



Everyone's House

Sydney Opera House
Strategy 2024 – 26



Acknowledgement of Country

The Sydney Opera House acknowledges the Gadigal of the Eora Nation, traditional custodians of Tubowgule, the land on which Australia's most iconic building and premier performing arts centre stands.

We honour the long Gadigal history of gathering and storytelling, and celebrate the strength and resilience of First Nations people and communities, past and present. The Opera House continues this legacy today by embracing and celebrating First Nations artistic expression and culture.



Welcome

The Sydney Opera House is a living work of art, a place of possibility and wonder. For half a century, artists, audiences and visitors have been coming here to be uplifted, empowered and entertained.

Today, it is one of the world's busiest performing arts centres, the nation's premier tourism destination and a World Heritage masterpiece that belongs to the people of NSW.

It is crucial that the Opera House evolves with the community it was built to serve. So at our 40th anniversary in 2013, we embarked on a Decade of Renewal. This ambitious 10-year plan involved:

- Planning, funding and delivering \$300m of capital works.
- Broadening and diversifying the programming and experiences offered, on site and online.
- Becoming a leader in social and environmental sustainability.

We completed major upgrades to the Concert Hall and Joan Sutherland Theatre, as well as improving accessibility across the precinct. The Forecourt is now vehicle-free. We have turned over more of the building to the community, opening a new Centre for Creativity and the Yallamundi Rooms. More than 15 million people have attended performances and tours since 2013

and there have been 21 million views of our digital content in the past year alone.

All of this has increased people's love for the Opera House. A 2023 report by Deloitte found that over the Decade of Renewal the social value Australians place on the Opera House had grown 38% in real terms to \$11.4 billion. The report also identified three key brand associations: unique, dynamic and visionary.

In 2019, we committed to the United Nations Global Goals because creativity has a key role to play in building a more sustainable, equitable and fairer future for everyone. Recent progress includes:

- A Six Star Green Star performance rating by the Green Building Council of Australia in recognition of our world leadership in environmental and social sustainability.
- The Opera House's fifth Reconciliation and Access Action Plans (2020-22) and first Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Strategy (2021-23).
- A new Heritage Action Plan (2022-25) setting out how we strengthen, care for, and conserve the building and site.

“We want our people, operations and the building itself to be more resilient, so that the Opera House is ready for what comes next.”



The 50th anniversary has been an opportunity not only to take stock of everything that's been achieved, but also to think about how we can keep evolving to meet the challenges ahead. The simple idea that the Opera House was built to serve the community is at the heart of our ambition for the future – to be Everyone's House.

With this strategy, we draw inspiration from the past as we engage with new and diverse artists and audiences to create a place where everyone feels welcome.

In doing so, we are taking into account how the pandemic has reshaped personal and working lives. We want our people, operations and the building itself to be more resilient, ready for what comes next. That includes embedding sustainability in our thinking and amplifying First Nations voices and culture.

This 2024-26 strategy is divided into four strategic themes. It will align us behind clear goals and measures and drive portfolio-based action plans and key performance indicators. The themes are:

- We better understand and connect with the community.
- Everyone feels welcome here.
- We are future ready.
- We lead and inspire positive change.



Photo by Ken Leanfore.

I am grateful to the many staff, Trustees, resident companies, partners and other supporters who contributed their ideas on how best to respond to the changing world. Your enthusiasm is a wonderful reminder of the centrality of the Opera House in Australian life.

I look forward to working together to realise our ambition to be Everyone's House.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'LH', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Louise Herron AM
Chief Executive Officer
October 2023



Fat Freddy's Drop perform on the Forecourt, November 2022. Photo by Mikki Gomez.

The Sydney Opera House is a living work of art. A place of possibility and wonder – on and off the stage. We bring people together to be uplifted, empowered and entertained.

Our ambition is to be
Everyone's House

To make this real, we are focused on four themes:

We better understand and connect with the community

Everyone feels welcome here

We are future ready

We lead and inspire positive change

**We better
understand
and connect
with the
community**



We better understand and connect with the community

Goal How we will get there

SOH's programming and experiences involve, inspire and attract an increasingly diverse range of artists and communities

- Continue to broaden SOH's programming across contemporary and traditional art forms, as well as programs inspired by the building – on site and online.
- More artists from diverse backgrounds, including First Nations artists, are engaged to develop and present new work across all SOH Presents programming areas.
- Increase participation in SOH's schools creative learning program, deepening relationships with teachers and inspiring children through on site, off site and online experiences unique to SOH.
- Nurture relationships and bring together people with different lived experiences to inform, enrich and extend the reach of our work, building on SOH's community engagement program.
- Enable more people to visit, participate and engage with SOH through subsidised access initiatives, including free tickets and travel, audio-described programming, tours and relaxed performances.

Goal How we will get there

We are audience-centred and better able to engage current and potential audiences and visitors

- New SOH-wide audience strategy informs all programming, engagement and marketing.
- Strengthen capabilities to become more data-led, improving insights, decision-making, reach and participation.
- Better integrate program planning and marketing across all presenting streams (SOH Presents, resident companies and hirers).
- Improve collaboration and insight sharing with resident companies and other precinct partners to build a holistic view of SOH's audiences and visitors.
- Continue to invest in website development and other customer-facing platforms.

We harness the power of screen-based programming

- Prioritise up-to-date screen infrastructure, including Recording & Broadcasting Studio upgrades.
- Broaden and deepen audiences through screen-based programs that amplify live performances on site, as well through 'screen-first' experiences.

This work supports these UN Global Goals



Everyone feels welcome here



Everyone feels welcome here

Goal

SOH's public spaces are vibrant, welcoming, accessible and safe – day and night

How we will get there

- Expand the use of our public spaces year-round with free and low-cost performances, experiences, public art, pop-ups and community-led events.
- Improve planning and collaboration for temporary activations, so that they meet the required standards of creative excellence and heritage management.
- Provide a more welcoming and easy-to-navigate path of travel for people arriving and leaving SOH.
- Create more engaging, inclusive and interactive visitor experiences through a new precinct-wide storytelling approach.
- Review public facilities site-wide and prioritise upgrades to meet the diverse needs of the community.
- Update SOH's Accessibility Masterplan to reflect current codes and evolving visitor demand.
- Draw on the Strategic Building Plan Edition 2 whenever making improvements to the site.

Goal

SOH is a culturally safe and nurturing environment for everyone – workers, artists, audiences and visitors

How we will get there

- Everyone who works at SOH understands and is responsible for cultural safety, inclusivity and anti-discrimination, and these are included in policies, education and training.
- Staff are engaged through an ongoing program of events, activities and storytelling to celebrate diversity and encourage connection, including with resident companies, operators and contractors.
- Explore new ways to celebrate and embrace community diversity and wellbeing across the end-to-end visitor experience.

This work supports these UN Global Goals



We are future ready



We are future ready

Goal

Our workforce is skilled for the future, more diverse, safe, supported and engaged

How we will get there

- A strong culture supports our people and enables the organisation to thrive:
 - We live our Values and work together to achieve our Ambition.
 - Managers and teams communicate effectively and openly.
 - Everyone feels valued for the role that they play.
- Our workforce planning and management, including recruitment, retention and development, is agile and responsive to the evolving needs of our people, the organisation and broader operating environment.
- Increase diversity at all levels of the organisation, including First Nations representation, providing equitable career pathways and targeted leadership development.
- Physical and psychosocial safety are paramount. We will work together to:
 - Manage risks, ensure appropriate training, awareness and accountability.
 - Update key safety systems and apply them consistently across SOH, including with third parties.
 - Implement a new health and wellbeing program.

Goal

The organisation is financially sustainable, with the right business model to make Everyone's House real

How we will get there

- SOH has the right mix of income (commercial, private and government funding), including growth in revenue from:
 - International tourism as it recovers.
 - Philanthropy and partnerships to \$10 million annually.
 - Providing specialist services (e.g. ticketing, content) to the wider arts and entertainment industry.
- Embedding a sustainable procurement framework more deeply across the organisation to increase diversity of SOH's goods and services providers, including First Nations businesses.

We are well set up to respond to the evolving needs of artists, presenting companies and hirers

- Adapt our processes and ways of working to better support an increasingly diverse program of artists and presenting companies.
- Develop innovative presenting models for performances on site and online.
- Enable more flexible use of the venues, balancing artistic, community, financial and maintenance needs.
- SOH's production and event delivery teams are appropriately resourced and skilled.
- Collaborate with the arts and entertainment industry on education and training initiatives.

This work supports these UN Global Goals



We are future ready

Goal

SOH's building, venues, technology and systems are continually adapting to meet future demands, while strengthening our World Heritage values

How we will get there

- Continue to work with the NSW Government to support the ongoing care and maintenance of the building.
- Scope and progress plans for major maintenance works and upgrades, including renewal of the Drama Theatre, Studio and Playhouse, guided by the Strategic Building Plan Edition 2.
- Finalise a climate adaptation plan to anticipate and effectively manage impacts.
- Set ourselves up with fit-for-purpose processes, systems and technology:
 - Improve project planning, delivery and change management.
 - Be open to harnessing new technologies and encourage innovation.
 - Have the right team structures, resources and platforms to support the evolving business.
- Celebrate and conserve SOH's heritage significance – now and in the future:
 - Communicate and deepen understanding of SOH's history and heritage.
 - Upskill staff and third parties so that SOH's heritage is celebrated and respected in the way we work.
 - Review and update SOH's heritage management framework and key documents.

This work supports these UN Global Goals



**We lead
and inspire
positive
change**



We lead and inspire positive change

Goal

How we will get there

First Nations voices, self-determination and storytelling play a vital role in shaping SOH and its future

- Develop and implement a new First Nations Strategy and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property protocols, led by a First Nations member of the Executive Team and supported by a First Nations advisory group.
- First Nations voices are at the forefront of storytelling about Tubowgule, the land and its people, as well as stories on and off SOH's stages.
- Support, share and connect with First Nations peoples, contributing to key conversations and community events and advancing First Nations cultures and capacity-building in the arts.

Goal

How we will get there

We lead, collaborate and innovate to bring about social and environmental change

- Amplify the role arts, culture and the creative industries play in addressing the UN Global Goals, leveraging our position and brand to lead, inspire and unite government, business and the community.
- Continue to adapt and improve our building and operations to maintain world leadership (Six Star Green Star) in social and environmental performance, including being on track to be climate positive by 2030.
- Champion a new working group with NSW Cultural Institutions to drive collective action.
- Find a way to measure SOH's social and environmental impact, ideally acting as a template for others.

SOH is at the heart of a more vibrant, creative and sustainable future for Sydney

- Build on successful collaborations with NSW arts, tourism and government organisations to accelerate Sydney's culture-led revival, attracting local, interstate and international artists and visitors and promoting the city as a sustainable destination.
- Expand strategic partnerships with education, broadcasting and peer institutions to trial initiatives and programs that increase access and participation in the arts.
- Encourage best-practice event delivery by showcasing and promoting SOH's sustainable event management principles, internally and with the broader industry.

This work supports these UN Global Goals



Tracking our progress

Key measures have been identified across the four themes. The strategy will drive the development of portfolio-based plans and annual key performance indicators.

We better understand and connect with the community

Goals

- SOH’s programming and experiences involve, inspire and attract an increasingly diverse range of artists and communities
- We are audience-centred and better able to engage current and potential audiences and visitors
- We harness the power of screen-based programming

Measures

- New audiences – on site and online
- Diversity of artists, performances and visitors
- Marketing reach and conversion
- Customer satisfaction
- Digital engagement including screen-based programming

Everyone feels welcome here

Goals

- SOH’s public spaces are vibrant, welcoming, accessible and safe – day and night
- SOH is a culturally safe and nurturing environment for everyone – workers, artists, audiences and visitors

Measures

- Sentiment for SOH as “a place I feel welcome”
- Engagement through free and low-cost experiences
- Participation in Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging staff training

We are future ready

Goals

- Our workforce is skilled for the future, more diverse, safe, supported and engaged
- The organisation is financially sustainable, with the right business model to make Everyone’s House real
- We are well set up to respond to the evolving needs of artists, presenting companies and hirers
- SOH’s building, venues, technology and systems are continually adapting to meet future demands, while strengthening our World Heritage values

Measures

- Workforce skills, diversity and safety
- Employee engagement
- Revenue across the site and to SOH, including funding from philanthropy and partnerships
- Planning and delivery of building and systems upgrades

We lead and inspire positive change

Goals

- First Nations voices, self-determination and storytelling play a vital role in shaping SOH and its future
- We lead, collaborate and innovate to bring about social and environmental change
- SOH is at the heart of a more vibrant, creative and sustainable future for Sydney

Measures

- Strategic partnerships and collaborations
- New First Nations strategy
- On track to be climate positive by 2030
- Adoption of Sustainable Events Management Principles across SOH events

UN Global Goals

The United Nations has defined 17 goals to address the world's most pressing challenges by 2030, including the climate emergency, education, inequality, poverty and justice. In 2019, the Opera House became the first major Australian arts institution to adopt the Global Goals. Since then, we have made progress across a number of areas, but there is still a lot to do.

As a cultural icon and symbol of modern Australia, the Opera House has a responsibility to lead and inspire positive change. In this

strategy, for the first time, key social and environmental sustainability actions and measures aligned with the Global Goals are embedded into our organisation-wide planning.

We have identified seven priority areas where we can make the biggest difference for the community, in collaboration with partners, artists, audiences and the cultural sector. Through our responsible business practices, we also support four other Goals. We are committed to finding effective ways to measure our impact.



Strategic Goal	Target	Our commitment
	3.4	Support community health and wellbeing through art, culture and creativity.
	4.4, 4.5, 4.7	Promote quality education and learning opportunities for all. Advance sustainable development through creativity and education.
	8.3, 8.5, 8.8, 8.9	Be a catalyst for creativity, innovation and sustainable tourism. Champion diversity and human rights across our workforce and business operations.
	10.2	Empower and advocate for fairness and inclusion, improving diversity and accessibility on and off the stage.
	11.4, 11.7	Create safe and accessible public spaces. Revitalise and protect cultural practices, heritage and sustainability.
	13.1, 13.3	Strengthen resilience and take bold climate action.
	17.16, 17.17	Deepen and enrich relationships with partners, sharing knowledge and collaborating to advance the Goals.

Our Values



Encounter Sydney, performing on the Monumental Steps, May 2022. Photo by Cassandra Hannagan.

Creativity

We are curious and ask questions.
We set out to inspire and be inspired.



Courage

We dare to think differently and
are ready to embrace change.



Inclusivity

We respect and welcome everyone.
People feel a sense of belonging here.



Collaboration

We value teamwork. We listen, learn and share.
Together, we celebrate success.



Integrity

We are honest, open and fair.



Care

We look after each other, this place and the world around us.
Safety is our greatest responsibility.



Here's what our staff say:
**What does
Everyone's
House mean
to you?**

“

I feel like I am at home.
I am happy and inspired.
I see me and can be me.



“

Staff feel engaged,
proud and loyal. Artists
want to work here.

“

The original intention was to
be the people's house – this
ambition has been consistent
over time but how we realise
it might change.



“

We're accessible, as a
place and organisation,
in all senses of the word.



“

There is a sense
of ownership and
belonging from
the community.



“

A place for everyone, a
realisation that dreams
are possible, this is
what Everyone's House
means to me.



Kawadji Wimpa perform at DanceRites 2019. Photo by Jaimi Joy.



The Sydney Opera House is a living work of art. A place of possibility and wonder – on and off the stage. We bring people together to be uplifted, empowered and entertained.

sydneyoperahouse.com