

**Advisory+  
Project Management**

Live Theatre Workshop – Outcomes Summary and next steps  
13 June 2017

**Background**

Ku-ring-gai Council requested Root Partnerships facilitate workshop with invited Councillors to discuss how to progress the decision-making process in relation to defining the need for live theatre / a performance facility within the Ku-ring-gai LGA.

Attendees at the workshop included:

Jennifer Anderson	Mayor
Elaine Malicki;	Councillor
Cheryl Szatow;	Councillor
Christiane Berlioz	Councillor
Jeff Pettett;	Councillor
John McKee	KMC
Janice Bevan	KMC
Greg Piconi;	KMC
David Marshall	KMC
Andrew Watson	KMC
Bill Royal	KMC
Dean Payne	KMC
Owen Judge	Root Partnerships
Chris Crick	Root Partnerships

**Workshop Objectives**

The following workshop objectives and outcomes were agreed with all present as:

- For Council to gain a better understanding of the process to be undertaken to determine the need for Live Theatre and the financial implications
- To define what inputs are and where the current information gaps may be.
- To agree what options that need to be interrogated.
- Gain a better understanding on what are the desirable location attributes.
- To better understand the differences between a Theatre facility vs a multifunction facility.
- Agree a clear direction that will allow Council to make an informed decision regarding the investment in future facilities.

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## Key Outcomes from the Workshop

The following views were expressed by the workshop participants

- Reintroduce professional level of entertainment to Ku-ring-gai and cater for community groups
- That there is an emotional attachment to the existing Marian Street Theatre venue.
- A 500-seat venue would cater for the largest capacity requests, but may be too large given the financial and space implications and proximity of the Chatswood Concourse. Agreed that a maximum of 300 seats should be considered.
- Whilst the need for rehearsal space was determined from the Gordon Hub Needs analysis, the location of such space would need to be reviewed in terms of the best use of Council's limited land assets.
- Flat floor Auditoriums vs raked fixed seating will required further review – agreed that the tour of some existing facilities should be undertaken
- Appropriate acoustic standards need to be achieved for professional music and Drama performance
- The facilities need to be available for use by a broad range of stakeholders including the Community, Schools, semi-professional and professional groups, external hirers
- Acknowledged any performance facility will require a high level of utilisation in order to be financially sustainable
- There is a perceived lack of conference facilities within the LGA
- Need to be able to meet the needs and expectations of a range of user groups
- Surrounding amenity (restaurants, retail, bars etc) will be part of the key to success for a venue
- The venue needs to have its own character – Artistic content and size / scale
- Need to get something up and running within the next 12 months, can't wait for the Gordon Hub project that is still several years away.
- There are a number of significant issues with the UTS site, that may preclude it from further assessment
- Council would need to consider funding options
- The Governance structure of any venue will need to be carefully considered and provide equitable access to all interest groups. High professional management standards should be adopted
- Two separate facilities may be worth considering in order to meet the services need, spatial requirements and professional standards requirements (e.g. MST and the Gordon Hub)
- Good links to transport and car parking are essential
- Careful consideration needs to be given to the potential impact to neighbouring residential properties in Marian Street should the theatre be re-opened
- Diverse programming will be important
- There is a preference for venues with a dedicated use, rather than one venue that is trying to cater for all uses.
- Make sure whatever is provided, that it doesn't compete with the existing cultural infrastructure
- Need to develop a collective vision within Council around "what is success"

## Next Steps

- Visioning workshop required a draw out Council's collective vision on "the Why?"
- Undertake a feasibility study, incorporating a robust demand assessment / demographic analysis and options assessment
- Tour example facilities
- Progress this next project definition phase in order to inform the incoming Council post the Council elections this year.