

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



Tuesday 9 May 2017

I wish to inform you that on 10 April 2017 Council passed the resolution to fully redevelop the Whitehorse Centre on the Nunawading Civic Precinct and refer this redevelopment resolution to the 2017/2018 draft budget.

Council will not require any loan (borrowings) to complete the redevelopment project. For further information on the 2017/2018 budget process please refer to: www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/Proposed-Budget.html

The Council's resolution responds to the comprehensive business case planning and extensive community consultation that recognises the value of the Whitehorse Centre for our community. A redeveloped centre will provide a facility that:

- meets the needs of our growing and diverse population
- is accessible for all users
- is a fit-for-purpose arts centre servicing our not-for-profit community groups
- will enhance the health and well-being outcomes of our community
- is an arts hub for artists and patrons to use and enjoy in their local area

It is envisaged the existing centre will continue to operate until the end of 2019. This allows for approximately two years of planning, design, contract management and design consultation before any building works commence on site. Council recognises the importance of performing art opportunities in the local area and during the building works Council will continue to offer a modified theatre and music program at local venues. Council will also be working with our Whitehorse Centre clients so they can make alternate arrangements during this period.

The Whitehorse Centre has served its community well for over 30 years. In the 2015/16 financial year:

- 77% of all centre bookings were made by City of Whitehorse clients
- 54% of theatre tickets were issued to Whitehorse residents showing strong local support for this facility

This Executive Summary of the Whitehorse Centre Redevelopment has been prepared to keep you informed of this valued community facility. A copy of the 10 April 2017 Whitehorse Centre Council Report and previous project reports can be found at: www.whitehorsecentre.com.au/Whitehorse-Centre-Future.html

If you have further enquiries please contact the Arts & Recreation Development Department Administration on 9262 6371 or email ard.admin@whitehorse.vic.gov.au

Yours sincerely



CR DENISE MASSOUD
MAYOR

**Whitehorse Centre
Council Resolution 10 April 2017
Executive Summary – Redevelopment**



This is a concept design only and does not reflect the final design

2017/2018 Budget Update – Long Term Financial Outlook

- Council will not require any loan (borrowings) to undertake the redevelopment
- Council plans to undertake this project within the rates cap level as set by the Minister for Local Government
- Council would seek Federal and State Government capital support for this project

Funding Strategy	Option A - Redevelopment	
	2015/16 Budget	2017/18 Update
Accumulated surplus	\$20m	\$30m
Reserves	\$24m	\$48m
Loans	\$34m	Nil
Total	\$78m	\$78m

Option A – Redevelopment (new centre)

This option would estimate a building life in excess of 50+ years. Key components include an increase in the size and capacity of the foyer, main theatre, function room, rehearsal room

An additional meeting room and studio theatre is included in response to market research findings

A car park to service the centre, library, walker park and civic building

Building cost:\$60.4 million
Deck car park cost:\$10.96 million
Project and contingency costs \$6.64 million

This redevelopment will require the centre to close for 24 months for works to be undertaken

Whitehorse Centre – a valued community facility

The Whitehorse Centre is a community based facility serving the needs of its local community and beyond.

In the 2015/16 financial year:

- 77% of all centre bookings were made by City of Whitehorse clients
- 54% of theatre tickets were issued to Whitehorse residents showing strong local support for this facility
- 73.6% of bookings were community based not for profit organisations. For example Nova Music Theatre, Babirra Music Theatre, City of Whitehorse Band, Whitehorse Showtime
- 19.5% of bookings are for Whitehorse based programs. For example Parkland Advisory Forum, Women's Forum, Midweek Matinee Program, Professional Theatre, Music and Children's Program
- 6.9% of bookings were Commercial/Corporate organisations. For example Yarra Valley Water



Whitehorse Centre — what's the problem?

Council identified that the future of the existing Whitehorse Centre was uncertain:

- Built in the 1980s it is over 30 years old and nearing the end of its working life
- It will become increasingly expensive to maintain
- Building services need to be entirely replaced - it is likely to have more frequent, unpredictable building and equipment failures
- There are areas of the centre that do not meet expected user access requirements
- Many spaces are functionally compromised and several important support spaces are missing
- The building is starting to limit community event and activity opportunities
- Research into future needs shows that it requires substantial upgrade and enlargement to serve the Whitehorse community into the future

Facility Component Comparison Table

Extensive market research was conducted to determine the future facility needs of the centre and the spaces required to respond to this demand. The following table provides the comparison between the existing centre and the new centre:

Venues / Hireable Spaces	Existing Centre	Redevelopment
Main Foyer	300 people	600 people
Proscenium Theatre	408 seats small/medium productions only	600 seats including required wheelchair & carer positions almost all relevant shows
Studio Theatre	—	200 seat capacity variable format – tiered seats, flat-floor sub-divides into 2 studio/function rooms
Sound Shell Stage	Concert stage Rehearsal/dance studio	Concert stage Rehearsal/dance studio
Meeting Room	—	Up to 20 people video-conferencing
Function Room	180 dining (warming kitchen – predominantly cooked off-site) 350 standing sub-divisible x2	250 dinner-dance * 300 banquet * 600 standing event sub-divisible x3 or x4 * Full service kitchen
Rehearsal Room	Small rehearsal/dance studio does not match stage size 30 – class 130 – standing	Large, divisible rehearsal/dance studio matching theatre stage size sub-divisible x2

Benefits of Redevelopment (new centre)

Venues / Hireable Spaces	Proposed Centre enables:
Main Foyer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– pre-show hospitality, enhancing function experience / quality / multi-use– art exhibitions– ‘cocktail’ functions, civic events– in-foyer performances, recitals
Larger Proscenium Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– more economic for local groups that can attract larger audiences– be viable for commercial presenters who currently don’t hire the centre
Multi-purpose Studio Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– lower cost option for community groups, performers– youth and children’s events – attract and build new audiences– creative development programs – attract and build new audiences– rehearsals /dance classes – increased capacity– functions – increased capacity and type of event
Function Room/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– multiple simultaneous events– larger function rooms serving hirers who currently don’t fit– much more attractive room meeting current community expectations
Multiple concurrent events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– more intensive activity & multi-use spaces– conference capability up to 600 people using all rooms
Sound Shell	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– improved facilities would assist the valued festival season of 43,000 people

Deck Car Park Concept Plan Proposal



USE OF EXISTING COUNCIL CAR PARKING + DECK CAR PARK (553 SPACES)

- An increase to the parking allocation with a deck car park (210 spaces) in close proximity of the centre.
- Please note: an earlier deck car parking option (opposite the centre - at the site of the sheds) was removed as an option by Council in 2015.

Whitehorse Centre Project Consultation

Consultation began in 2010 and since then there has been four stages of community consultation:

- 2010 - SGL Whitehorse Centre Feasibility Study
- 2013 - Williams Ross Business Case
- 2015 - Williams Ross Business Case Community Consultation
- 2016 – JWS Research Findings

An accumulative total of this consultation has delivered findings from:

Independent telephone survey	1,100 responses
Online/hardcopy surveys	2,132 responses
Focus group sessions	24 sessions*
Stakeholder interviews	65 interviews
Written submissions	183 submissions
Total	3,480 individual submissions *Multiple participants in 24 focus groups sessions

The following three slides provide the research profile (who participated in the consultation) and 2016 key findings from the independently conducted community consultation undertaken by JWS Research on the preferred option for the future of the Whitehorse Centre .

RESEARCH PROFILE

Whitehorse Quantitative Research Profile

	Number of Responses	Number of Whitehorse Residents	Whitehorse Housing Situation	Years lived in Whitehorse	Attended the Whitehorse Centre/ Festival (or member of household)	Gender	Age (years)
Telephone interviews	600	600 – 100%	Ratepayer – 85% Renter – 14% Prefer not to say – 1%	10+ – 73% Under 10 – 26% Don't know/ not sure – 1%	68%	Female – 52% Male – 48%	18-39 – 32% 40-64 – 47% 65+ – 22%
Online/ Hardcopy Surveys	1292	1142 or 88%	Ratepayer – 93% Renter – 4% Prefer not to say – 4%	10+ – 88% Under 10 – 6% Don't know/ not sure – 6%	88%	Female – 61% Male – 39%	18-39 – 12% 40-64 – 42% 65+ – 43% Prefer not to say – 3%

Whitehorse Qualitative Research Profile

Public Submission	123	Public submissions provided an open forum for public comment
Client Interviews	10	These were evenly divided between theatre/performance clients and function/meeting clients of the Whitehorse Centre. No other distinguishing factors were sought
Focus Groups	6 groups	Inclusive of general community, regular Whitehorse Centre users and local residents

SUMMARY OF THE DIFFERENT OPTIONS BEING CONSIDERED FOR THE FUTURE OF THE WHITEHORSE CENTRE

Option A: Complete redevelopment

- Includes new main theatre, studio theatre, function room, sound shell, larger foyer and increased studio space.
- Estimated cost of \$67 million; plus \$10.9 million for proposed car park to service the Whitehorse Centre, Library, Civic Centre and Walker Park.

Option B: Essential works to keep the Whitehorse Centre operational

- \$7 million investment to conduct essential works (such as roof replacement, improvements to building fabric and technical upgrades) to keep the existing Whitehorse Centre open for another 8-10 years, prior to possible closure.

Option C: Closing the Whitehorse Centre

- The Whitehorse Centre would be closed within two years.
- The existing Centre would be demolished and returned to parkland at an estimated cost of \$2 million+.

SNAPSHOT OF KEY FINDINGS



- All facets of the research program show that **Option C is not supported.**

This makes it a decision between Option A and Option B:

- Opinions are somewhat divided however there is **more support evident towards Option A** in the community telephone research.
- There is **heightened support for Option A** in the self-select and hardcopy research.

Telephone research:

Option A = 42%

Option B = 37%

Option C = 15%

Not sure = 6%

Self-select research:

Option A = 56%

Option B = 29%

Option C = 13%

Not sure = 2%

(Results are considered preferences – after consideration of arguments for/against redevelopment)

- The client segment and the written submissions received are **more evenly split** in their preference between Option A and Option B.



“The Whitehorse Centre is great for our community”
Community survey respondent

