the citizens.

**The improved scope and size of the redeveloped centre meets my expectations.** Maybe it needs asking Not an opportunity to splurge. Keep it attractive, non-expensive materials, search for alternatives to keep costs down.

**Which description best suits you?**

I have attended a performance over the years.

**Are you a resident of the City of Whitehorse?**

No. Once was a frequent user of library + entertainment – now too old + immobile.

**Other comments**

Seems a great emphasis on backstage facilities - bathrooms? Does this mean showers?

What about handicapped parking + also designated area close for older seniors? Should be better access from Whitehorse Rd not so much walking area (paved) People come by CAR or BUS? This needs to have a united access to the facilities at least in case of “drop off” + “pick up”. I cannot understand if the area near the theatre is parking or paving?

Nothing is said about COST + how the parking 3 stories is to look? + does it have a function when NOT full of cars?

(\*Feedback form difficult to read, scanned and copied included in Appendix D)

32. I would like to lodge my objections on the Proposed Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment. In particular, the proposed locations of the Car Park (both option 1 and option 2) are the points of objection I wish to raise. Both those locations have, in my opinion, a large impact to the area including, but not limited to: SECURITY

- Safety of members of the public that walk along that area, due to various issues, including those highlighted below.
- Increased risk of crime to that area, impacting not just the cars and people that use the area but a mark increase of risk to residential areas around that.

- The development of either two parking plans increases the 'Dark Zone / Low Visibility Zone' of that area,

#### LIGHT POLLUTION

- 
- Increased lighting to that area will dramatically increase the light pollution to the remaining area around the Council proposed Car Parking, impacting events like Australia Day fireworks
- 

#### NOISE POLLUTION

- 
- Should the Car Park be enclosed, the impact of ventilation units will/could be an impact on noise to residential areas.

#### ENVIROMENT POLLUTION

- 
- Environmental impact to reduction of "Green" area of the community. A large number of people use those areas in the Propose Car Parking for community and personal use. Included in this is the loss of the area for the "Farmer's Market" event, a very popular event in the Whitehorse area that brings family from the area and visitors from other areas to the event.
- Rubbish / Litter. The increase of Car Parking to that zone will increase the amount of rubbish and litter to that area. Given that it is away from the Council area it is already apparent that the Council has a very poor plan in regards to keeping the areas clean. The increased rubbish to that area will have an impact to the region, the health of the area and an environmental impact to rubbish cause in storm water systems
- Reduction of established trees in the area and the direct impact to flood zones along that area.
- Direct impact to the wildlife of that area.

I have been asked to raise the potential of a third Car Parking concept which I have attached to this email. The potential plan could be above or below ground, or a mixture to reduce impact. Would allow and cater from close parking for elderly members attending the centre and could easily be attached to the Centre via an overhead cover to protect those attending during poor weather.

Please also note that these are just a few of the objections that have been put forward, as hopefully captured by those from the Council in attendance of the information sessions held, including the Ward Forum. (see also attached scanned comments on the concept drawings below)



33. I am an occasional user of the civic centre for forums, meetings etc. and I often ride my bike. I have looked therefore in the proposal for any mention of bike parking and am disappointed to find none. Clearly most users travel by car however Council has an obligation by virtue of its own Planning Scheme to provide bike parking for a significant number of bikes. I refer to Whitehorse Planning Scheme requirements re bike parking, (section 52.34). Objectively I am not concerned with the actual number however I believe Council should be making it clear that quality bike parking will be provided and this needs to be shown in all development plans and not left as an afterthought requiring retrofitting as happened at Aqualink. Provision should be made for highly visible parking rails, under cover, close to the entrances and with opportunity to expand to meet any increased demand. Bike parking in the multilevel car park is less satisfactory given distance from the facility and lack of passive supervision which is possible outside a busy facility entrance.
- I have cycled parked my bike on the hoops outside and subsequently come out to rain and wet bike and belongings hence the desirability of covered bike parking. I note the secure bike cage adjacent to the library which is great for longer visits during office hours however not an appropriate facility for out of hours casual cycling visits.
- It is highly desirable to give cyclists (and pedestrians) some benefits over car drivers such as close, secure, under cover parking. Such action would fit with Whitehorse City's vigorous promotion of Sustainability. I suggest that Council officers consult with CoWBAC, as the community's representative body, regarding the provision of bike parking before plans are too far advanced.

34. General Comments about information provided – The Cost of \$72 million is mentioned but there is no information on how this will be paid for. ( An enquiry about this was responded to by directing me to the 118 page proposed budget, which was most unhelpful.) Car Park Option 1 – There is no vegetation showing on the option 2 site (opposite the development site) however Option 2 shows some vegetation will be lost on that site, so the option 1 drawing is incomplete. The financial information provided was quite vague and incomplete about certain issues – What is the operating cost for year 1 – 4 after completion? Only the amount for year 5 is mentioned. What is the percentage offset from increased revenue going to be when compared to the increased spending on additional staff and overheads? The increased spending is not quantified. If the public are asked to comment and give their opinion, it is necessary to provide this sort of detailed information so they can make a considered and informed decision.

#### **Response to the proposed project –**

While I support the Arts and feel it is important to have facilities that can be used for showcasing the arts, I feel the cost of \$72M to demolish a perfectly usable existing structure and build a new one is not warranted. The assertion that as the Centre is a 29 year old building, it is out of date, requires costly maintenance and is not suitable, seems a bit exaggerated, the home I live in is over 45 years old, yet it does not need costly maintenance, upgrading etc etc.

There is already currently debt of 13m that is unpaid at the present time, to take on considerable more would be rash.

The cost of maintaining the building 'like for like' is stated as 5.2 Million over 10 years, which works out to .5m each year. It seems to me that it would be more prudent to do that for the next 10 yrs, while building up capital reserves for this project, that way in 10 years time when this project is viewed again, even if there is escalation of cost, there will be a substantial amount of money that council can utilise to seed fund it. Despite all of the above, should this project go ahead I prefer the Option 2 carpark site.

35. The Whitehorse White Elephant

I am a ratepayer and an occasional patron of the Whitehorse Centre

I have already completed various feedback forms and surveys regarding the project.

Those responses clearly state my lack of support for the project.

My view was formed after considering the following factors:

- The cost is excessive, especially in the current economic environment, when council is proposing rate increases that exceed CPI.
- Vic Gov't is pressurising councils to limit rate increases.
- The quoted cost is likely to be exceeded, and with a complex design, cost over-runs will occur. This is a historic reality.
- There is little prospect of the complex being a net profit contributor to councils overall finances. In fact it will be a net expense which would only increase pressure for more rate rises
- The multilevel carpark is excessive, with daily utilisation being unlikely. Financial contribution from this source would be break even at best, but more likely to be a loss contributor.
- The existing complex, of which I am a patron, appears to fulfil its purpose adequately, and with a modest refurbishment will serve the ratepayers future needs.
- Incurring significant cost to demolish the existing facility and replacing it with something similar is not something a sensible council should contemplate.
- Using the Albany WA facility as a comparative lacks logic, as Albany is a remote region, where no other similar facility is close by, whereas Whitehorse is a suburban council where appropriate facilities exist within close proximity to satisfy potential users needs, ie Monash and Deakin universities.

I am of the old school of ratepayers who believe the role of council is to provide basic services which will benefit all ratepayers. Those services include street lighting, roads, footpaths, garbage collection etc, rather than embark on an exercise in outdoing other specialist providers of such amenities which can more realistically operate them on a sustainable basis.

I don't believe that council has a mandate to develop a state of the art facility which won't be utilised by the majority of ratepayers, especially when such a major use of ratepayers' money is involved.

As a matter of interest, would you please advise the cost to date of the redevelopment, including architects, consultants and other fees, (not to mention councils input in the form of employee involvement) as well as any forward commitments undertaken by Whitehorse Council.

36. I tried to do the survey but the page wouldn't open. I downloaded the feedback form but couldn't type any answers so now I'm just writing what I think. I hope you don't mind. 1) I think the design looks great. It looks like a lovely space and I assume, for artistic types, that the space will be great improvement on the existing facilities. How many residents will really value the redevelopment is a big question from my perspective. 2) I would like my home to look great too but I can't ask my neighbours to pay for my home renovations. This is my main objection to the redevelopment proposal. I don't think that it is fair for your facilities to look wonderful by placing an additional financial burden on Whitehorse residents and making my home looking wonderful a dream even further away than it is now.3) I have been to the existing centre 3 or 4 times and the facility has been completely adequate each time.
37. Generally speaking we agree that an up-to-date performing arts facility is a very important requirement for a community, particularly one the size of our community. Actually 29 years old is not old for a building, and some facilities are more attractive because they have a "homely old-time aura" about them. However if they aren't up-to-scratch with current safety regulations etc and do not have facilities to handle modern day presentations, or have insufficient carparking space, and if the building itself is deteriorating, then certainly a new building to suit the community well into the future should be considered whilst we are in a situation of low interest rates and shortage of work. The existing facility has always seemed reasonably comfortable to us, and it always seems to be well attended, but as with any community facility we always have to be looking ahead into the future to make sure that we are catering adequately for forecasted increased populations. Having a good quality arts facility located locally sure beats having to drive into the CBD to see a show.
38. to all councilors of Whitehorse City,  
This project of \$78 million dollars or more every rate payer of the city should have a letter of this event. As put on to it. Yes or no ??? to go ahead or dismiss ??? Over years I've noticed close to a dictatorship where those extremely wealthy ? WWI and WWII for thousands lost lives fighting for just nation and law procedure. Rates exceed 5.6% of project ahead 7.8%. Increases much higher than nation inflation (hand writing difficult to read - this has been interpreted to the best of our ability. RENTS ESCULATE Nil Control Legal in Australia.  
(Document was scanned and attached in Appendix D)
39. Page 1 of survey completed indicating support of the project – scanned included and included in Appendix C

24<sup>th</sup> May 2015

**Public Submission for the Whitehorse Council Special Committee Meeting 9<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

Dear Councillors

While we fully comprehend the need to update the current Whitehorse Centre,  
we strenuously object to the car park option 2 plan for the increased  
car parking facilities, our reasons for objections are as follows -

3) Safety

- a. Multi-level car parks quite often have dark areas that are not open to public view these areas tend to attract undesirable persons, leading to an increase in criminal activities such as property theft, motor vehicle theft, house burglaries, drug dealing and drug use. Also with the potential increase in these activities there could be a decrease in personal safety for those that use the adjacent parkland for recreation and other leisure pursuits.

In summary, while we understand and appreciate the need to renovate the Whitehouse Centre and provide increased parking facilities, we respectfully request that other options be investigated such as underground parking in the current carpark location, or at worst then option 1 be selected for the project with increased security for the parking areas to be included in the design.

Yours Sincerely

9<sup>th</sup> June 2015

**Public Submission for the Whitehorse Council Special Committee Meeting 9<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

Dear Councillors

While we fully comprehend the need to update the current Whitehorse Centre,  
strenuously object to the car park option 2 plan for the increased  
car parking facilities, our reasons for objections are as follows -

The other area of impact may be the  
increased risks of property flooding in nearby homes in Cherrybrook Close and  
Knightsbridge Ave, due to the change in rainwater run off caused by this large  
concrete structure.

3) Safety

- a. Multi-level car parks quite often have dark areas that are not open to public view  
these areas tend to attract undesirable persons, leading to an increase in criminal  
activities such as property theft, motor vehicle theft, house burglaries, drug dealing  
and drug use. Also with the potential increase in these activities there could be a  
decrease in personal safety for those that use the adjacent parkland for recreation  
and other leisure pursuits and given the new Police superstation at Foresthill, the  
state government may decide to close the Nunawading station further impacting  
safety concerns.

In summary, while we understand and appreciate the need to renovate the Whitehouse Centre and  
provide increased parking facilities, we respectfully request that other options be investigated such  
as underground parking in the current carpark location, I believe that there has been a separate  
submission detailing this alternative or at worst then option 1 be selected for the project with  
increased security for the parking areas to be included in the design.

Yours Sincerely

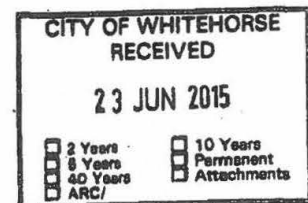
Victoria 3131

22<sup>nd</sup> June 2015

Dear

We recently received your letter in reference to the car parking proposals for the Whitehorse Centre redevelopment. We are writing to thank you and your councillors for listening to our grievances and communicating promptly to allay our concerns.

Yours Sincerely





41. Letter - (attached below)

### **Proposed Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment – A submission from**

I have already made a Budget Submission to Council which included comments about the Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment.

To ensure that those who are considering community feedback about this proposal are aware of my thoughts, I have restated and expanded on them in this feedback which is specifically about the proposed Redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre.

#### **My experiences as a regular patron of theatrical performances.**

I like the Whitehorse Centre for performances because it is part of the local community. Audiences are smaller and the theatre size ensures that all seats are good. The entertainment presented is a good mix of opera and theatre from state and national company touring programs, and also some excellent smaller touring companies that would not be viable in Melbourne theatres.

Consequently I am a very regular patron at the Whitehorse Centre.

I also regularly attend theatre, opera and music in Melbourne at such venues as Hamer Hall, Melbourne Recital Centre, State Theatre and Playhouse amongst others. These are large world-class facilities. They are very easily accessible by public transport - the train trip there is quick and I have no parking worries.

I do not believe it is appropriate for Whitehorse to try and emulate the world-class facilities noted above. Whitehorse should instead aspire to keeping the smaller local flavour of its current Theatre.

#### **Should anything be done?**

There is certainly scope for technical and comfort improvements at the current centre, and by all means these **should be done** to ensure the quality of productions can be maintained and even enhanced.

The brochure produced by Council says that the estimated cost to upgrade on a *like-for-like type replacement* is \$5.2 million. Doubling this to \$10 million to allow for Building Code requirement compliance, or allowing \$15-20 million to enable a more modest expansion would be far more appropriate.

#### **Have the alternatives been fully examined?**

There are many other possible ways to cater for more performance productions in Whitehorse. Assuming that “bigger is better” at the Whitehorse Centre (by increasing the footprint and doubling the area with an increased theatre size and adding another smaller theatre) is not necessarily a good assumption to make.

I have not seen evidence of serious consideration having been given to the following kinds of ideas which are by no means exhaustive. Indicative fund allocations are given merely as examples of the scale of funding which might be appropriate:

1. Co-use of existing facilities in schools and tertiary institutions in other parts of the city  
- allow \$5 million for cooperative upgrades to facilities
2. Innovative modification and use of Box Hill Town Hall or Box Hill Community Arts Centre  
- allow \$10-20 million for innovative uses and redevelopments
3. A co-development of a smaller “studio” theatre in association with the Nunawading Community Hub development  
- allow an additional \$10 million to provide for this.
4. Joint venture development of additional performance space with some of the anticipated major regional centre developments in Box Hill Central area in the next decade  
- allow \$25-40 million over the next decade

The provision of additional performance space at Box Hill has the following potential benefits – just to name a few:

- catering for ever increasing population and activity growth in the immediate vicinity.
- utilisation of existing off-street car parking facilities of an evening outside of peak shop trading hours
- having richly connected public transport modes available
- diversifying performance space over a wider geographical area.

#### **A business case.**

A full business case for the proposed expansion at Nunawading which transparently shows likely future annual running costs vs income must be developed and be made available for ratepayers to consider.

Alternative cases showing consideration of alternative possibilities, as shown above, should be developed too.

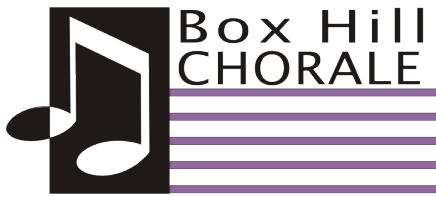
#### **What to do?**

I recommend that the allocation of \$200,000 in this year's budget be held over until after all feedback has been received and analysed, the business case prepared and published, and the kinds of alternatives noted above are fully examined and transparently presented to ratepayers. It can then be included in next year's budget if appropriate. Or else use the \$200,000 (or some lesser amount) to undertake these measures.

The additional 2% rate increase which is being predicated on the \$78 million expenditure on the Whitehorse Centre should be similarly deferred.

Apart from a potential political imperative to capture a rate rise because of "rate capping", there is no instant urgency for a 2% rise this year.

Other items budgeted for the Whitehorse Centre for 2015/2016 viz. Optic fibre link replacement \$10,000 and Lighting console replacement \$22,000 will ensure that ongoing operational and technical matters can be addressed.



PO Box 471, Box Hill VIC 3129

[www.boxhillchorale.org.au](http://www.boxhillchorale.org.au)

Email: [info@boxhillchorale.org.au](mailto:info@boxhillchorale.org.au)

29/05/15

Whitehorse City Council

Dear

Box Hill Chorale is pleased to once again have the opportunity to comment on the progress of the proposed new Whitehorse Centre.

As in previous discussion documents and open consultation meetings, we applaud Council's desire to upgrade and improve facilities for the performing arts in our community. By doing so, The City of Whitehorse continues to demonstrate strong support of the arts. It is very pleasing to view its progress.

We understand that a multi-purpose centre must cater for a very diverse range of performing arts needing a broadly described physical environment...

Box Hill Chorale, along with other choral performing groups in the community, has specific performance needs. Amongst these are: Tiered safe risers to accommodate up to 60 choristers. Acoustically enhancing smooth surfaces. Open staging which includes space for orchestra which may perform in an ensemble capacity during the course of a concert.

As a community choir which has a goal to perform more frequently in the City of Whitehorse, we look forward to experiencing the new facility and it would be wonderful if some of these needs could be accommodated.

Yours sincerely

43. Letter - (text inserted below)

**From:**  
**Date:** 30 May 2015 11:24:38 am AEST  
**To:**

**Subject: Whitehorse Centre**

Dear

Please find attached our submission on the Whitehorse Centre with post closure additions in red. We trust you will see the merit of removing the project from the Capital Works program.

The main points are :-

- 1 There is no objective evidence that a larger theatre is required.
- 2 The theatre is not currently being used to capacity.
- 3 Attendances are decreasing rather than increasing.
- 4 Ratepayers, as distinct from patrons, users and random persons, who are expected to pay for the project, have not been consulted.
- 5 If \$78 million is to be spent on Capital Works, Ratepayers and Council may prefer it to be spent on other projects.

Kind regards,

## Submission Whitehorse Centre

The existing Whitehorse Centre provides a very intimate and friendly venue. There is no need to replace it. The crowded foyer adds to the ambience.

However If a crowded foyer is considered a problem, people could wait in the supper room, which is never in use whilst we have been there, apart from the opening night suppers for plays, when the patrons not attending the supper are leaving. We have seen at least three councillors attend opening nights, so they have firsthand knowledge of this.

This would take advantage of the Whitehorse Centre's size for musical productions, with the added advantage of the shop being open for patrons.

The drive for a 600 seat venue comes principally from the subjective opinions and vested interests of users and patrons. There is no objective evidence to show that a larger theatre is required, nor has there been any relevant consultation with the people who are expected to pay for it; the Ratepayers.

In reaching the conclusion that a larger theatre was required the consultants relied in part on outdated, naturally biased and subjective data as follows:-

- A 500 person independent household telephone survey
- A 200 person Whitehorse Centre user (patrons /clients) survey
- Focus group sessions
- Surveys with hirers of the centre, local arts groups, local businesses.

The 500 person independent household telephone survey was conducted in 2010 and the others in 2012 or earlier. None of the parties interviewed would have been aware of the size and \$78million estimated cost of the current proposal.

Nor can the current feedback forms be relied upon. Whilst they ask whether respondents believe the centre should be redeveloped and how much the improved scope and size meet their expectations there is no indication of the cost or size involved.

The validity of responses is further compromised by the letter sent by Council in May this year; to approximately 5000 patrons, inviting their response, again without any indication of the \$78 million estimated cost or size involved.

Ratepayers already subsidise the existing operation by approximately \$1.25 million per annum for a facility where, according to the consultant's survey, 59% of users are not Whitehorse residents. How much more will Ratepayers be expected to subsidise a greatly expanded venue that will be far more expensive to run and maintain, for the benefit of others?

The function of Council is to provide for its Ratepayers. It is not the function or prerogative of Council to provide for wider areas.

The main thrust of user arguments to expand the Centre is that they have, on occasions, full houses. Surely a more rational solution would be put on additional performances or use venues with larger capacities.

Within the municipality, both the Box Hill Town Hall (600 capacity) and Mt Scopus (999 capacity) meet this requirement. There are also at least 9 venues within close proximity of Whitehorse that have large capacities (e.g. Hawthorn Town Hall, Yarra Valley Grammar).

The feasibility report of 2012 concluded that attendances were increasing, however this trend has now ceased. Council's own annual reports show the following attendances at professional theatre and matinee performances:-

2010/2011 16063 attendees

2011/2012 14711 attendees

2012/2013 16573 attendees

2013/2014 16439 attendees.

Not only have attendances stalled, but they are, in fact, falling.

Also overall annual attendances at the Whitehorse Centre have decreased from 131,572 in 2010/2011 to 123,541 in 2013/2014. The average attendance of 121,892 for the three years to 2013/2014 is at odds with the statement in the brochure that *Over 124,000 people attend events at the Whitehorse Centre annually.*

Actual attendances are as follows:-

Financial Year	Attendance
2010/11	131,572
2011/12	121,872
2012/13	120,264
2013/14	123,541

On the basis that only 41% of attendees are Whitehorse citizens then only 6740 attended the 2013/2014 professional theatre and matinee performances:-

The current theatre is not used to capacity as shown in the following table provided by Council officers for the 2013/2014 season.

Event	No of Perfs	Total Patrons	House Capacity
Midweek Matinee - Live Shows	6	2429	98%
Midweek Matinee - Classic Film	5	963	47%
Pro Season - Matinee Performances	10	2749	66%
Pro Season - Evening Performances	24	8512	86%
Kids Shows	5	1786	86%
Totals	50	16439	77%

On this basis there will be on average 97 unoccupied seats per performance and 57 during the professional theatre and matinee performances.

There are numerous sites available for smaller groups eg the Avenue Neighbourhood House @ Ely has a large hall, where concerts are held bimonthly.

We also have the perfection of the Box Hill Community Art's Centre's size for intimate musical productions, with the added advantage of the craft shop being open for patrons, as well as the café style lounge.

Given the availability of large television screens, home theatre systems, on-demand movies and many free activities in Melbourne, it is likely that attendances will continue to decline.

There also appears to be serious anomalies in the required size and costing of a larger facility. The 2012 feasibility study proposed that to accommodate a 580 seat theatre the size of the theatre needed to be increased from 2390 square metres (sqm) to 2600sqm at a cost of \$25 million. The current proposal is for a 6400sqm facility at an estimated cost of \$78 million. Over three times the cost and almost 2.5 times the area!!!

However, the crucial question which has not been put is: "Do the Ratepayers, who are expected to pay for this facility, wish it to proceed, or would they rather spend the \$78 million on other cultural projects such as passive open space, improved parks, bike and walking tracks, community gardens, educational facilities etc?"

This is quite apart from growing demands for improved traffic measures, parking, drainage, child minding centres, health services, services for the aged etc.

Until such time as a soundly-based, statistical survey of Ratepayers is conducted, Council has no idea of what Ratepayers, who are expected to pay for these capital works, want. The existing surveys and reports have not addressed this issue and are strongly biased in favour of hirers and patrons, the majority of whom appear not to be Whitehorse residents or ratepayers.

Notwithstanding the consultant's strong criticisms of the current site alternative solutions have not been addressed, such as upgrading the 600 seat Box Hill Town Hall or moving the Centre to a better located site e.g over the carpark at the corner of Cambridge and Station Streets). This site is currently under review by Council.

Furthermore no Business Case has been made available.

Will hire costs increase for the small groups that use it? If so, this would lead to those groups booking other, cheaper, alternatives, thereby decreasing the Centre's revenues, and putting even more pressure on Ratepayers to cover the shortfall.

The proposal for additional Car parking is for the construction of a three level deck car park to the rear of the Police Station. Apart from being ugly this solution is socially unacceptable. It is unsuitable for audiences where the patron profile shows 32% of attendees are 60 or over. It also requires the removal of several mature trees thereby detracting from the park like setting.

There is absolutely no need for the very expensive, oversized facility proposed. We wish to continue to enjoy the facility in its current friendly form.

44. Letter – (attached)

24<sup>th</sup> May 2015

Dear Councillors,

**RE: Public Submission for Whitehorse Council Special Committee Meeting to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

We are not opposed to the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre. However, we strongly object to the building of car park option 2 in the proposed redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre.

Our

objections to car park option 2 are as follows:-

4. At present the area where the proposed car park 2 would be placed is used by:-
  - a The farmer's market group
  - b The Mitcham junior and senior football club as their warm up area prior to the commencement of their matches
  - c Many families use this area to play with their children/grandchildren
  - d Many people throw ball to and play with their dogs.

In summary, we are not against the renovation to the Whitehorse Centre however we would strongly request that car park option 1 be built behind the police station (with an underground level or 2)

Yours Sincerely



45. Submission from Whitehorse Ratepayers & Residents Association(*inserted below*)



## **Whitehorse Ratepayers and Residents Association Inc**

**Inc # A 0053805 M**

**WRARA,  
C/- 1/ 21 Cobham Road  
Mitcham, Vic., 3132**

12<sup>th</sup> May, 2015

Whitehorse City Council  
Locked Bag 2,  
Nunawading DC, Vic., 3131

Dear

### **Re: PROPOSED WHITEHORSE CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT**

It is shameful that Council has decided, in isolation, without Ratepayer communications for three years, without transparency, without a justification, and without a business case, to attempt to progress this project.

Further, to incompetently time the Draft Budget submission prior to any detail being available, is reprehensible and smacks of bias or incompetence. Similarly the lack of current and forecast financial performance information.

The approach to this project shows no capability within Council to project manage.

The spraying of Ratepayer funds, and the rush to move into significant debt, is totally incomprehensible in the current degenerating economic climate as evidenced locally by increased unemployment, and rate and other essentials financial hardship and reducing real incomes.

WRARA is vehemently opposed to this project.

Attached please find comments regarding the proposal.

Yours sincerely,

## **PROPOSED WHITEHORSE CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT**

### **1) SUMMARY**

- a. No justification has been provided by Council,
- b. No usage increase has occurred since 2006/7 to the present day.
- c. A majority of users (59.1%) are from outside Whitehorse
- d. Recurrent costs and depreciation are not about to “increase through the roof” and especially compared with the expected horrific recurrent costs during the first four years of operation of a redeveloped facility.
- e. Council is dictating that Whitehorse Ratepayers will fund and recurrently support the majority of users who come from neighboring Councils.
- f. No Business Case has been forthcoming from Council.
- g. Not one survey justifies a Centre Redevelopment. (But there are many peripheral areas requiring attention and at a much much much lower cost than a major redevelopment.).
- h. Even if a justification was forthcoming, Council has not considered alternatives to optimize the financial outcome for Ratepayers.

### **2) JUSTIFICATION**

Up to this time **no justification has been put forward by Council** regarding its proposal to build a new Centre.

#### **a. USAGE**

The Usage data provided by Council is a shemuzzle!

The data provided by Council has been fragmented, a mix of different and some irrelevant uses not applicable to the Centre (not apples v's apples), and in general the data is incomplete.

One of the main documents used by Council has been “The DRAFT Whitehorse Centre Feasability Study” (= ref 1).

#### **Council claims :-**

- i. “Over the past 5 years [2005 to 2010] the Whitehorse Centre has experienced steady growth in patronage and at times is at full capacity” (ref 1 Executive Summary)
- ii. “...usage of the facility has increased significantly over the past 5 years.” (ref 1 section 2.2.2)

### **The Reality Is :-**

Usage was down in 2005/6 relative to the following 4 years which were uniform at around 130-140,000. Analysis of preceding years (i.e. before 2005/6) would be necessary in order to see if 2005/6 was an abnormal year, etc.. To suggest a continuous increase 2005/6 to 2009/10 is an absolute nonsense. To suggest a significant increase over 5 years when the last four years are plateaued is similarly a nonsense.

### **Council claims :-**

Council's latest quoted number (2015) is "Over 124,000 people attended events at the Whitehorse Centre annually ....." (ref 2 page 3)

### **The Reality Is :-**

The usage data of ref 1 Table 2.1 shows usage within the Centre was approximately 135,000 (i.e. excluding the Civic Suite) in 2008/9, and likewise in 2009/10. **So no increase in usage has occurred comparing the start and end of the last 9 year period, and in fact the data needs to be critically scrutinized to determine if usage has in fact decreased!.**

Council's report (ref 1) has ineptly included the Civic Suite usage data as part of the Whitehorse Centre usage!. Whilst this may be a part of the Whitehorse Centre cost centre or department, it is highly inappropriate to use this independent remote Civic Centre usage data (and exclusive to Council staff usage at that) to attempt to redevelop the Whitehorse Centre.

Council's incomplete and fragmented and inconsistency with data claiming 93,000 market visits in 2009/10, but 43,000 attending annual festivals in 2015 goes no way to comparing like-for-like for external Centre usage.

### **Council claims :-**

"Arts & Culture play a significant role in the daily lives of many residents of Whitehorse"

### **The Reality Is :-**

Ref 1 contains a user survey which includes the geographic location of the surveyed users residences. Ref 1 Table 4.1 identifies that **59.1% of users are from outside Whitehorse!.**

Using the data in ref 1 tables 3.9 and 4.3 and combined with the data of table 4.1, it is possible to calculate the number of individual Whitehorse residents who use the Centre. Because of the high repeat attendance within short time spans (most less than monthly) by many of the users, and a majority of users are from outside Whitehorse, it is possible to identify that as few as 5,000 individual Whitehorse Residents actually use the Centre, or only 3-3.5 % of the Whitehorse population!!!.

Council's rhetoric around "many residents" is simply that, "rhetoric".

**b. RECURRENT COSTS/COSTS**

Council claims that the existing Centre costs are about to skyrocket because it is 30 yrs old. But the Engineering assessments are good. Age is not a justification!

Council has not been honest and forthright in identifying its current costs, as well as the first 4 years of operations for a redeveloped Centre.

A case of “Don’t tell the Ratepayers and we’ll hide the real costs which are quite high”.

**Council claims :-**

In ref 2 that a redeveloped Centre would have, in its 5<sup>th</sup> year of operation, \$1.3m of recurrent cost, and \$2.7m of depreciation.

**The Reality Is :-**

That Council is very very reluctant to tell the truth about the horrific costs to get the redeveloped Centre operating in the first four years. A very significant impost on Ratepayers, and potentially in the order of \$25-35m!!!!

Council is consistently claiming that the existing Centre is about to have skyrocketing costs. This is an absolute nonsense as the current level of depreciation is extremely low, and any significant maintenance/replacement would be capitalized and subsequently depreciated.

But overwhelmingly, how can Councilors sleep at night when they are telling Ratepayers that Ratepayers will be paying the capital/depreciation and recurrent costs for **59.1% usage by non Whitehorse Residents!!!!** Where is the adjacent Council subsidy to any redevelopment????? And 59.1% of \$78m is \$46m!!!!

And why is the cost of use of the Civic Suite in the Civic Centre, which is used exclusively by Council Officers and Staff, being “hidden” in the greater cost of the Whitehorse Centre???

**c. SURVEYS**

It is interesting to note that in ref 1 that everyone is a key stakeholder except the Ratepayers who have to pay for and redevelopment.

**i. Telephone Survey**

It is extremely unusual to have a 501 Resident phone survey where everyone has responded??

The survey questions have not been provided, so the level of leading questions and bias cannot be determined.

The survey doesn’t differentiate between events inside and outside the Centre so is somewhat meaningless. In fact the data is something of a “bowl of porridge” given there are no venue/usage areas defined. A very poor survey except for potential expansion of current facility usage if marketed correctly.

**ii. User Survey**

An unbiased question as to location of users residence shows more than half, almost two thirds of users are not from Whitehorse!!!

This would suggest that if Council is genuine about providing for Whitehorse Residents, then should a capacity problem exist at the Centre, then usage should be restricted to Whitehorse Residents, or those from outside Whitehorse should become user pay!

Ref 1 section 4.1 (vi) identifies 90.7% rate the current facility good to excellent! So why redevelop?

Ref 1 section 4.1 (vi) identifies most areas which people were unhappy with could be addressed without a major redevelopment.

Ref 1 section 4.1 (vii) identifies 92.6% identified current services and programs were good to excellent!. No redevelopment necessary!.

And so on. The survey identifies many items, but nothing which requires a redevelopment of the Centre.

The Focus Groups appear to have been cleverly managed to focus only on the “Gold Plated Wish List”. Not once is a cost benefit approach taken. And no cost benefit analysis has been attempted subsequent to the focus groups. Some of the wish list should have been taken care of historically and progressively with logical stand alone justification capital improvements.

The only justifiable change encountered in the surveys relates to an increased foyer/break out area and this area could easily be extended along with box office and access considerations, and for an estimated \$1-2m.

The car parking issue is a fiasco. Council representatives, at best, identify that the redevelopment proposal meets the standards. Well that’s a virtual approach. The real approach is that Council employees are consuming the car parking during business hours, and the overflow car parking opposite Council on Whitehorse Road is often full during business hours. Irrespective of a redevelopment, car parking must seriously be addressed.

### 3) ALTERNATIVES

Unfortunately **No adequate and realistic options for the Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment have been considered** by Council.

Even if the Centre redevelopment was justified, which it isn't, Council has considered only two options.  
a) Ratepayers pay, and b) some Federal Govt contribution.

Option b) has failed miserably as identified in "The DRAFT Whitehorse Centre Feasibility Study March 2012 Progress Report". Simply attempting to create an Eastern Region Performing Arts/Function Centre is ludicrous. Most Councils who responded to Whitehorse's invitation saw it as an egotistical centralist thrust by Whitehorse, and declined involvement. Some Councils very realistically questioned its need and justification.

Council has not explored any Eastern Region Performing Arts/Function Centre other than in Whitehorse. This could be in the form of a new venture, or the June 2011 Study document clearly identifies facilities in neighboring Council areas with which Whitehorse may have taken a shared/partnership (and/or developmental approach). i.e. put egos to one side.

What of entering a PP partnership with an existing facility, or joining a neighboring Council for a new or redeveloped facility. There are excellent facilities elsewhere in Whitehorse, and there are at least two facilities worthy of comparison in Councils report (ref1 section 6). Getting the cost down may assist, but any justification would need to stand alone!

Further, there are private facilities in Whitehorse with which Council might have considered a Private/Public Partnership. Such venues include the Bezen Theatre at Mt Scopus Memorial College which is very new and has excellent facilities including a theatre seating 900 plus, would ease any pressure on the existing Whitehorse Centre, and provide a myriad of opportunities and capacity into the future..

Council goes part way to accepting that there are alternate facilities available in its rhetoric regarding the continuation of high quality facilities and high quality theatre productions during the several years a redevelopment would take. (ref 2, page 11). The other / alternate spaces exist!!!

The narrow sightedness of Whitehorse Council is deplorable, and is built on the egos of several Councillors. An edifice that is simply not justifiable and without any meaningful relevant real life investigation. The obituary may well be "Tell a consultant exactly the final outcome you want and he will tell you".

It is not a case of a philanthropic cash spray as some Councillors have on their Gold Plated Wish Lists. And the icing on the cake was at the Draft Budget Council Meeting where stated that because Council had spent millions on sport it was now time to spend on the Arts. About as logical as saying we've spent millions on garbage collection, so its time to spend on roads. Everything must stand alone on its own merit!

Ref 1 = "The DRAFT Whitehorse Centre Feasibility Study June 2011"

Ref 2 = "PROPOSED WHITEHORSE CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT" glossy 11 page brochure handout

Ref 3 = Draft Budget 2015-2016

Vermont. 3133.

To Whom it may concern:

WHITEHORSE CENTRE.

This is an exceptional facility – intimate, comfortable and affordable.

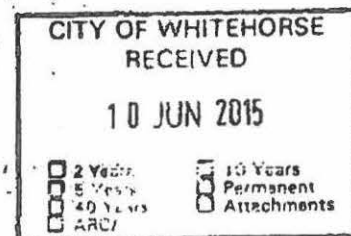
At its inception it was envisaged as an affordable venue for local clubs and groups to showcase their skills, and ensure the public could afford to support them while enjoying a wonderful close-to-home night out.

A redeveloped centre would necessarily increase the cost to the groups of hiring the facility, which, in the case of the Besen Centre, caused the disbandment of the Whitehorse Theatre group (an outstanding company) , as they could not cover the increased costs. So new talent lost the opportunity to hone their skills.

The Whitehorse Band concerts, Babira Players and Nova would also be under pressure – three groups which give a lot of pleasure to a lot of people at affordable prices.

Please don't go ahead with a project that has the potential to destroy our community participation.

Yours faithfully,



# WHITEHORSE CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

## A submission from a concerned ratepayer

### 1. Overview

The proposed Whitehorse Centre demolition and construction project's estimated capital cost is \$78,000,000. This is a substantial investment that council proposes to make primarily for the benefit of the ratepayers, and other residents, living in the municipality.

To determine whether this capital expenditure is justified, we need to look at a number of key aspects of the proposal.

1. The incremental benefit to the community, and in particular whether this building will benefit a significant majority of the residents, or only a tiny minority.

2. The incremental cost to the community, and in particular what will be the capital costs, the annual forecast operating costs, and the annual forecast revenue, over the first twenty years.

The true total cost to the ratepayers will put in clear view the value they will forego for this project, which money could have been spent on other projects, other annual council programmes, or on mitigation of historically large percentage rate increases.

3. The alternatives to such a major investment, such as retaining the existing centre, and making better use of other existing facilities within the City of Whitehorse, not necessarily owned by the council.

The proposal raises the central question about council's role as a service provider to its citizens.

### **The role and function of local government.**

The core function is to provide essential services to the residents of Whitehorse – rubbish collection, road maintenance, parks, and the enforcement of local laws for example. All costs are recovered and no subsidies are required. Every citizen pays, every citizen benefits, more or less equally. Services additional to this can be classed as desirable but not essential, and purely discretionary.

- Essential services require a small bureaucracy and achieve full cost recovery.
- Desirable services require a bigger bureaucracy and some degree of welfare subsidies.
- Discretionary services require a large bureaucracy and high levels of welfare subsidies.

Subsidies necessarily involve some re-distribution of income, from the majority of ratepayers who derive little direct benefit, to a minority who pay little but derive most of the benefit.

**Has council gone too far in writing its own job description, in the process moving away from its core brief, and devoting too much of the silent majority's hard-earned taxes to paying for discretionary activities that benefit the few?**

Management of the economy is the responsibility of the federal government (fiscal) and the Reserve Bank (monetary), with the state governments playing a role. Local government



efforts can do no more than provide very limited influence on the economic health of the municipality.

A history of subsidisation on a large scale does not justify continuation of this practice per se.

We need to start with a clean sheet and only do what we can afford, not all of the things we want.

## **2. Incremental benefit to the community**

The *raison d'être* given for the demolition of the existing centre, and the construction of a new one, is that (a) the existing centre needs smartening up, and (b) that there is a need for more capacity, particularly in seating in the auditorium.

### **Renovation good value**

The present building was only constructed in 1986, and is structurally sound.

Council estimates that carrying out "necessary renewal works" on the existing building over the next ten years would cost \$5.2 million. This is a practical alternative, at a fraction of the very large costs to be incurred for a new building - interest on the loan, interest foregone on cash reserves contributed, and depreciation over the first twenty years of operation.

A new building will also require maintenance costs; the old building is not unique in this regard. Murrindindi is facing difficulties paying for the normal maintenance of almost new buildings given to it following the 2009 bushfires.

At the very least, this alternative should be properly costed and presented to the community as an alternative. Carefully renovated, the existing building has many years of productive life ahead of it. The proposed new building offers increases in capacity, and more facilities for performers, but are these increments really worth the enormous cost?

### **Current utilisation is most likely low; we have excess capacity now**

The case for increasing capacity has not been made. Other than overall figures, the history of centre utilisation by ratepayers has not been disclosed.

The overall utilisation figures are 124,000 visitors annually (source: brochure).

How many of these "visitors" are simply the same people attending multiple times?

How many are ratepayers, who reside in Whitehorse and pay local taxes?

How many are residents, who reside in Whitehorse but do not pay local taxes?

How many are from outside the municipality, who do not reside in Whitehorse and do not pay any local taxes?

What is the split of this 124,000 between the number that use (a) the auditorium, (b) the function rooms, and (c) the foyers?

In short, who is really using the centre now, and is it fully utilised?

### **Benefit for a tiny minority; most residents do not use the centre**

1. If every one of the 54 day and night main auditorium live performances (2 of the 54 are films actually) set out in the 2014/ 2015 Whitehorse centre programme used all 408 seats available, the total year's audience would be 22,000.

More realistically, at 80% average capacity, 17,600. If all 17,600 are residents (they won't be) and on average attend three times per year, the actual number of individual residents using

the main auditorium would be just 5,900 (17,600 / 3). This is a tiny 3.5% of the 2015 Whitehorse population of 166,258.

This is a markedly different picture to the one painted by the council's claimed "124,000 visitors" per year.

People from outside the municipality are of course welcome, but should not be used to justify a capital project of this scale that is to be funded by rate payers alone, particularly if these non-residents are receiving subsidised (less than true cost) tickets to events.

2. In the absence of official research, and for illustrative purposes, the total claimed attendance history for the auditorium, function rooms and foyers, might look like this (this is hypothetical, and illustrates the data we need to see).

Annual visitors 124,000 of which half are local = 62,000 residents.

Made up of:

- Residents attending 6 times per year 6,000 x 6 = 36,000 visitors
- Residents attending 3 times per year 6,000 x 3 = 18,000 visitors
- Residents attending 1 time per year 8,000 x 1 = 8,000 visitors
- Total residents attending per year 62,000 visitors.

If this were correct, the actual number of residents attending one or more events (auditorium, function room or foyer) each year would be just 20,000 individuals out of a population of 166,258 (2015 figure), or 12%. For every local citizen that attends once or more per year, 9 other citizens would not but must still pay for the ones that do.

If this is anything like the imbalance between the minority that will benefit and the majority that will pay but receive no benefit, the plan is manifestly unfair.

**This is an entertainment venue, not a national health insurance plan, and the standards for subsidisation are completely different. Why should the majority of ratepayers, who never use the centre now and will not in the future, pay for the entertainment costs of the few that do?**

If council knows the historical make up of visitors to the existing centre, let's see the numbers and complete the above analysis. If council does not know the figures, it will struggle to make a sound case for the proposal because it will not be able to tell us what benefits will accrue to those who must pay.

#### **Low rate of population increase ; future demand increase small**

The other relevant fundamental is the expected increase in utilisation resulting from projected increases in Whitehorse's population.

A population research specialist company called i.d. has projected a net total increase in Whitehorse's Estimated Residential (ER) population over the next 21 years from 2015 to 2036 of just 12.1%.

This means that Whitehorse's average annual compound rate of population increase will be a tiny half of one percent (0.55% actually) over these 21 years. There is no booming population growth forecast for Whitehorse. There is no case for doubling the size of the centre, from 2,390 square metres of space to 6,400 square metres, and certainly not at a \$78,000,000 cost.

### **Small additional capacity comes at a huge cost**

Proposed increase in seating capacity for the main auditorium is from 408 seats to 580 seats (source: brochure), or just 172 seats. The new small auditorium adds 200 seats. Total additional seats 372

There is more to the building proposed than just seats, but the cost of the extra 372 seats, to the extent that this is an important element of the proposal, is a staggering \$210,000 per seat (\$78 million divided by 372 seats).

If capacity is an issue, we are spinning our wheels, at great cost to the community.

### **"Festivals" are unrelated to this proposal**

Council states that there are also 43,000 visitors attending festivals at the centre. These "festivals" include things like fireworks and a light show.

Of the 8 "festivals" scheduled for the year ended 30 June 2015, only 3 are to be held at the Whitehorse Centre, and they are not held in the centre, but in the precinct, outdoors.

- It is hard to understand how these "festivals" can be considered anything but frivolous and unnecessary.
- They are essentially unrelated to the council's construction proposal and cannot be used to justify it.
- They are also far outside Council's core brief.

### **3. Incremental cost to the community**

The costs of demolition and construction, and annual operation costs less revenue, need to be clearly set out if we are to form a view on the benefits foreseen in relation to the cost to be incurred.

This is a capital investment of unprecedented scale and cost for the city, and requires a degree of rigour far above that which would be applied to a new playground.

If we are not careful, it could end up as tremendous drain on revenues for years to come, restricting other essential council activities and necessitating large percentage increases in rates far ahead of inflation, to protect the city from insolvency.

The capital cost of \$78,000,000 is about half of current total annual rate revenue. It is probably understated; the final capital cost could be as much as \$90,000,000.

### **Sources of capital and their costs**

Council proposes to use two sources of capital – cash reserves, and long term debt, with the cash component augmented by a special rate loading of 2% for the year ended 30 June 2016.

- The cash contribution has not been publicly quantified but is likely to be substantial. Cash so used incurs an opportunity cost of interest foregone. If the cash component is \$20,000,000, the income foregone in future years at a 3% interest rate would be \$600,000 per year. Over twenty years the basic cost would be \$12,000,000 in current dollars. This is income that the council could have had, but will now not receive.
- The debt contribution has also not been publicly quantified. If the additional debt taken on was \$50,000,000 at an interest rate of 8%, the annual cost to service the debt would be \$4,000,000. This is for each and every year of the first twenty years or

more. Over twenty years the basic cost would be \$80,000,000 in current dollars. This is a cost that the council does not incur now. What will be cut in order to pay? Or will rates be increased yet again, year on year for twenty years, far above the CPI?

#### **Rates have been rising astronomically already**

The additional ratepayers' contribution is to be 2%, increasing the overall rate increase for year ended 30 June 2016 from 5.6% (already high) to 7.6%. This increase is three times the CPI, and could reasonably be considered outrageous, particularly given the history. This will raise about an extra \$3,400,000 in revenue for 2016.

My rates have increased by 93% (almost doubled) in the nine years since year ended 30 June 2006, an average annual compound rate of 7.5% - about three times the CPI as measured by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. If the 2016 rate increase of 7.6% goes ahead, my rates will have more than doubled since 2006. Many of us are wondering when this will stop.

The relativity here is not the increase in property prices over this time, but the affordability to the ratepayers that have to pay the tax. Their income will not have increased anything like this over this time period. Whitehorse rates have become a severe financial burden.

The estimated capital figures above are conservative and do not even quite add up to the full \$78,000,000.

#### **Financial risk and council insolvency**

There is considerable financial risk associated with this proposal. Debt interest rates are low now; they will surely rise in the future.

According to the ABS, bank business variable large-loan interest rates were 19.75% in 1989. In the ten years to 30 June 2011, they averaged 9.5%. The Commonwealth Bank's current interest rate for this type of loan where the security is not residential property, is 7.98%.

These rates may easily rise from 8% now to 12% within five years. The annual interest cost on a \$50,000,000 debt would then increase from \$4,000,000 to \$6,000,000 in current dollars.

This substantial additional cost load would invariably translate into reductions in services and staff, and further large increases in rates above CPI, over what might otherwise have applied.

#### **Annual operating costs versus revenue; the venue will run at a loss**

Council states that in the 5th year of operation depreciation will be \$2,700,000 and loss on operations \$1,300,000. Combined deficit on operations and depreciation annual cost will be \$4,000,000 pa.

If this is typical of the first twenty years, the simple total cumulative cost will be \$80,000,000 (depreciation straight line \$54,000,000, cumulative losses on operations \$26,000,000).

That is, the ratepayers of Whitehorse will be paying out \$80,000,000 over the core lifespan of the building. This is an enormous cost, and it is all for what is essentially an entertainment centre.

#### **4. Practical alternatives already available**

Council has stated that it is able to arrange for theatre performances and special events to be held at "other facilities" during demolition and construction. Council will also form partnerships with other venues within the city.

Clearly other excellent venues already exist within the city for the performance of plays, music and other entertainment. Council should explore these extensive high-quality resources and map out a plan to utilise them. Institutions such as Deakin University, the larger public and private schools, church halls, and spacious grounds already under council control, could all be utilised, as council has already said itself.

Council should treat this opportunity to utilise excess capacity in existing facilities in Whitehorse seriously; it may well be an excellent permanent change in modus operandi that will maintain current levels of community participation at a significantly lower cost per year than the building planned. If this was done, and the current centre refurbished, we could well have all parties satisfied, at a fraction of the cost.

#### **5. A costly proposal by any criteria; a benefit for the few**

Over the first twenty years, the cost load will be significant. Using the estimated figures above:

Interest forgone cost @ 3%	\$12,000,000
Debt interest cost @ 8%	\$80,000,000
Depreciation cost	\$54,000,000
Cumulative losses on operation	\$26,000,000
<b>Total costs over 20 years</b>	<b>\$172,000,000</b>

This is a measure of the money foregone, and the cost to the Whitehorse community, if this project plan is implemented. The interest forgone cost is not a cash outlay as such but is nonetheless a cost.

**The project may benefit only 12% of the population. If so, 88% of the cost - \$151,000,000 of the above - will be paid by ratepayers who will derive no utility from the building at all.**

A Net Present Value analysis of the "whole of life" cash flows for this proposal could be expected to show a significant negative value, demonstrating that the whole project is unsound in cost/ benefit terms, that it involves a massive initial outlay, unrelenting annual operating losses and major interest costs over its life, and, if it is implemented, a large-scale subsidy provided to a small sub-section of the municipality.

#### **6. Community research deficient**

Council claims that there has been extensive research done with residents and ratepayers on the merits of the proposal.

- Friends of ours have not heard about the proposal. They certainly have not been consulted by council or a research company. Most people I have spoken to are unaware of the proposal. Community awareness about the proposal is low.



- The questionnaire I received at the 18 May session only asks very basic questions of limited use in gauging community sentiment about the fundamental case, and, separately, the community's view of the building's specifics.
- The questionnaire makes no reference to the substantial recurring costs to be incurred for years to come. How then can we provide a considered response to the question "to what extent do you support the redevelopment as currently proposed?"
- The questionnaire can be submitted to council by anyone, any number of times. Respondents do not have to provide evidence of their membership of the electorate (such as a rate notice and ID), and "branch stacking" could easily be carried out, with resulting distortion and bias errors.
- There is no defined sample size, and proper statistical inference that could guide the council, on real community opinion about the fundamental concept to spend such a significant amount of money, and on the secondary concept of the building design itself, cannot be made. To that extent, the questionnaire is virtually worthless.
- The use of a passively distributed questionnaire, rather than a properly administered random sample of a cross section of the population, almost guarantees that the respondents will be unrepresentative of the total population. This filter effect will deny council a true view of the broader electorate's views. The collated results of the questionnaire returns will probably be misleading.
- Asking the minorities that do use the current centre what they think about the new proposal is useful ancillary research for the design of the building, but of little value otherwise. This minority of performers and spectators will support anything that enlarges, enhances or improves their particular interest in life – that is only to be expected.

## 7. A referendum is needed

On an issue of such great importance, council should carry out a referendum of ratepayers, presenting them with the expected benefits and the expected costs for the fundamental proposal, with the indicative drawings of the possible new building as an adjunct only, for guidance.

The appearance now is that council has set its course on implementing the project, and so has given the new building centre stage, when the fundamental case for the proposal has not been put to the electorate in a balanced cost/ benefit way, and council does not in fact know if there is support or not.

Council has dangled the bait in front of us, but has not adequately explained the serious consequences of taking it. Acting impetuously without proper consideration of the issues could end badly, in the pursuit of something that we do not really need in the first place, at a significant personal cost to all rate payers in Whitehorse.

Thursday 4 June 2015

Dear

Thank you for the time you gave to discuss by telephone some of the aspects of the proposed Whitehorse Centre re-development last Monday 1 June.

Council seems to be focusing on the specifics of a draft building design, when the primary step of establishing the case for the investment has not been done, or has not been made public.

This significant investment proposal warrants very careful consideration, and council should be wary of becoming aspirationally committed to it before the hard facts are set out clearly, the people of Whitehorse properly informed, and the wishes of the ratepayers, and of the residents generally, are thoroughly established.

The primary criteria for this evaluation are the incremental benefits the project is expected to provide to the residents (and ratepayers in particular), and secondly the incremental cost burden the project will impose on the people of Whitehorse over the next twenty years.

The attached submission is an updated version of the one I submitted on Friday 29 May, and attempts to quantify important elements of the proposal that appear to be undefined or unpublicised at present. Of necessity I have used estimates. If these are not accurate they at least illustrate the detail we need to have.

The case for this new centre is unsubstantiated.

As discussed, it would be appreciated if you could provide this submission to council for the next meeting scheduled for Monday 18 June.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

# WHITEHORSE CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

## A submission from a concerned ratepayer

### 1. Overview

The proposed Whitehorse Centre demolition and construction project's estimated capital cost is \$78,000,000. This is a substantial investment that council proposes to make primarily for the benefit of the ratepayers, and other residents, living in the municipality.

To determine whether this capital expenditure is justified, we need to look at a number of key aspects of the proposal.

1. The incremental benefit to the community, and in particular whether this building will benefit a significant majority of the residents, or only a tiny minority.

2. The incremental cost to the community, and in particular what will be the capital costs, the annual forecast operating costs, and the annual forecast revenue, over the first twenty years.

The true total cost to the ratepayers will put in clear view the value they will forego for this project, which money could have been spent on other projects, other annual council programmes, or on mitigation of historically large percentage rate increases.

3. The alternatives to such a major investment, such as retaining the existing centre, and making better use of other existing facilities within the City of Whitehorse, not necessarily owned by the council.

The proposal raises the central question about council's role as a service provider to its citizens.

#### ***The role and function of local government.***

The core function is to provide essential services to the residents of Whitehorse – rubbish collection, road maintenance, parks, and the enforcement of local laws for example. All costs are recovered and no subsidies are required. Every citizen pays, every citizen benefits, more or less equally. Services additional to this can be classed as desirable but not essential, and purely discretionary.

- Essential services require a small bureaucracy and achieve full cost recovery.
- Desirable services require a bigger bureaucracy and some degree of welfare subsidies.
- Discretionary services require a large bureaucracy and high levels of welfare subsidies.

Subsidies necessarily involve some re-distribution of income, from the majority of ratepayers who derive little direct benefit, to a minority who pay little but derive most of the benefit.

**Has council gone too far in writing its own job description, in the process moving away from its core brief, and devoting too much of the silent majority's hard-earned taxes to paying for discretionary activities that benefit the few?**

Management of the economy is the responsibility of the federal government (fiscal) and the Reserve Bank (monetary), with the state governments playing a role. Local government



efforts can do no more than provide very limited influence on the economic health of the municipality.

A history of subsidisation on a large scale does not justify continuation of this practice per se.

We need to start with a clean sheet and only do what we can afford, not all of the things we want.

## **2. Incremental benefit to the community**

The *raison d'être* given for the demolition of the existing centre, and the construction of a new one, is that (a) the existing centre needs smartening up, and (b) that there is a need for more capacity, particularly in seating in the auditorium.

### **Renovation good value**

The present building was only constructed in 1986, and is structurally sound.

Council estimates that carrying out "necessary renewal works" on the existing building over the next ten years would cost \$5.2 million. This is a practical alternative, at a fraction of the very large costs to be incurred for a new building - interest on the loan, interest foregone on cash reserves contributed, and depreciation over the first twenty years of operation.

A new building will also require maintenance costs; the old building is not unique in this regard. Murrindindi is facing difficulties paying for the normal maintenance of almost new buildings given to it following the 2009 bushfires.

At the very least, this alternative should be properly costed and presented to the community as an alternative. Carefully renovated, the existing building has many years of productive life ahead of it. The proposed new building offers increases in capacity, and more facilities for performers, but are these increments really worth the enormous cost?

### **Current utilisation is most likely low; we have excess capacity now**

The case for increasing capacity has not been made. Other than overall figures, the history of centre utilisation by ratepayers has not been disclosed.

The overall utilisation figures are 124,000 visitors annually (source: brochure).

How many of these "visitors" are simply the same people attending multiple times?

How many are ratepayers, who reside in Whitehorse and pay local taxes?

How many are residents, who reside in Whitehorse but do not pay local taxes?

How many are from outside the municipality, who do not reside in Whitehorse and do not pay any local taxes?

What is the split of this 124,000 between the number that use (a) the auditorium, (b) the function rooms, and (c) the foyers?

In short, who is really using the centre now, and is it fully utilised?

### **Benefit for a tiny minority; most residents do not use the centre**

1. If every one of the 54 day and night main auditorium live performances (2 of the 54 are films actually) set out in the 2014/ 2015 Whitehorse centre programme used all 408 seats available, the total year's audience would be 22,000.

More realistically, at 80% average capacity, 17,600. If all 17,600 are residents (they won't be) and on average attend three times per year, the actual number of individual residents using

the main auditorium would be just 5,900 (17,600 / 3). This is a tiny 3.5% of the 2015 Whitehorse population of 166,258.

This is a markedly different picture to the one painted by the council's claimed "124,000 visitors" per year.

People from outside the municipality are of course welcome, but should not be used to justify a capital project of this scale that is to be funded by rate payers alone, particularly if these non-residents are receiving subsidised (less than true cost) tickets to events.

2. In the absence of official research, and for illustrative purposes, the total claimed attendance history for the auditorium, function rooms and foyers, might look like this (this is hypothetical, and illustrates the data we need to see).

Annual visitors 124,000 of which half are local = 62,000 residents.

Made up of:

- Residents attending 6 times per year 6,000 x 6 = 36,000 visitors
- Residents attending 3 times per year 6,000 x 3 = 18,000 visitors
- Residents attending 1 time per year 8,000 x 1 = 8,000 visitors
- Total residents attending per year 62,000 visitors.

If this were correct, the actual number of residents attending one or more events (auditorium, function room or foyer) each year would be just 20,000 individuals out of a population of 166,258 (2015 figure), or 12%. For every local citizen that attends once or more per year, 9 other citizens would not but must still pay for the ones that do.

If this is anything like the imbalance between the minority that will benefit and the majority that will pay but receive no benefit, the plan is manifestly unfair.

**This is an entertainment venue, not a national health insurance plan, and the standards for subsidisation are completely different. Why should the majority of ratepayers, who never use the centre now and will not in the future, pay for the entertainment costs of the few that do?**

If council knows the historical make up of visitors to the existing centre, let's see the numbers and complete the above analysis. If council does not know the figures, it will struggle to make a sound case for the proposal because it will not be able to tell us what benefits will accrue to those who must pay.

#### **Low rate of population increase ; future demand increase small**

The other relevant fundamental is the expected increase in utilisation resulting from projected increases in Whitehorse's population.

A population research specialist company called i.d. has projected a net total increase in Whitehorse's Estimated Residential (ER) population over the next 21 years from 2015 to 2036 of just 12.1%.

This means that Whitehorse's average annual compound rate of population increase will be a tiny half of one percent (0.55% actually) over these 21 years. There is no booming population growth forecast for Whitehorse. There is no case for doubling the size of the centre, from 2,390 square metres of spade to 6,400 square metres, and certainly not at a \$78,000,000 cost.

### **Small additional capacity comes at a huge cost**

Proposed increase in seating capacity for the main auditorium is from 408 seats to 580 seats (source: brochure), or just 172 seats. The new small auditorium adds 200 seats. Total additional seats 372

There is more to the building proposed than just seats, but the cost of the extra 372 seats, to the extent that this is an important element of the proposal, is a staggering \$210,000 per seat (\$78 million divided by 372 seats).

If capacity is an issue, we are spinning our wheels, at great cost to the community.

### **"Festivals" are unrelated to this proposal**

Council states that there are also 43,000 visitors attending festivals at the centre. These "festivals" include things like fireworks and a light show.

Of the 8 "festivals" scheduled for the year ended 30 June 2015, only 3 are to be held at the Whitehorse Centre, and they are not held in the centre, but in the precinct, outdoors.

- It is hard to understand how these "festivals" can be considered anything but frivolous and unnecessary.
- They are essentially unrelated to the council's construction proposal and cannot be used to justify it.
- They are also far outside Council's core brief.

### **3. Incremental cost to the community**

The costs of demolition and construction, and annual operation costs less revenue, need to be clearly set out if we are to form a view on the benefits foreseen in relation to the cost to be incurred.

This is a capital investment of unprecedented scale and cost for the city, and requires a degree of rigour far above that which would be applied to a new playground.

If we are not careful, it could end up as tremendous drain on revenues for years to come, restricting other essential council activities and necessitating large percentage increases in rates far ahead of inflation, to protect the city from insolvency.

The capital cost of \$78,000,000 is about half of current total annual rate revenue. It is probably understated; the final capital cost could be as much as \$90,000,000.

### **Sources of capital and their costs**

Council proposes to use two sources of capital – cash reserves, and long term debt, with the cash component augmented by a special rate loading of 2% for the year ended 30 June 2016.

- The cash contribution has not been publicly quantified but is likely to be substantial. Cash so used incurs an opportunity cost of interest foregone. If the cash component is \$20,000,000, the income foregone in future years at a 3% interest rate would be \$600,000 per year. Over twenty years the basic cost would be \$12,000,000 in current dollars. This is income that the council could have had, but will now not receive.
- The debt contribution has also not been publicly quantified. If the additional debt taken on was \$50,000,000 at an interest rate of 8%, the annual cost to service the debt would be \$4,000,000. This is for each and every year of the first twenty years or

more. Over twenty years the basic cost would be \$80,000,000 in current dollars. This is a cost that the council does not incur now. What will be cut in order to pay? Or will rates be increased yet again, year on year for twenty years, far above the CPI?

### **Rates have been rising astronomically already**

The additional ratepayers' contribution is to be 2%, increasing the overall rate increase for year ended 30 June 2016 from 5.6% (already high) to 7.6%. This increase is three times the CPI, and could reasonably be considered outrageous, particularly given the history. This will raise about an extra \$3,400,000 in revenue for 2016.

My rates have increased by 93% (almost doubled) in the nine years since year ended 30 June 2006, an average annual compound rate of 7.5% - about three times the CPI as measured by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. If the 2016 rate increase of 7.6% goes ahead, my rates will have more than doubled since 2006. Many of us are wondering when this will stop.

The relativity here is not the increase in property prices over this time, but the affordability to the ratepayers that have to pay the tax. Their income will not have increased anything like this over this time period. Whitehorse rates have become a severe financial burden.

The estimated capital figures above are conservative and do not even quite add up to the full \$78,000,000.

### **Financial risk and council insolvency**

There is considerable financial risk associated with this proposal. Debt interest rates are low now; they will surely rise in the future.

According to the ABS, bank business variable large-loan interest rates were 19.75% in 1989. In the ten years to 30 June 2011, they averaged 9.5%. The Commonwealth Bank's current interest rate for this type of loan where the security is not residential property, is 7.98%.

These rates may easily rise from 8% now to 12% within five years. The annual interest cost on a \$50,000,000 debt would then increase from \$4,000,000 to \$6,000,000 in current dollars.

This substantial additional cost load would invariably translate into reductions in services and staff, and further large increases in rates above CPI, over what might otherwise have applied.

### **Annual operating costs versus revenue; the venue will run at a loss**

Council states that in the 5th year of operation depreciation will be \$2,700,000 and loss on operations \$1,300,000. Combined deficit on operations and depreciation annual cost will be \$4,000,000 pa.

If this is typical of the first twenty years, the simple total cumulative cost will be \$80,000,000 (depreciation straight line \$54,000,000, cumulative losses on operations \$26,000,000).

That is, the ratepayers of Whitehorse will be paying out \$80,000,000 over the core lifespan of the building. This is an enormous cost, and it is all for what is essentially an entertainment centre.

#### 4. Practical alternatives already available

Council has stated that it is able to arrange for theatre performances and special events to be held at "other facilities" during demolition and construction. Council will also form partnerships with other venues within the city.

Clearly other excellent venues already exist within the city for the performance of plays, music and other entertainment. Council should explore these extensive high-quality resources and map out a plan to utilise them. Institutions such as Deakin University, the larger public and private schools, church halls, and spacious grounds already under council control, could all be utilised, as council has already said itself.

Council should treat this opportunity to utilise excess capacity in existing facilities in Whitehorse seriously; it may well be an excellent permanent change in modus operandi that will maintain current levels of community participation at a significantly lower cost per year than the building planned. If this was done, and the current centre refurbished, we could well have all parties satisfied, at a fraction of the cost.

#### 5. A costly proposal by any criteria; a benefit for the few

Over the first twenty years, the cost load will be significant. Using the estimated figures above:

Interest forgone cost @ 3%	\$12,000,000
Debt interest cost @ 8%	\$80,000,000
Depreciation cost	\$54,000,000
Cumulative losses on operation	\$26,000,000
<b>Total costs over 20 years</b>	<b>\$172,000,000</b>

This is a measure of the money foregone, and the cost to the Whitehorse community, if this project plan is implemented. The interest forgone cost is not a cash outlay as such but is nonetheless a cost.

**The project may benefit only 12% of the population. If so, 88% of the cost - \$151,000,000 of the above - will be paid by ratepayers who will derive no utility from the building at all.**

A Net Present Value analysis of the "whole of life" cash flows for this proposal could be expected to show a significant negative value, demonstrating that the whole project is *unsound in cost/ benefit terms, that it involves a massive initial outlay, unrelenting annual operating losses and major interest costs over its life, and, if it is implemented, a large-scale subsidy provided to a small sub-section of the municipality.*

#### 6. Community research deficient

Council claims that there has been extensive research done with residents and ratepayers on the merits of the proposal.

- Friends of ours have not heard about the proposal. They certainly have not been consulted by council or a research company. Most people I have spoken to are *unaware of the proposal. Community awareness about the proposal is low.*



- The questionnaire I received at the 18 May session only asks very basic questions of limited use in gauging community sentiment about the fundamental case, and, separately, the community's view of the building's specifics.
- The questionnaire makes no reference to the substantial recurring costs to be incurred for years to come. How then can we provide a considered response to the question "to what extent do you support the redevelopment as currently proposed?".
- The questionnaire can be submitted to council by anyone, any number of times. Respondents do not have to provide evidence of their membership of the electorate (such as a rate notice and ID), and "branch stacking" could easily be carried out, with resulting distortion and bias errors.
- There is no defined sample size, and proper statistical inference that could guide the council, on real community opinion about the fundamental concept to spend such a significant amount of money, and on the secondary concept of the building design itself, cannot be made. To that extent, the questionnaire is virtually worthless.
- The use of a passively distributed questionnaire, rather than a properly administered random sample of a cross section of the population, almost guarantees that the respondents will be unrepresentative of the total population. This filter effect will deny council a true view of the broader electorate's views. The collated results of the questionnaire returns will probably be misleading.
- Asking the minorities that do use the current centre what they think about the new proposal is useful ancillary research for the design of the building, but of little value otherwise. This minority of performers and spectators will support anything that enlarges, enhances or improves their particular interest in life – that is only to be expected.

## 7. A referendum is needed

On an issue of such great importance, council should carry out a referendum of ratepayers, presenting them with the expected benefits and the expected costs for the fundamental proposal, with the indicative drawings of the possible new building as an adjunct only, for guidance.

The appearance now is that council has set its course on implementing the project, and so has given the new building centre stage, when the fundamental case for the proposal has not been put to the electorate in a balanced cost/ benefit way, and council does not in fact know if there is support or not.

Council has dangled the bait in front of us, but has not adequately explained the serious consequences of taking it. Acting impetuously without proper consideration of the issues could end badly, in the pursuit of something that we do not really need in the first place, at a significant personal cost to all rate payers in Whitehorse.

Submission

Whitehorse City Council

29 May 2015



**Re : Proposed Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment**

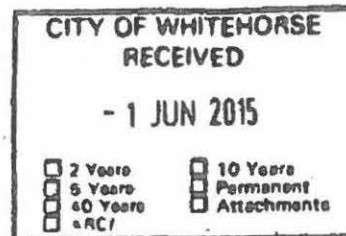
This submission is opposed to the proposed Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment and the Expenditure of 78 million dollars of ratepayers funds on this proposed project. Reasons are as follows:

1. **This is a very significant expenditure. There are other theatres nearby** including Deakin University, Aquinas college, Mount Scopus theatre and several school halls, where drama and shows can be performed.
2. **I am very concerned about the impact that the proposed 3 storey carpark will have in a detrimental way, to the amenity and safety of families living very close to the proposed new multi-storey carpark.** I understand that police statistics indicate that such structures can attract people congregating there, and that assaults have a higher incidence rate in such circumstances, particularly in an after- hours situation.
3. **Resident consultation processes have been poor.** We heard about the \$78 million proposal through friends who live close to the area.
4. **Consultation processes and the information evening were disappointing: posters on the wall** stated that consultation had included a 500 household independent telephone survey:  
  
When staff were questioned about this, they advised that **there had been some survey, but back in 2012. They were not sure whether it had been part of a general customer survey.** Further many of the attendees said they had not heard about it earlier.
5. **Many of those who attended the information evening on the Thursday were opposed to the Council proceeding with the development.** They expressed to us their anger and disappointment that the Council appeared to want to spend such a large amount of ratepayers funds on an extension and re development of the theatre.

I urge the Council to not proceed with this proposed expensive upgrade. Sincerely

26th May, 2015

Whitehorse City Council,  
379 Whitehorse Road,  
Nunawading 3131



Dear

I attended last week an information session on the proposed redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre at a cost of \$78m.

Why is Council proposing a project which is said to be the biggest investment in a single project in the Council's history? Such grandiose ideas for spending other peoples money – it seems everything has to be done bigger and better than other Councils. A good example of this is when the Council offices were redeveloped a few years ago at great expense to ratepayers which included a huge area at reception which is completely unnecessary. I recently went there to collect a copy of the draft budget and the only person in sight in this massive reception area was one lady sitting at the reception desk!! This is not a competition to pat yourselves on the back and say 'look what we did in my term of office'. The purpose of Council is to provide essential services for ratepayer and to be accountable to ratepayers for how all money is spent.

There are three options for the Whitehorse Centre -

1. Refurbishment at an estimated cost of \$5.2 m
2. Redevelopment as planned at a cost of \$78m
3. Redevelopment on a smaller scale which has apparently not been considered

These options should have been presented to the community with a preliminary feasibility plan for each for the community to vote on before spending massive amounts of money on detailed plans for option 2 with glossy brochures and questionnaires, and a proposed extra 2% on our rates to fund this project assuming this is a done deal!

It seems that contrary to the claim that there has been extensive consultation the consultation is coming after the plans have been made and so much money has already been spent.

The survey by way of a Questionnaire to be submitted to Council is worded in such a way to bias the result to achieve acceptance of the project. A question as to whether redevelopment at a cost of \$78m or a refurbishment at a cost of \$5.2m was preferred would, I am sure, have received a 100% tick for the refurbishment!



I subscribe to the Whitehorse Theatre performances and also attend the Utassy Ballet performances and rarely is it house full so where is the need for the huge increase in capacity from 2390 to 6400 square metres. A larger complex will result in higher running costs flowing through to higher costs to those hiring the complex and ultimately higher costs to patrons.

There are 80 municipal councils in Victoria and they do not all need Performance Arts Centres!

Why is it that Whitehorse ratepayers are expected to fund what is described in the Whitehorse Leader (11<sup>th</sup> May 2015) as the premier arts centre in Melbourne's east, It is not even close to public transport and parking is barely adequate for the current Centre. There are many other venues available in the eastern suburbs – not everyone needs to come to Whitehorse. Several years ago schools were given money by the government to build halls and many schools also have theatres both of which can be used for their own purposes or hired out to the community.

The role of Councilors was initially to truly represent the interest of the ratepayer/residents and to protect them from the Council's uncontrolled spending habits. Now that Councilors are paid by the Council, as employees of the Council they are restricted and cannot truly represent two masters.

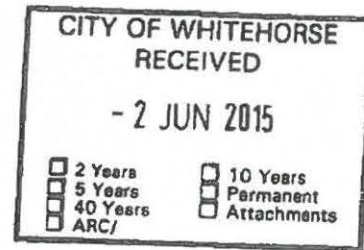
Why would they vote to accept the draft budget with an extra 2% rate increase to fund this \$78m project which was irresponsibly ignoring the warning of

against raking in cash prior to the planned rate capping in 2016/2017? This is exactly what Whitehorse Council is doing!

I am extremely upset that the Whitehorse Council has attracted much negative publicity in the media from their actions in blatantly proposing an extra 2% rate increase against the warning of and also the millions of dollars spent on executive salaries.

I do support a refurbishment of the Whitehorse Centre but am totally against this proposed redevelopment.

Yours sincerely,



May 29 , 2015

City of Whitehorse.

Dear

Re: Proposed \$78 million theatre building.

Please note my strong disagreement with the proposed Whitehorse Centre, at \$78 million of ratepayers' money.

I frequently attend concerts at the venue and have found the standard of the facilities very good just as they are. I have never heard negative comments from other patrons.

It would appear that highly paid municipal employees have no empathy for moderate or low income earning ratepayers

Yours faithfully,



CITY OF WHITEHORSE  
RECEIVED

- 2 JUN 2015

☐ 2 Years  
☐ 5 Years  
☐ 40 Years  
☐ ARC/

☐ 10 Years  
☐ Permanent  
☐ Attachments

May 29, 2015.

City of Whitehorse.

Nunawading 3131.

Dear

Re: Proposed new Arts centre.

As I am a ratepayer in Whitehorse, please consider my opposition to spending \$78 million of ratepayers' money on a new and glamorous arts centre and theatre. The \$5 million refurbishment will be just fine.

There are many new and suitable halls in Whitehorse, for example, big church halls and auditoriums and school assembly halls, built under the government scheme. Moreover, the auditorium/theatre at Mt. Scopus college in Burwood is excellent and holds 900 people. We do not need another facility like this.

As a regular attender at the Whitehorse plays and concerts, I enjoy our theatre, but do not want \$78 million spent in this way. It is over capitalising. The local amateur ballet schools and musical theatre companies will not be able to afford such a new and expensive structure.

Please lower our rates instead of wasting our money on a new theatre complex.

Yours faithfully,

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

**4. Which description best suits you? Although you may attend the Whitehorse Centre in more than one category, please choose the one that would be your primary contact with the centre.**

- ☐ I am a season subscriber to the Whitehorse Centre
- ☐ I have attended a performance at the Whitehorse Centre
- ☐ I have attended festivals and events at the Whitehorse Centre soundshell (amphitheatre)
- ☐ I have attended a function at the Whitehorse Centre
- ☐ I have hired the Whitehorse Centre
- ☐ I am a producer of shows in the Whitehorse Season
- ☐ I have never visited the Whitehorse Centre

**5. Are you a resident of the City of Whitehorse?**

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

**6. Are there any other comments or feedback you would like to provide?**

Thank you for your time.

If you require additional details please contact  
Arts & Recreation Development on 9262 6371  
or email: [ard.admin@whitehorse.vic.gov.au](mailto:ard.admin@whitehorse.vic.gov.au)

Postal Address:  
Whitehorse City Council  
Locked Bag 2  
Nunawading Delivery Centre, VIC, 3131

**From:**  
**Sent:** Sunday, 10 May 2015 9:58 PM  
**To:**  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Re: Whitehorse Center Development

Dear

I have had a look at the proposal and also shown it to

We welcome the proposal that will definitely address access problems that currently exist – dressing rooms, studios, toilets that cannot be accessed when there are bookings both in the Soundshell and Theatre - but do see some problems in the proposed design.

Provision has been made for dance, but not necessarily the way the ballet school currently runs. We do not fully understand what is meant by 'triangular layout', for the Soundshell.

Our school has run our productions (multiple times per year) since the Whitehorse Centre was opened. A definite community calendar event is our Peter and the Wolf season which has been running for 29 years. Over the years we have presented 6 or 7 performances in this season and entertained up to 1800 kindergarten children, their parents, and the Aged Care community groups each year. On 2 occasions we have performed accompanied by  
and the Nicholas Chamber Orchestra.

We will again be collaborating, this June 6, at the Burrinja Theatre in Upwey, with the Nicholas Orchestra on a brand new production of La Boheme (permission to use score granted by West Australian Ballet

We would have welcomed the opportunity to present this ballet at the Whitehorse Centre, but the Whitehorse Orchestra Pit will only take 22 players and we require a 40 piece orchestra to do justice to the Puccini based score.

We thank Whitehorse for allowing us to accommodate our costumes and sets since 1986, coinciding with the opening of the Whitehorse Centre. Unfortunately we do not see this possibility in the proposed design. The wardrobe is the property of the Utassy Ballet School Parents Association, a non profit group that has been supporting productions within the school for 55 years. Talented parents have contributed over the years to this wardrobe of costumes. We have hand painted costumes and works of art that our current students benefit from. The goodwill and talent of parents from the last half century is preserved and re-used time and time again.

did envisage accommodation for sets and costumes at the homestead of the Old Strathdon Orchard. He envisioned Whitehorse groups such as Utassy, Nova Theatre, Mitcham Rep (no longer in existence) and others. The stables were going to be converted. The popularity of shipping containers as an inexpensive and 'cool' means secure storage for Arts groups could be the answer. I do hope his vision of Whitehorse residents hand sewing on the homestead veranda and looking out to the orchard has not been lost.

We wish you luck with the redevelopment and do support you. We have wrestled with the difficulties of design of the current centre since it opened. Our overriding concern has been the safety of our students as our 2 studios can only be accessed by going outside. I do not see that this important issue has been addressed. To compensate for this oversight in design we timetable so our students rarely need to change studios. Sometimes this is impossible to guarantee.

With thanks



## **Newspaper article attached to comments provided to Council**

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Due to copyright restrictions Council is unable to reproduce the newspaper article. To see the article please go to:

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/opinion/councils-trash-ses-funding/news-story/d8565d6121cc3f0bc857e6961afbafbc>

## Copies of scanned responses as referred to in General Feedback/Comments Section



### Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

The redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre is an exciting initiative for the Whitehorse community and the largest project investment in the history of the City of Whitehorse.

The Centre provides community access to the performing arts, function services and is home to major events within the Whitehorse Festival Season.

Council is now embarking on this critical stage of consultation as it releases the findings, concepts and proposed outcomes of the project to date. This stage of community consultation will inform Council on the future direction of the Whitehorse Centre. Council values your feedback and looks forward to hearing your views.

The survey will only take a few minutes to complete. It is confidential and no individual will be identified. The results will only be published as aggregated responses.

#### 1. Do you believe that the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre is an important project for the City of Whitehorse?

☒ Yes

☐ No

#### 2. To what extent do you support the redevelopment as currently proposed?

☐ Highly support

☒ Support

☐ Somewhat support

☐ Do not support

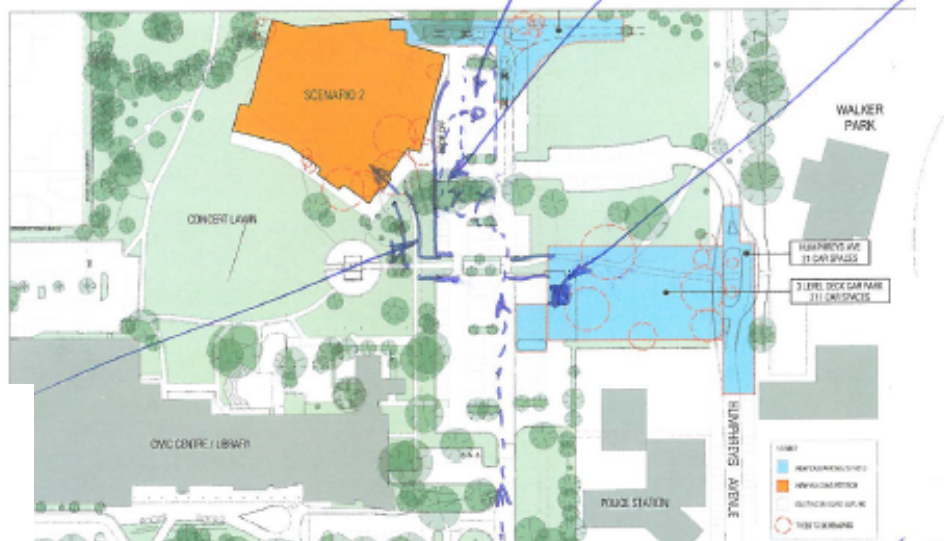
☐ No opinion

#### 3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
Council has an important role in providing cultural facilities	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Whitehorse Centre is a valued community asset	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Whitehorse Centre requires redevelopment	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The improved scope and size of the redeveloped centre meets my expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## THE PLANS - CAR PARK

Based on the parking rates set out in the Whitehorse Planning Scheme, the increase in use of the enhanced Whitehorse Centre would require an additional 173 parking spaces on site to meet current demand and satisfy the increased venue capacity. A three level deck car park has been found to be the most cost effective option while also minimising the impact on the parkland environment. Two possible locations have been identified for the deck car park:



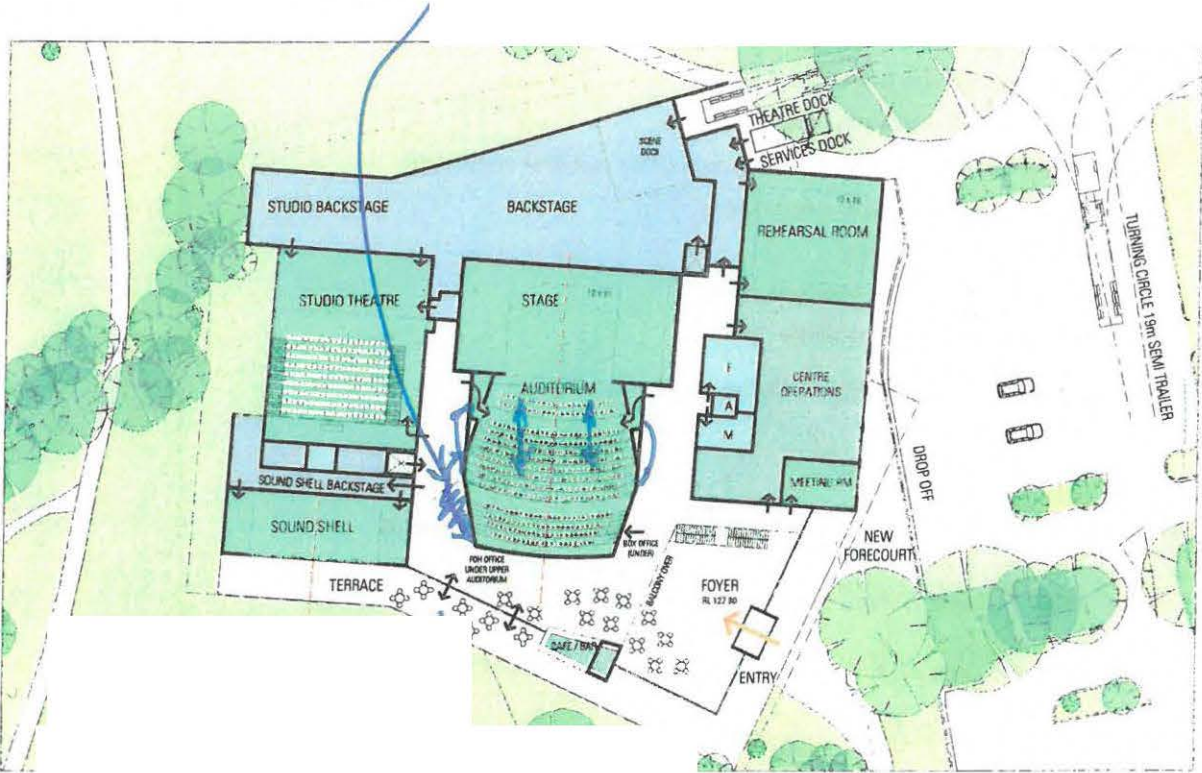
Option one: Deck car park at the rear of Police Station.



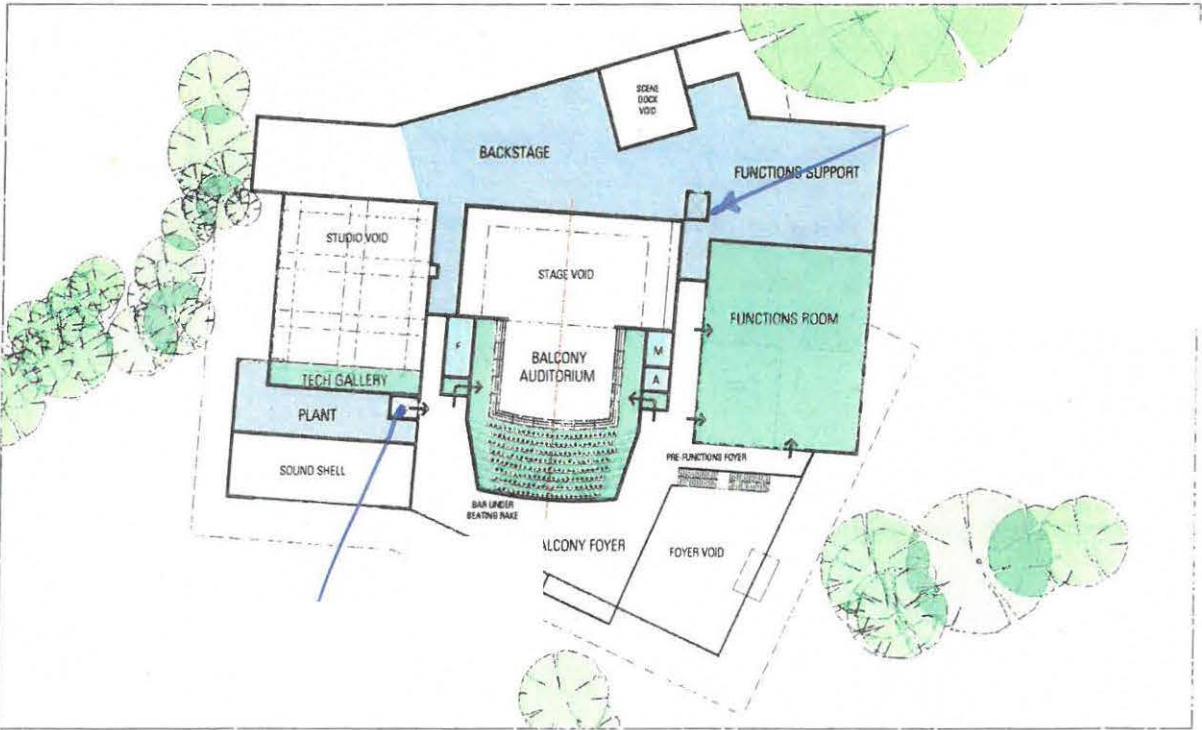
Option two: Deck car park opposite the redeveloped centre



# THE PLANS - SITE



Ground Floor



First Floor

## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

**4. Which description best suits you? Although you may attend the Whitehorse Centre in more than one category, please choose the one that would be your primary contact with the centre.**

- ☐ I am a season subscriber to the Whitehorse Centre
- ☐ I have attended a performance at the Whitehorse Centre
- ☐ I have attended festivals and events at the Whitehorse Centre soundshell (amphitheatre)
- ☐ I have attended a function at the Whitehorse Centre
- ☐ I have hired the Whitehorse Centre
- ☐ I am a producer of shows in the Whitehorse Season
- ☐ I have never visited the Whitehorse Centre

**5. Are you a resident of the City of Whitehorse?**

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

**6. Are there any other comments or feedback you would like to provide?**

Thank you for your time.

If you require additional details please contact  
Arts & Recreation Development on 9262 6371  
or email: [ard.admin@whitehorse.vic.gov.au](mailto:ard.admin@whitehorse.vic.gov.au)

**Postal Address:**  
Whitehorse City Council  
Locked Bag 2  
Nunawading Delivery Centre, VIC, 3131



## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

The redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre is an exciting initiative for the Whitehorse community and the largest project investment in the history of the City of Whitehorse.

The Centre provides community access to the performing arts, function services and is home to major events within the Whitehorse Festival Season.

Council is now embarking on this critical stage of consultation as it releases the findings, concepts and proposed outcomes of the project to date. This stage of community consultation will inform Council on the future direction of the Whitehorse Centre. Council values your feedback and looks forward to hearing your views.

The survey will only take a few minutes to complete. It is confidential and no individual will be identified. The results will only be published as aggregated responses.

**1. Do you believe that the redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre is an important project for the City of Whitehorse?**

- ☐ Yes  
☒ No

**2. To what extent do you support the redevelopment as currently proposed?**

- ☐ Highly support  
☐ Support  
☐ Somewhat support  
☒ Do not support  
☐ No opinion

**3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
Council has an important role in providing cultural facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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## Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

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# Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment Survey

## 6. Are there any other comments or feedback you would like to provide?

### The Parking:

Will there be a specified area for Performers to park, considering most will be carrying costumes etc.?

If parking charges are introduced, will Performers be charged parking fees?

### The Building:

**The cost** of hiring the Theatre would most likely rise, and may price many local groups out – currently it is affordable, and provides a good size stage & auditorium. The majority of hirers of the current Whitehorse Centre are local community groups, and the size and amenities would suit most groups' needs and budgets.

**The Stage in the large Theatre** (proposed) would suit most Dance Schools, but the Auditorium in the proposed development would be far too big, whereas the Stage in the small theatre would be too small for most Dance School Productions, but the seating most likely quite adequate – not a good mix all round.

**The Dressing Room** in the large Theatre in the proposed development appears to be able to accommodate approximately 70 people, where most large Dance Schools would need space for 100 + students – and there doesn't appear to be an area to provide for "overflow" such as the current "Soundshell". (The position of the Soundshell is totally separate and removed from both the proposed smaller Theatre and the proposed Main Theatre, and is therefore not in a position to be a "multi-purpose" space, as it is currently.)

The smaller Theatre (proposed) appears to provide totally inadequate Dressing Room space for smaller productions.

Will the Dressing Rooms be easily supervised when there are 50 – 80 school-aged performers involved in a production? What about access to the Dressing Rooms from outside – performers/parents need access without having to walk through the public Foyer area, for drop-off and pick-up.

**The Rehearsal Room** appears to be in close proximity to the Backstage area where scenery will be unloaded and transported to the Stage – a possible safety issue, assuming that the space is for performers to use for "warm up" prior to a performance.

Will the rehearsal space have a fully sprung floor? – an essential requirement for dancers.

**Subject:**

FW: WebSurvey Submission Confirmation: Whitehorse Centre Feedback Form

#### WEBSURVEY DETAILS

**Survey Name:** Whitehorse Centre Feedback Form

**Submitted On:** 30/05/2015 3:55:12 PM

#### WEBSURVEY RESULTS

**Q1: Name**

**Q2: Email address**

**Q3: Phone number**

**Q4: Feedback**

We wish to register our strong objection to Council's plan to spend \$78m on re-development of our Whitehorse Arts Centre

What you are proposing to your ratepayers is, in our opinion, an unjustifiable rise in rates to provide facilities quite beyond local community needs. There may be a need for an enlargement of what we already have but how can Council members even contemplate asking ratepayers to support the plan financially. Such extravagance would no doubt shock those in our community who have little or no interest in ever attending events at the Arts Centre, especially since no persuasive case has been offered for such a development in a poorly accessible site, with insufficient parking for even the present facility

Perhaps Council should come down to earth out of their 'fantasy land' and be more realistic. Think about what could be provided for, say, \$10m. or \$20m.

It appears to us that any edifice that would need \$78m. for a 're-development' could only have as its purpose the aggrandisement of Councillors – for all the world to see – but ratepayers would scoff at obvious narcissism, and so they should!

The ploy of pushing a rate increase that will circumvent the State Government's declared policy before it can be legislated is not only reprehensible, but given the Andrews government's track record in cancelling contracts retrospectively, it is surely going to be a case of serious 'egg on face' for Council unless something more appropriate is adopted.

We definitely do not favour the expenditure of \$78m. for such grandiose redevelopment as planned by Council and we ask that you go back to Square 1.

Seriously,

**Q5:**

#### Privacy

The personal information requested on this form is being collected to enable the Whitehorse Centre to contact you regarding this feedback. The personal information will be used by the Whitehorse Centre for that primary purpose or directly related purposes only. The information

**From:**  
**Sent:** Thu, 4 Jun 2015 17:28:36 +1000  
**To:** "customerservice" <customerservice@whitehorse.vic.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Attn:

Hi

I am writing in response to the release of the plans for the new Entertainment centre. I know I am too late for formal responses but I was talking to the ladies in the customer service centre and they gave me your name and encouraged me to write because they believed I had some good points to raise. I hope this doesn't bother you too much.

Firstly I am all for getting a new theatre that fits with better productions, I am just a bit concerned about the way it's being done.

My first concern is the need to demolish what is there already - with that great theatre gone for a year or two during building there will be nothing for all the regular theatre goers and production companies to use. This is likely to create a situation where over time everyone gets happily settled going elsewhere and doesn't come back. I believe Lazy Moes in Forest Hill faced this problem - they rebuilt after the fire but never got the custom back and had to close down.

My thoughts would be that as the new plans still include a small theatre then why not leave the one that is there (with its function rooms etc) and build a whole new building on the north east corner. I think that is where the option two car park was planned. It would be quite normal these days to build down into the ground for a multi-level car park and then you could put the new, larger theatre on top of the car park. This would also have the advantage of providing disabled car parking under cover with lift access straight to the theatre.

After the new theatre is finished and open for business then the existing theatre could be stripped to provide a small theatre space with multi use seating.

Secondly, when the new theatre is built please be considerate of all the shapes and sizes of people in the demographic of the majority of your theatre subscribers. Modern theatre seating seems to have the unfortunate priority of trying to fit in more seats at the expense of comfort. The Karralyka theatre is a perfect example of this - only short skinny people are truly comfortable in that seating. One of the features of seeing a show at the Whitehorse Centre has been the comfort and ease of getting in and the fact that every seat in the place has a good view.

Regards,

From:

Sent:

Subject:

Thursday, 28 May 2015 12:35 PM

RE: Submissions for the WH Theatre close on Friday

Hello

**The Whitehorse White Elephant**

I am a ratepayer and an occasional patron of the Whitehorse Centre

I have already completed various feedback forms and surveys regarding the project.

Those responses clearly state my **lack of support** for the project.

My view was formed after considering the following factors:

- The cost is excessive, especially in the current economic environment, when council is proposing rate increases that exceed CPI.
- Vic Gov't is pressurising councils to limit rate increases.
- The quoted cost is likely to be exceeded, and with a complex design, cost over-runs will occur. This is a historic reality.
- There is little prospect of the complex being a net profit contributor to councils overall finances. In fact it will be a net expense which would only increase pressure for more rate rises
- The multilevel carpark is excessive, with daily utilisation being unlikely. Financial contribution from this source would be break even at best, but more likely to be a loss contributor.
- The existing complex, of which I am a patron, appears to fulfil its purpose adequately, and with a modest refurbishment will serve the ratepayers future needs.
- Incurring significant cost to demolish the existing facility and replacing it with something similar is not something a sensible council should contemplate.
- Using the Albany WA facility as a comparative lacks logic, as Albany is a remote region, where no other similar facility is close by, whereas Whitehorse is a suburban council where appropriate facilities exist within close proximity to satisfy potential users needs, ie Monash and Deakin universities.

I am of the old school of ratepayers who believe the role of council is to provide basic services which will benefit all ratepayers. Those services include streetlighting, roads, footpaths, garbage collection etc, rather than embark on an exercise in outdoing other specialist providers of such amenities which can more realistically operate them on a sustainable basis.

I don't believe that council has a mandate to develop a state of the art facility which won't be utilised by the majority of ratepayers, especially when such a major use of ratepayers money is involved.

As a matter of interest, would you please advise the cost to date of the redevelopment, including architects, consultants and other fees, (not to mention councils input in the form of employee involvement) as well as any forward commitments undertaken by Whitehorse Council.

Regards,



---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 4 June 2015 3:47 PM  
**To:**  
**Subject:** FW: Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment

City of Whitehorse

Dear

I wish to address the matter of the proposed redevelopment of the Whitehorse Centre by Council.

As background to my comments, I did attend a City of Whitehorse Information Evening earlier this year, I have read Council's proposed 2015/2016 Budget and have I perused the Whitehorse Centre redevelopment display in the foyer of the Council Offices.

Whilst I appreciate Council wishes to keep the assets of the City up-to-date and agree the Whitehorse Centre is a little tired, I cannot support the intended re-development of the site with a new enlarged facility at a cost of \$78M. I do realise that Council has some money set aside towards the cost but am completely against the intended 2% levy on the ratepayers of the City. The intended 5.6% rate increase is bad enough, as always, an increase significantly more than CPI.

1. I believe the Whitehorse Centre facility, which is like a Taj Mahal, will only serve a minimal number of Whitehorse ratepayers, instead, the majority of its use will be by those people external to Whitehorse (59% is a figure that has been quoted). Why should our ratepayers carry the burden for non-residents of our City.
2. The display stated that to bring the existing facility up to standard, the cost would be \$5.5M over 10 years. This course of action sounds feasible and would give the City a functional asset but without the huge price tag.
3. The display stated the design was only concept at this stage which leads me to confidently believe that if the project were to go ahead, the detailed design would blow out beyond \$78M to an unknown figure. This

would then further burden the ratepayers as Council would have committed itself.

4. The display stated there was wide consultation including;

a) 500 individuals of which 200 were Whitehorse residents. Not much of a sample when we consider there are 68,000 ratepayers in Whitehorse.

b) A number of Arts groups including a number outside the City of Whitehorse. Of course these groups would be supportive of such an enlarged facility. A great idea at no expense to themselves except the hire fee for a performance. Let these people lobby their own Cities for their own facilities.

5. The display stated the enlarged facility would require additional staffing, the cost of such being partially funded by the revenue generated by the facility's use. This means that in the end, the balance of additional staffing plus other operational costs, would have to be borne in the main by ratepayers.

6. The enlarged facility will over time require the usual costs in upkeep which in turn will require greater input by ratepayers.

7. Whilst I support the City having some great assets, Council needs to ensure it does not commit the ratepayers long term to having a noose around their necks, so-to-speak, in having to fund the upkeep of all these, plus support the cost of a Council's staff and its Councillors whilst trying to reap some benefit in the basic services the community requires.

8. On the one hand, Council cry poor that things like the disposal of rubbish is going to cost the City more and that the State Government may limit rate increase by way of a rate cap and yet Council are looking to commit \$78M on an arts facility. Surely, \$78m would go a long way to support the basic services of the City.

9. At the information evening I attended, I said then and I will say again, will Councillors please ensure that Council rates are used wisely for the provision of essential services for the City. We do not want to end up having money wasted on largely irrelevant things in the name of saying what a great City we have.

Yours sincerely,

On 21 Jun 2015, at 3:58 pm,

wrote:

Good afternoon

I refer to my email below and must admit I am disappointed

did not have the good manners to at least acknowledge my email even if you did not wish to provide your opinion on the redevelopment.

From the lack of response it shouts to me that you are in favour of the proposal and believe in without every endeavour being made to garner the opinion of all constituents, not just interested parties.

Funnily enough everyone I have spoken to who reside in our community are flabbergasted that such an amount of money is to be spent 'full stop' and then without proper and thoroughly justified canvassing of all rate payers.

I will continue to express my disappointment to all I interact with, neighbours, parent groups at both primary and secondary schools in the City of Whitehorse and the sporting bodies my family mixes with.

---

**From:**

**Sent:** Monday, 8 June 2015 10:09 PM

**To:**

**Subject:** Proposed Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment

Good morning

As I have only very recently become aware of the above I would be pleased to understand your positions with regard to the redevelopment of the 'Arts Centre'

I am a little disturbed that the Council thinks it acceptable to spend close to \$90m (if not more) in capital expenditure and operating costs, of rate payers money without consulting all of the rate payers for the benefit of a very small % of the rate payers of this City. Asking a select few (500 and by phone which represents circa 0.003% of the

population of Whitehorse) and those who have a vested interest (funnily enough I don't imagine they're upset to spend someone else's money for their own benefit) will never give you the thoughts , that is if you were actually wanting it in the first place.

Using an excuse that it would cost over \$5m in up keep over the next 10 years is negligible compared to what is being proposed with no mention of when, if ever, the new centre will turn a profit, as such how is this beneficial to all rate payers?

I believe that the first and foremost responsibility of Councillor is to all of their constituents and for such a spend as the one proposed it would be in the best interest of all rate payers, i.e. the ones who are actually going to pay for the new centre, to be given a voice in whether it goes ahead.

As such I would eagerly suggest that the Council now put the process on hold, engage the Australian Electoral Commission and seek consensus from all eligible rate payers. There is a significant cost involved but when it comes to spending \$90m+ of rate payers money I think you would want to ensure you have everyone on side.

You may from my query derive that I am opposed to the redevelopment. I see the responsibility of the 'Arts' rests with State and Federal Governments, not local Council.

I look forward to your emailed response.

Kind regards

FILE COPY

Whitehorse City Council  
379-397 Whitehorse Road,  
Nunawading Vic 3131

13th May 2015.

To the Councillors and Administrators of Whitehorse City Council :-

I feel compelled to question the viability and need for the size of the rate increase and a serious doubt how this new \$78 million plus redevelopment will benefit the community as a whole and not a minority of the residents.

I also question the "statement" made by that the general community had been extensively consulted - what consultation, with whom, how many were consulted and were they the "minority" who currently use the facilities.

I think ratepayers money at this time and with the clear uncertainty of economic times ahead that a more prudent approach to council spending would be more appropriate. Renewal work of \$5.2 million over the next 10 years would be the better option, less burden on an already struggling population trying to make ends meet.

Use ratepayers funds wisely and what they are meant for ie. services and capital works.  
We would rather see our rates used in ways that benefit everyone and not just a few.

Yours sincerely,

CITY OF WHITEHORSE RECEIVED	
15 MAY 2015	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Years	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 Years
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 Years	<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent
<input type="checkbox"/> 40 Years	<input type="checkbox"/> Attachments
<input type="checkbox"/> ARC/	

✗

TO The City of Whitehorse Council: -

Whereas objections to the Proposed Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment, either in the development of the Centre from what it currently is; or the creation of the proposed car parking on the green nature areas; as indicated below:

WE the undersigned petition the City of Whitehorse Council as follows: -

Remove the considered Car Parking for the green nature areas from the current Proposed Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment plans and develop alternative plans for a new Car Parking on existing parking areas, to return that then for consideration by the Community.

[illegible]

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[illegible]

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10

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