

Heritage Impact Statement

in support of a fifth modification to DA 445-10-2003 'Sydney Opera House – Use of Forecourt, Monumental Steps for Temporary Events and Functions'



Acknowledgement of Country

The Sydney Opera House acknowledges the Gadigal of the Eora Nation, traditional custodians of Tubowgule, the land in 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.

Version	Date of Issue	Issued by	Issued for
1	10/04/2026	Sydney Opera House	In support of a fifth modification to DA 445-10-2003 'Sydney Opera House – Use of Forecourt, Monumental Steps for Temporary Events and Functions'

Table of Contents

Acknowledgement of Country	1
Table of Contents	2
Executive Summary	3
1 Preamble	7
2 Understanding the site	7
2.1 Location and context	7
2.2 Heritage Listings	9
2.3 Statutory framework for outdoor events and activities	11
2.4 Forecourt events and associated planning and heritage instruments	14
3 Proposal – Fifth Modification to the Forecourt DA	29
3.1 Forecourt DA MOD 5	29
3.2 Context of SOH outdoor event planning and heritage reform	29
4 Heritage Impact Assessment	31
4.1 Basis of assessment	31
4.2 Assessment against the Statement of Significance and policies of the <i>Conservation Management Plan</i> , 4 th Edition	31
4.3 Assessment against the Criteria of the State Heritage Values of the Sydney Opera House	59
4.4 Assessment of impact on National Heritage Values of the Sydney Opera House	65
4.5 Assessment of impact on World Heritage Values of the Sydney Opera House	72

Attachment 1 – Sydney Opera House Heritage Guidelines for Outdoor Events and Activities, June 2024.

Executive Summary

Background

The Sydney Opera House is located on the lands of the Gadigal, on Bennelong Point, a peninsular on the eastern side of Circular Quay.

The cultural heritage significance of the Opera House is captured in its statutory (World, National, State, Local) and non-statutory heritage listings. The Opera House cultural heritage significance includes that it is recognised as a masterpiece of 20th century architecture and a world-renowned performing arts centre. It is an internationally renowned landmark, an architectural icon, a symbol of Sydney and Australia, and holds a unique place in the Australian psyche as a focus for national celebrations and events.

Since its opening in 1973, the Opera House has hosted temporary community events and performances on the Forecourt, Monumental Steps, Podium and Broadwalks. Temporary outdoor events and activations at the Opera House are governed by a planning and heritage framework that permits community and performing arts events including low, medium and high impact events (as defined under Sydney Opera House exemptions under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts – Eastern Harbour City) 2021 and site-specific exemptions under the Heritage Act 1977).

The planning consent and heritage approval that permits high impact large-scale concerts on the Forecourt include DA445-10-2003, dated 29 June 2004, “Use of Southern Forecourt and Monumental Steps of the Sydney Opera House for Temporary Performing Arts/Community events and Functions”) and associated modifications (the most recent fourth modification, or MOD 4, was granted 14 October 2016) and associated section 60 heritage approval (2016/s60/177 dated 28 April 2017 and fast track s60 dated 21 December 2021 for a time frame extension).

The planning consent as modified by MOD 4, permits up to three events of max. 20 days and five events max 11 days (includes bump in/out and event days) of no more than 99 days per annum, and permitted a one-off 25-day event in 2016 for an Opera Australia performance.

The Proposal

The Opera House is seeking a fifth modification application (MOD 5) to amend DA 445-10-2003 (the Proposal). The proposed amendments focus on acoustic and operational enhancements to better support diverse outdoor programming, aligning with the NSW Government vibrancy reforms.

This HIS considers only the changes that have implications of the Proposal for the cultural heritage significance of the Opera House, specifically:

- increasing the capacity from 6,000 to 7,000 people per performance. This will have some impacts on temporary infrastructure (e.g. increased number of toilets, etc). The potential impacts to the amount of infrastructure and location has been considered as part of this assessment, including event infrastructure to the Covered Concourse.
- changes to the event duration permitted as outlined in the table below.

Criteria	Forecourt DA Mod 4 (current)	Forecourt DA Mod 5 (proposed)
Duration	3 events of max. 20 days 5 events max 11 days (includes bump in/out and event days)	2 events of max. 25 days 1 event of max. 16 days 4 events of max. 11 days (includes bump in/out and event days)
Event days per annum	99 days per annum maximum.	No change – retain 99 days per annum maximum

Summary Assessment of Heritage Impact

This Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) has assessed the potential impacts of the Proposal to the cultural heritage significance of the Opera House as identified in *Respecting the Vision, Sydney Opera House – a Conservation Management Plan*, by Alan Croker, fourth edition, July 2017 (referred to as CMP4), and the State, National and World Heritage listings.

The Proposal has both positive and negative impacts to the cultural heritage significance of the Sydney Opera House. Negative impacts can be reduced or mitigated through a series of Recommendations, and if implemented, the Proposal is considered acceptable and is supported.

The Proposal has a positive impact to the cultural heritage values of the Opera House as a performing arts venue. The proposed longer event periods enable shared use of infrastructure by more than one hirer, additional shows over a third weekend, and reduce bump in and out from consecutive event footprints. These factors reduce the costs for hirers and broaden programming opportunities for a more diverse range of artists and genres, as well as potentially more free and low-cost performances through these more cost-effective and flexible operational arrangements. Increased capacity will also enable more patrons to participate with these large scale Forecourt events. The changes potentially strengthens the role of the Opera House as a performing arts venue.

These positive impacts of the Proposal on the Opera House's role as a performing arts centre and premier tourist destination for Australian and international visitors alike, must be considered in context of the other cultural heritage values of the Opera House. These values include the site as an architectural masterpiece, the building being read as a 'sculpture in the round' in a waterscape setting and the arrival sequence (from the front of the site, across the Forecourt, to the Monumental Steps and Podium and, for patrons, the internal venues).

The Opera House is, for many Australian and international visitors, possibly their most anticipated destination on a visit to Sydney. Their visit, whether or not, an large scale Forecourt event is set up as outlined in the Proposal, should be an enjoyable and memorable, one that is not impacted by poorly located or ill-considered event infrastructure that clutters or obscures primary views and public access, particularly if it is in place for an extended period of time.

All areas affected by the Proposal's events have been assessed in the CMP4 as having Exceptional significance (A), with the largest potential negative impacts on the patron and visitor experience of the Forecourt, Monumental Steps, Covered Concourse, the significant views to and from the Opera House and within the southern area of the site.

The Proposal includes an increased event duration, increasing the time for the large-scale event infrastructure to be in situ, resulting in negative visual and experiential impacts over a longer period. The Proposal's two 25 day event footprints (including bump-in and bump-out) are assessed as an upper limit for the duration for a major Forecourt events, if the mitigation measures identified in this HIS, and summarised in the Recommendations below, are implemented. Equally, any additional event infrastructure required for an increased capacity of 1,000 patrons for the events outlined in the Proposal, must be undertaken in accordance with the mitigation measures identified in this HIS, and summarised in the Recommendations below.

Negative impacts on heritage values of the Opera House arising from the Proposal are temporary for the duration of the event, and will have no have permanent impacts on the experiential values of the place. The events in the Proposal have potential to impact significant fabric due to the nature of bump in/out of event infrastructure and during performances, however these are significantly reduced and mitigated through existing processes that manage risk to building. Ongoing cumulative impact assessments will inform potential for any longer lasting impacts to heritage values of the Opera House (as outlined in the mitigations).

Negative impacts arising from the Proposal are proposed to be reduced or mitigated through a series of Recommendations outlined below. With the implementation of these Recommendations, the cultural heritage values of the Opera House - as identified in the CMP4 and its State, National and World heritage listings - are able to be conserved, respected and enjoyed, during these events to a large extent.

The Proposal does not have a significant impact on the National Heritage Values or the Outstanding Universal Value of the Sydney Opera House.

Recommendations

The Proposal is supported with the following Recommendations to mitigate negative impacts to the Sydney Opera House's heritage values.

1. **Heritage Guidelines for Outdoor Events and Activations** – Continue to implement the 'Sydney Opera House Heritage Guidelines for Outdoor Events and Activations' (Heritage Guidelines) as endorsed by Heritage Council NSW (or its delegate), and referred to in the Conservation Management Plan.

It is recommended that the Heritage Guidelines be updated, and endorsed by the Heritage Council NSW (or its delegate), as a condition of the planning consent and heritage approval for the Proposal.

This recommendation seeks to ensure that events do not have an unacceptable impact on the heritage values of the Sydney Opera House.

2. **Temporary infrastructure** – Infrastructure and installations required for events under the Proposal must comply with the Heritage Guidelines and the policies of the Conservation Management Plan.

Continual improvements to the design quality and layout of infrastructure required for the events in the Proposal should be scoped, identified and implemented as part of the updates of the Heritage Guidelines. Design improvement opportunities noted throughout the HIS include: barriers, fencing, scrim and signage, toilets, and food and beverage outlets.

The annual compliance report prepared for the Proposal should include details on any implemented improvements to temporary event infrastructure and proposed improvements with a timeline for implementation (noting that some projects may take longer to implement than others).

This recommendation seeks to ensure that events do not have an unacceptable impact on the heritage values of the Sydney Opera House.

3. **Timing between events** – A suitable period of event free clear days is required between the event footprints, as specified in the Heritage Guidelines 'Timing between Events and Activations'. Given the Proposal includes increased event duration to up to two 25 day footprints, it is recommended that a minimum of 11 clear days including two weekends (where possible, three weekends) with no more than a low impact event in between, is required before and after event footprints of over 20 days in the Proposal.

This recommendation seeks to reduce the perception of continuous event infrastructure at the Opera House for long periods of time. Clear days will improve access to the site between long events for visitors and patrons and to balance the significant values of the Opera House as an architectural masterpiece with the function as a performing arts centre.

4. **Site protection** – Significant fabric must be protected during events including bump in, bump out and the performance from potential damage. It is recommended that dilapidation surveys continue to be undertaken before and after event footprints and any damage recorded and rectified.

This recommendation seeks to ensure that events do not have an unacceptable impact on the heritage values including fabric of the Sydney Opera House.

5. **Compliance Reporting** – Reporting on events held under the Proposal should continue to be submitted from Sydney Opera House Trust to Heritage Council NSW (or its delegate) in an annual report. The report should include event footprint dates, descriptions, physical impacts from events, images of the events, cumulative impacts, risk management, training and awareness raising, and updates on temporary infrastructure design improvements roll out. Continuing the time limit to the s60 heritage approval is supported.

It is recommended that the annual report be provided to the Sydney Opera House Conservation Council for review and feedback prior to submission to Heritage NSW.

Ongoing tracking and assessment, including cumulative impact assessment from outdoor events at the Opera House, by Sydney Opera House management should be undertaken to ensure all impacts to heritage values of the Opera House are managed holistically and appropriately, and reported to SOH Conservation Council.

This recommendations seeks to provide the opportunity to assess compliance, impacts (including cumulative impacts) of temporary outdoor events and improvements that have been made to reduce negative impacts to Sydney Opera House heritage values.

- 6. Expert heritage advice** – Ensure expert heritage advice is continued to be sought for temporary outdoor events in relation to potential impacts on the Opera House's heritage values. The Sydney Opera House Conservation Council is a key source of expert advice and their opinion and feedback should be sought regarding events permitted under the Proposal.

This recommendation seeks to ensure that events and activations do not have an unacceptable impact on the heritage values of the Sydney Opera House.

- 7. Heritage training and risk management** – Ensure heritage risks associated with the events under the Proposal are assessed and managed effectively, including regularly reporting to Sydney Opera House Conservation Council. Review and update heritage training and awareness programs for those involved in planning and executing events under the Proposal to ensure the Opera House's heritage values are protected.

This recommendation seeks to ensure that events do not have an unacceptable impact on the heritage values including fabric of the Sydney Opera House.

- 8. Improved visitor information** – Ensure patrons and visitors to the Sydney Opera House are informed of events held under the Proposal, and how this may impact their experience of, and access to, the Sydney Opera House during an event footprint. Updates may include improved onsite signage during events and information on the Sydney Opera House website visitor page identifying when major forecourt events are on and how this may impact a visitors/tourist experience (e.g. timing for Monumental Steps closures, visual impacts).

This recommendation seeks to ensure that visitors are informed and can plan their visits to the Opera House to receive the best experience possible during an event held under the Proposal.

1 Preamble

The Sydney Opera House (SOH) and Design 5 – Architects Pty Ltd (Design 5) have prepared this Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) to assess the heritage impacts of a proposed modification to an existing Development Consent for large scale performing arts events on the Forecourt (DA 445-10-2003 and modifications).

This reported has been co-authored by Laura Matarese (Heritage Manager, Sydney Opera House), Alida Eisermann (Heritage Officer, Sydney Opera House), Alan Croker (Director, Design 5) and Matthew Byrnes (Director, Design 5).

2 Understanding the site

2.1 Location and context

The Conservation Management Plan 4th edition (CMP4) describes the site as:

The Sydney Opera House is located on the peninsular on the eastern side of Circular Quay known as Bennelong Point, on the south side of Sydney Harbour. The site is legally described as Lot 5 in DP 775888 and Lot 4 in DP 787933. The site is surrounded on the east, north and west sides by the waters of Sydney Harbour and on the south by the Royal Botanic Garden and the north end of Macquarie Street and East Circular Quay (refer Figure 1).



Figure 1: Aerial view of site and surrounds, approximate site boundaries of site outlined in red. (Source: Six Maps, annotated by Sydney Opera House).

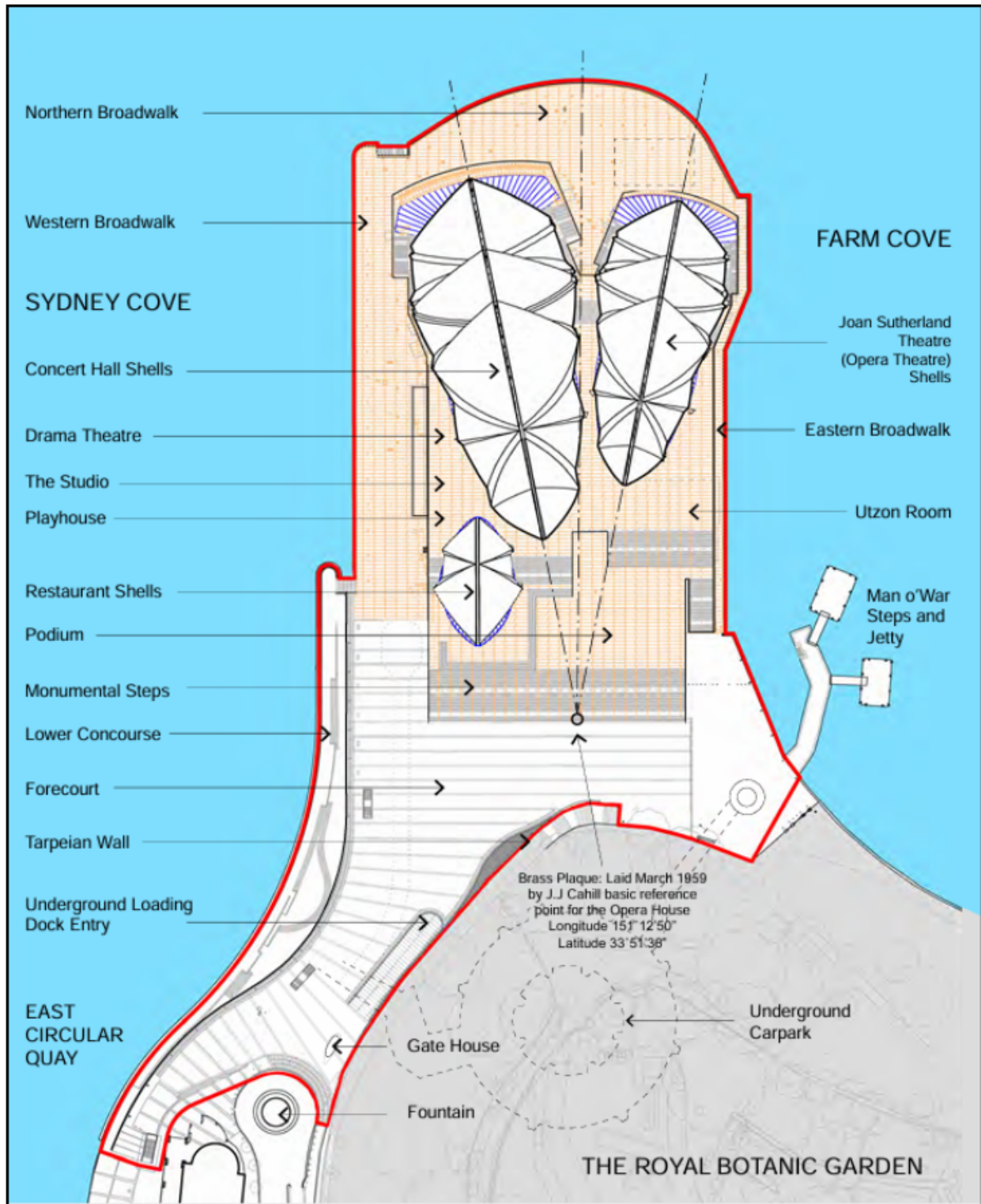


Figure 2: Elements of the Sydney Opera House site. Areas affected by the Proposal include the Forecourt, Tarpeian Wall, Monumental Steps, Podium and Covered Concourse (not shown on this plan, located underneath the Monumental Steps and lower Podium). (Source: CMP4).

2.2 Heritage Listings

The below tables identify the statutory and non-statutory heritage listings that apply to the Sydney Opera House.

Table 1: Heritage Listings (Statutory)

Listing Type	Authority	Listing Number
World Heritage List	UNESCO, 2007	166rev
National Heritage List	Australian Government, 2005	105738
State Heritage Register	State Heritage Register, 2003	01685
Sydney Local Environment Plan	City of Sydney Council, 2005	l1712
Sydney Opera House Buffer Zone (refer to Figure 2)	State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts- Eastern Harbour City), 2021	n/a

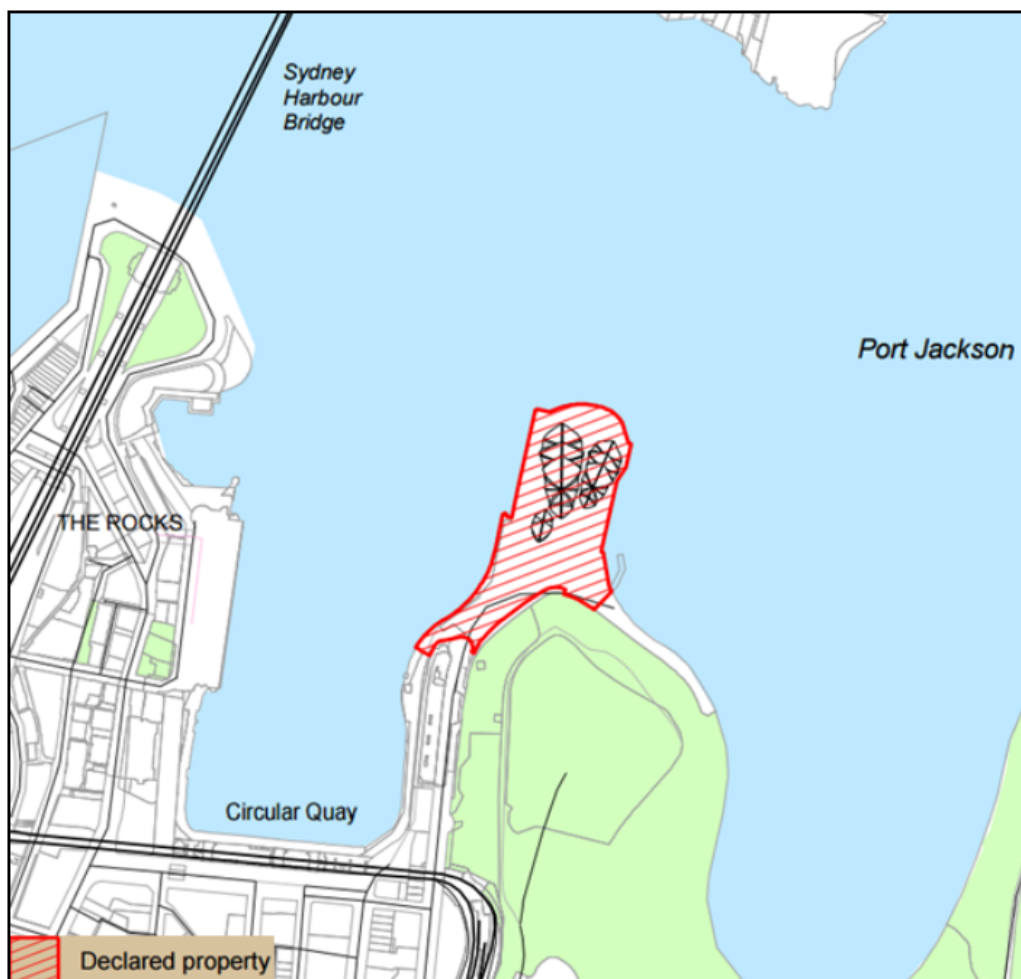


Figure 3: declared world heritage listed site boundary (red). (Source: Six Maps, annotated by Sydney Opera House World Heritage inscription).

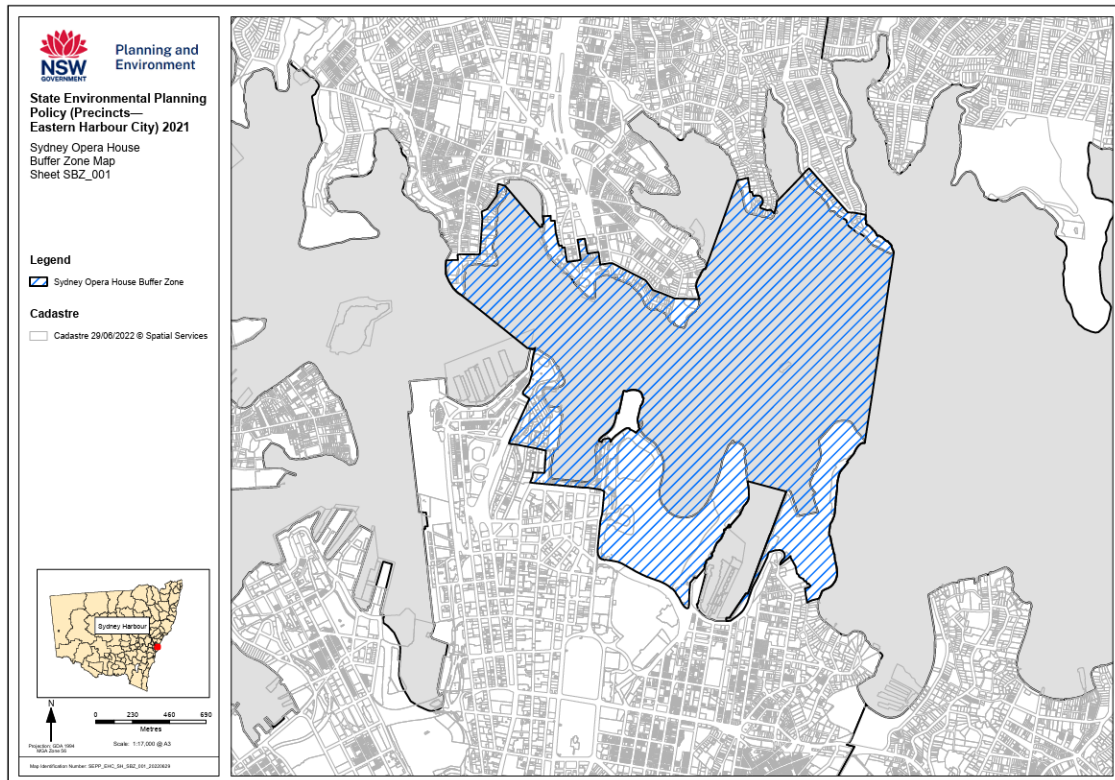


Figure 4: State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts- Eastern Harbour City) 2021. (Source: NSW Planning and Environment)

Table 2: Heritage Registers (Non-statutory)

Listing Type	Authority	Listing Number
Register of Significant 20 th Century Australian Architecture	Royal Australian Institute of Architects, 1990	n/a
Register of Significant Architecture in NSW	Australian Institute of Architects, 1990	4702929
National Trust of Australia, 1983	New South Wales Register	6088
Register of the National Estate	Archived list with the Australian Heritage Council, 1980	2353
Buildings Register	Do.co.mo.mo Australia	n/a

2.3 Statutory framework for outdoor events and activities

The SOH has a planning and heritage framework that regulates the number of temporary outdoor events and activations at the Opera House site.

The SOH statutory outdoor event and activation framework is governed by the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) and the *Heritage Act 1977* (Heritage Act).

The framework was developed between 2002 and 2005, in context of Utzon's re-engagement with the SOH and the development of the Utzon Design Principles (2002), the State Heritage listing (2003) and the National heritage listing (2005).

The key relevant instruments and consents include:

- **The Forecourt DA** (DA 445-10-2003 MOD4), as modified, permits high impact large-scale staged events on the Southern Forecourt, Podium and Monumental Steps. The current limits for event number and duration (more detail in the following section), include event duration of up to three 20 day event footprints and up to five 11 day event footprints, with a total maximum of 99 days per annum including bump in and out of temporary event infrastructure. Capacity for performances is 6,000 people.
- **The Forecourt DA associated section 60** (DA 445-10-2003 MOD 4 2016/s60/177 and fast track s60 dated 21 December 2021) conditions require, amongst other matters, that Heritage Guidelines adopted by Heritage Council NSW be used to reduce impacts of the events to the heritage values of the Opera House. Annual compliance reporting and a time limit for the approval are also required.
- **State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts – Eastern Harbour City) 2021 (SEPP)**, permits SOH to undertake minor activities onsite including minor community and performing arts events and activations permitted as exempt development. This includes unlimited free “community events”, and 120 days of “primary events” relating to the function of the SOH (comprising 40 event days, and 1 bump in and 1 bump out days per event day). Note, these provisions were carried over from the former State Environmental Planning Policy (Significant Precincts) 2005.
- **Site-specific exemptions (SSE) under the Heritage Act 1977** – permits SOH to undertake certain activities onsite including, low, medium and some high impact community and performing arts outdoor events and activations, subject to relevant standards without additional heritage approvals. SOH applies for heritage approvals under the Heritage Act when proposed events do not fit within the existing framework.
- Outdoor events and activities are guided by the policies of the SOH conservation Management plan 4th edition (CMP4), Utzon Design Principles (UDP), and the *Sydney Opera House Heritage Guidelines for Outdoor Events and Activities, June 2024* (Heritage Guidelines).
- SSD-9794 permits activations and events in the Lower Concourse areas.

The chart below summarises the existing planning and heritage statutory instruments and associated documents that form this framework and the graph below shows the total number of events and event days per calendar year since 2016.

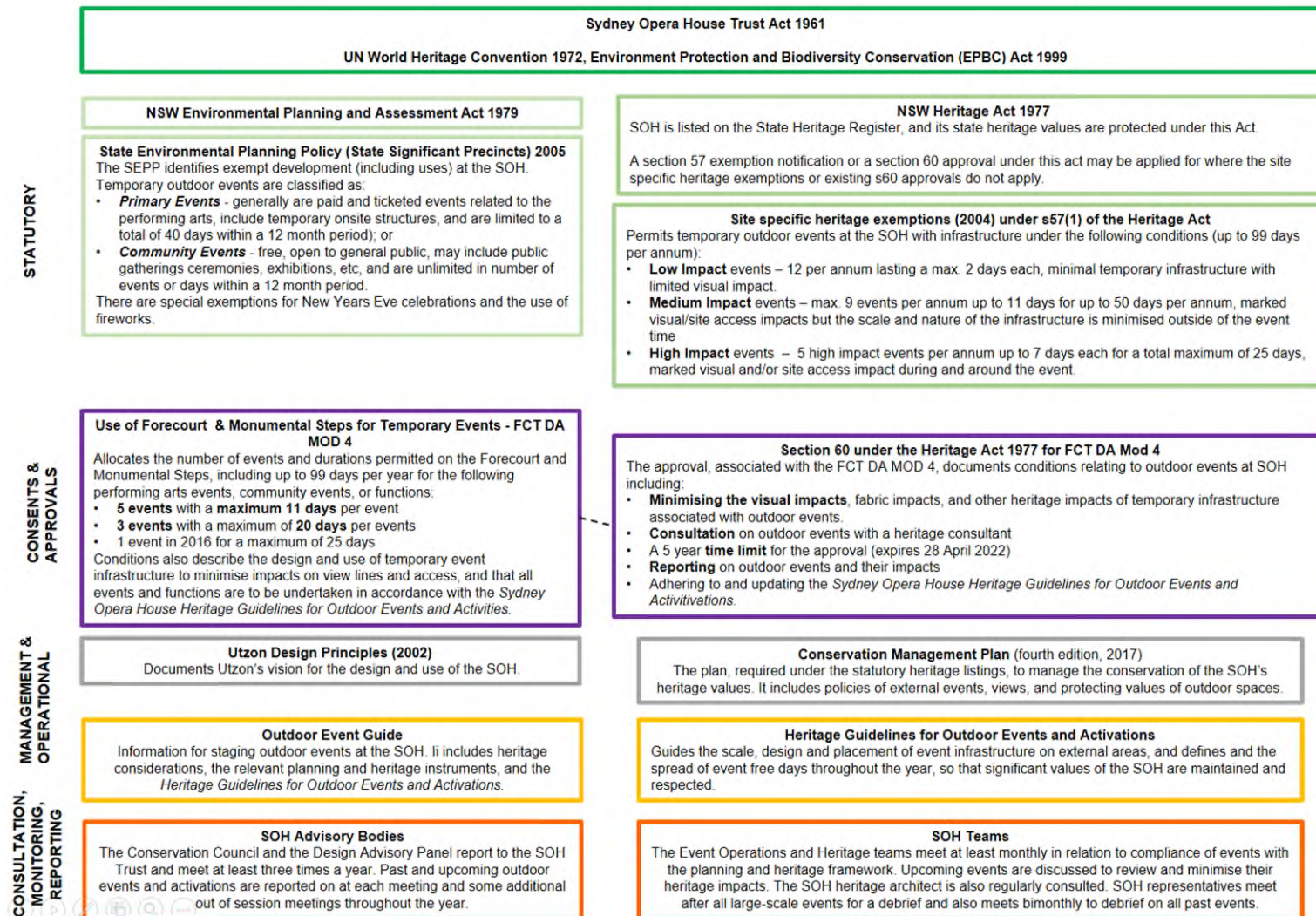


Figure 5: Relationship of Sydney Opera House statutory, consents, and operational requirements. Note the chart does not include other management documents for outdoor events such as noise or waste management plans. Source: Sydney Opera House.

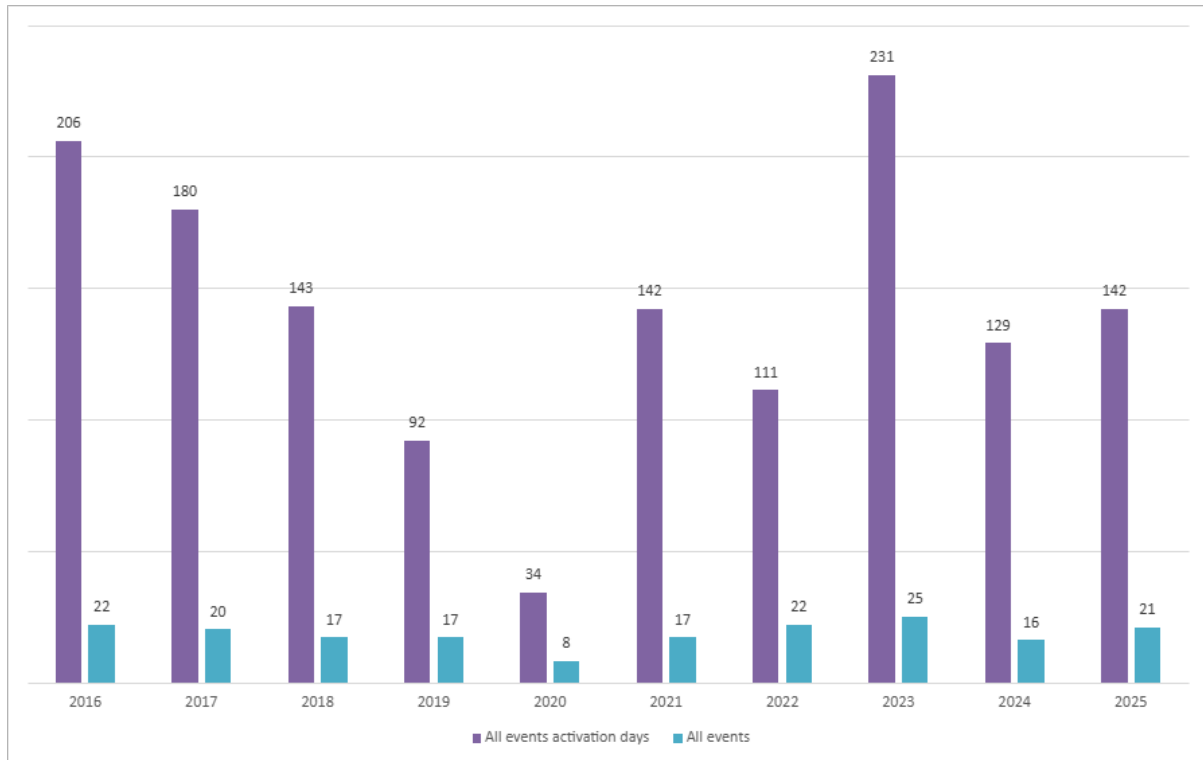


Figure 6: Graph showing all outdoor events and activations over a 10 year period (including Forecourt DA and SEPP events). The graph shows the number of events footprints (blue) and number of days temporary infrastructure associated with the events was located at SOH on the Forecourt and Broadwalks (excluding activations on the Lower Concourse) per calendar year (purple). Source data: SOH Event Operations outdoor events and activations tracking calendars 2016-25.

2.4 Forecourt events and associated planning and heritage instruments

2.4.1 Early use of the Forecourt (1973-2002)

Since its opening in 1973 the SOH has hosted community events and performances on the Forecourt, Monumental Steps and Podium. The open expanse of the Forecourt and the gradual rise of the Monumental Steps create an amphitheatre that was utilised from opening of the building.

At the official opening of the Opera House by Queen Elizabeth II in 1973, the ceremony was hosted on the Forecourt and Monumental Steps. In the years since, these locations have been the location for inspiring community events and performances.



Figure 7: Queen Elizabeth II officially opens the Sydney Opera House at a ceremony hosted on the Forecourt, 1973.

(Photographer unknown.
Source: National Archives of Australia).



Figure 8: Thin Lizzy perform on the Forecourt, 1978.

(Photographer unknown.
Source: Sydney Opera House).



Figure 9: Rocktober on the Forecourt, 1979.

(Photographer unknown.
Source: Sydney Opera House).



Figure 10: Australia Day celebrations on the Forecourt, 1988.

(Photographer unknown.
Source: Sydney Opera House).



Figure 11: Aerial view of the set up for the Forecourt Concert by Buena Vista Social Club, 2001.

(Photographer unknown.
Source: Sydney Opera House)

2.4.2 Forecourt DAs: 2002/03 Trial Season (DA 319-9-2002)

Between November 2002 and May 2003 a special season of community events and performances were held that were subject of a Development Consent granted by the Minister on 7 November 2002 (DA 319-9-2002).

This initial season facilitated the trial of bump in and bump out of temporary event infrastructure and housekeeping facilities for the purpose of quantifying event time and cost. Major event infrastructure, including staging and fencing, was installed for a consecutive 45 day period in which five major performance events were held.

The experience of the pilot season informed the direction of the subsequent development application in 2003 and planning consent in 2004 (the Forecourt DA).



Figure 12: Crowd and infrastructure for Opera on the House, 2002.

(Photographer unknown. Source: Sydney Opera House).

2.4.3 Forecourt DAs: 2003/04 Original Approval (DA 445-10-2003)

On 29 June 2004, the then Minister for Infrastructure and Planning approved DA445-10-2003 under the EP&A Act to permit the use of the 'Southern Forecourt and Monumental Steps' for a total of eight temporary events and functions, of up to 7 days in duration, for a maximum of 48 days per year. The consent was time limited to lapse three years from the date of determination. The consent also limited the patronage of events to a maximum of 6,000 persons and 2,000 persons for functions.

The Statement of Environmental Effects (SEE) by City Plan (October 2003) assessed the proposal's impacts to the SOH's local heritage values only. At this time the Opera House was inscribed on the Local Environmental Plan only, the SOH was not State heritage listed until December 2003, and so no heritage approval was sought.

In the SEE, it was noted that :

"the temporary/transient nature of the proposed community events and performances and associated infrastructure significantly limits the potential for any adverse heritage impacts" and there is "no adverse impact on adjacent heritage items (the Tarpeian Wall and Royal Botanic Gardens)". City Plan Services, October 2003. Statement of Environmental Effects, Sydney Opera House – Forecourt and Site DA.

Table 3: Maximum number of events permitted by DA 445-10-2003 (Condition 5)

Event type	Maximum number of days per year DA 445-10-2003	Maximum days in total
Performing arts and community events	4 events (maximum of 7 days per event, and 24 days per annum)	48
Corporate functions	4 functions (maximum of 7 days per function, and 24 days per annum)	

Examples of events permitted by DA 445-10-2003



Figure 13: Stage and infrastructure set up for Australia Idol, 2004.

(Photographer unknown.
Source: Sydney Opera House).



Figure 14: Stage and audience viewing area for Australian Open, 2005.

(Photographer unknown.
Source: Sydney Opera House).

2.4.4 First Modification, 2005 - MOD 6-1-2005 ('MOD 1')

On 22 March 2005, the Department of Planning and Environment approved a modification (MOD 6-1-2005) to increase the maximum number of events and functions per year on the Southern Forecourt and Monumental Steps from a maximum of 48 days per year to a maximum of 127 days per year including up to 99 days for performing arts events and 28 days for functions.

The Planning Assessment Report for MOD 1 rationalised the increase in the maximum number of event days due to a delay in the drafting and timing of *State Environmental Planning Policy – State Significant Development* (SEPP) that would permit low and medium impact events as exempt development. Due to these delays, a modification to the original consent was sought to include low, medium and high impact events.

MOD 1, approved in March 2005, permitted 26 performing arts events, up to 11 days each, at 99 maximum days per annum, and 6 functions, maximum of 7 days per function and 28 days per annum, totalling 127 days per annum of activity. This is an increase of 79 days of events and functions from the original consent in 2004.

The MOD 1 consent did not regulate the specific break down of these events, however the associated Planning Assessment Report clarifies the 26 performing arts/community events per year were intended to comprise of 12 low, 9 medium, 6 high impact events and six impact corporate functions on the Forecourt, Monumental Steps and Broadwalk area. The Planning Assessment Report identifies these were included in the modification due to delays in the SEPP and heritage site specific exemptions being gazetted.

A Heritage Impact Statement was not prepared or a heritage approval under the Heritage Act was not sought for this planning modification that increased the number of high impact events, their duration, and maximum number of days per annum permitted from the original planning consent.

It is noted that the SEPP was finalised and gazetted in late 2005, and site specific heritage exemptions finalised and gazetted in December 2004 that includes low (up to 12 events of maximum 24 days per annum), medium (9 events of 11 days each at a maximum of 50 days per annum) and high (5 events up to 7 days each at a maximum of 25 days per annum) and 6 functions per annum of up to 7 days each. This resulted in some overlap between the planning and heritage exemptions and the intent of MOD 1 for a number of years.

Table 4: Maximum number of events permitted by MOD 6-1-2005 (Condition 5)

Event type	Maximum number of days per year under MOD 1 (2005)	Maximum days in total
Performing arts and community events	26 events (maximum of 11 days per event, and 99 days per annum)*	127*
Corporate functions	6 functions (maximum of 7 days per function, and 28 days per annum)	

* Noting this includes six high impact performing arts/community events at a maximum of 66 days per annum. An increase from 48 days per annum in the original consent.

2.4.5 Second Modification, 2007 – MOD 90-12-2007 ('MOD 2')

On 10 December 2007, the Department of Planning approved a second modification (MOD 90-12-2007) to allow a one year extension to the three year time limit placed on the consent. No Heritage Impact Statement or heritage approval under the Heritage Act was sought for this modification.

2.4.6 Third Modification, 2008 - MOD 52-6-2008 ('MOD 3')

On 24 July 2008, the Department of Planning approved a third modification (MOD 52-6-2008) to allow a further extension to the time limit placed on the consent. No Heritage Impact Statement or heritage approval under the Heritage Act was sought for this modification.

Examples of events permitted by MOD 1, MOD 2 and MOD 3



Figure 15: Infrastructure located on the Monumental Steps as part of Australian Idol, 2006.

(Photographer unknown. (Photographer unknown. Source: Sydney Opera House).



Figure 16: Opera Australia's performance of La Traviata broadcast to the Forecourt, 2007.

(Photographer: Keith Saunders. Source: Sydney Opera House).



Figure 17: Opera Australia's performance of Carmen broadcast to the Forecourt, 2008.

(Photographer unknown. Source: Sydney Opera House).



Figure 18: Australian Idol finale with view of crowd and infrastructure, 2008.

(Photographer unknown. Source: Sydney Opera House).

2.4.7 Fourth Modification, 2016 - DA 445-10-2003 MOD4 ('MOD 4')

On 14 October 2016, the Department of Planning and Environment approved 'MOD 4' including changes to the permitted number, duration and maximum days per annum for events (removing the distinction of corporate functions) and permitted a one-off 25 day event in 2016 for an Opera Australia performance, among other operational changes. The maximum number of events and functions is detailed in the below table.

Table 5: Maximum number of events permitted under DA 445-10-2003 MOD 4

Event type	Max. number of days per year MOD 4 2016	Maximum days in total
Performing arts and community events and corporate functions	3 events (maximum of 20 days per event) 5 events (maximum of 11 days per event) 1 event in 2016 (maximum of 25 days) Up to a maximum of 99 days per year	99

Design 5 - Architects prepared a Heritage Impact Statement (HIS), the first in relation to this planning consent, in relation to the proposed changes from the first modification relating to the event number, duration and total maximum days permitted per annum and a separate HIS for the one-off 25 day in 2016, to accompany the planning submission and associated heritage approval. Due to the wording of the first modification consent, the HIS assessed the events and changes from MOD 1 to MOD 4 as all high impact, large scale Forecourt style events.

Specifically, the changes assessed in the 2016 HIS included:

- Reducing the total number of performing arts/ community events and corporate functions from 32 in to nine per annum.
- Reducing the total number of days permitted per annum from 127 to 99.
- Increasing the duration of the events from a maximum of 11 days to three 20 day events and five 11 day events with one one-off 25 day event in 2016 for an Opera Australia performance.

On 28 April 2017, a section 60 approval under the *Heritage Act 1977* (2016/s60/177) for MOD 4 was granted for a period of five years. On 21 December 2021, the time limit was extended for another five years under fast track section 60 approval under the Heritage Act (HMS ID 604, fast tracked section 60 heritage approval, dated 21 December 2021).

The MOD 4 consent required the development of *Heritage Guidelines for Outdoor Events and Activities* and improvements in temporary infrastructure (DA 445-10-2003 MOD4 Conditions 54, 63 and 64). Similarly, the section 60 approval also includes conditions for temporary infrastructure and

the development and implementation of *Heritage Guidelines for Outdoor Events and Activities* that must be adopted by the Heritage Council NSW (2016/s60/177 Condition 5).

Design 5 Architects prepared the *Sydney Opera House – Outdoor Events and Activities* in 2016 to guide the scale, design, placement of event infrastructure and to define and outline the spread of event-free days throughout the year so that the significant values of the SOH are maintained and respected. The Guidelines includes a site plan showing key view-lines and defined areas for outdoor event infrastructure. This site plan was included in CMP4, published in October 2017, shortly after the first issue of these Guidelines.

Subsequent Heritage Guidelines editions endorsed by Heritage Council NSW (or its delegate) are dated 2017, 2021, and 2024 (current). These Heritage Guidelines currently apply to all temporary outdoor events and activations on the Forecourt, Podium, Monumental Steps and Broadwalks.

The section s60 approval and Heritage Guidelines are required to be updated again by 21 December 2026.

2.4.8 Use of the Forecourt DA (2016 - 25)

Since 2016, the number of events held under the Forecourt DA and associated s60 has remained well under the allowable limits. Events typically include community events (annual Australia Day broadcast concert, ANZAC Day Lest We Forget Tribute broadcast concert and parade) and contemporary music concerts programmed by SOH Presents (SOHP) or third party hirers, such as Live Nation Australia (LNA).

The below graph outlines its use between 2016-25, noting:

- The number of events held under the Forecourt DA and associated s60 has remained within under permitted limits.
- The maximum number of Forecourt DA events occurred in 2024, 5 events.
- The highest number of Forecourt DA event days occurred in 2024 (70 of a maximum of 99 permitted).
- The average number of Forecourt DA events per year is 3.
- 2016 included the one-off 25 day opera event.
- Outdoor events were limited in 2020-21 on account of Covid-19 restrictions on large gatherings.

SOH delivers annual reports on the Forecourt DA events to Heritage NSW, in accordance with the conditions of the MOD 4 s60. These reports include descriptions, photographs and site plans of each Forecourt DA event and they demonstrate improvements to the design quality and layout of the events over the last decade.¹

Some examples of the Forecourt DA events over this 10-year period are shown in images below.

¹ See Sydney Opera House Outdoor Events Compliance Reports 2016-2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025, submitted to Heritage NSW.

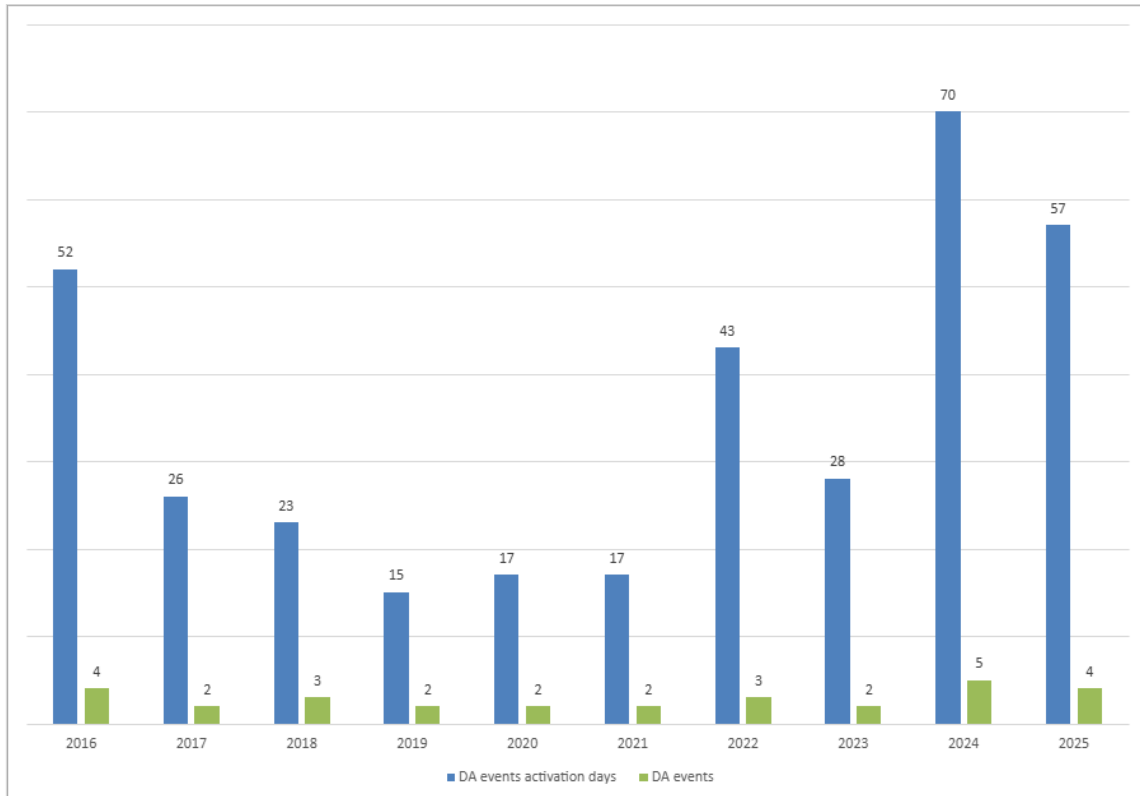


Figure 19: Graph showing the number of events and total event days (including bump in and out) under MOD 4 from 2016-25. The graph shows the number of events footprints (green) and number of days temporary infrastructure associated with the events was located at SOH (blue). Source data: SOH Event Operations outdoor events and activations tracking calendars 2016-25.

Examples of events permitted under Forecourt DA MOD4 since 2016



Figure 20: View from southern approach of setup for Crowded House concert, very soon after Mod 4 approval, 2016.

(Source: Alan Croker, Design 5)



Figure 21: Event entry setup on western side of Forecourt for Crowded House concert. Note truss frame and signage and black security marquee visible centre left, 2016.

(Source: Alan Croker, Design 5)



Figure 22: Event setup viewed from top of centre stair down to Lower Concourse for Lorde concert. Event patrons queuing (seated) and yellow directional sign on right, 2017.

(Source: Alan Croker, Design 5)



Figure 23: Closer view of event entry and security screening setup for Lorde concert. Event patrons queuing in foreground in midday sun, 2017.

(Source: Alan Croker, Design 5)



Figure 24: High 'Mojo barriers' shown on left, to screen outside view of performance from western Forecourt, black security marquee centre mid-ground behind barrier, Lorde concert, 2017.

(Source: Alan Croker, Design 5)

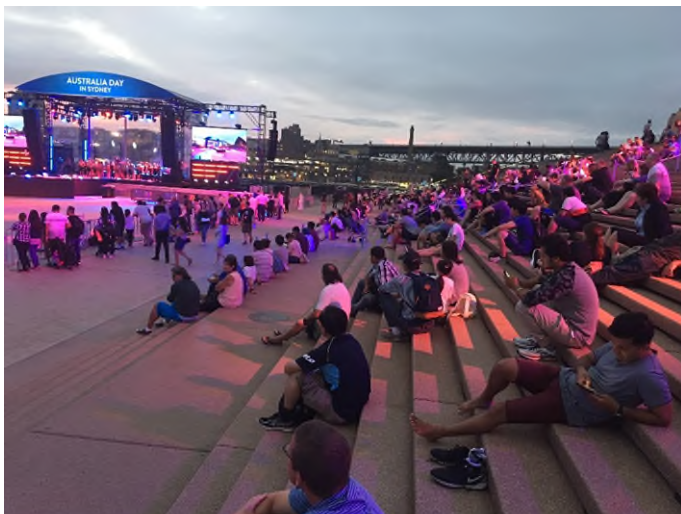


Figure 25: Australia Day concert stage, with see-through rear enclosure, 2017.

Most events have solid rear walls plus a sound barrier wall.

(Photographer unknown. Source: Sydney Opera House)



Figure 26: Southern entry to Opera House site for the Invictus Games event with black security marquee. 2018.

(Source: Alan Croker, Design 5)



Figure 27: Stage and seating for the Invictus Games event. This event had a larger footprint than recent events with the size of this stage and its associated side screens obstructs significant view lines, 2018.

(Photographer: Laura Matarese. Source: Sydney Opera House)



Figure 28: View to the Australia Day concert stage with see through back of stage, from southern entry of the Forecourt, 2019.

(Photographer: Laura Matarese. Source: Sydney Opera House)



Figure 29: View to the Australia Day concert stage from southern approach at Primary viewpoint 2 on *Site Activation Areas, Primary Views & Event Zones* plan in *Outdoor Event Heritage Guidelines*, (at top of centre stair from Lower Concourse), 2022.

Note stage and 'wing' assembly setup complies with Guidelines.

(Source: Alan Croker, Design 5)



Figure 30: View to the stage and associated infrastructure during the Wanha Journey to Arnhem performance on the Forecourt, note the use of black scrim which minimises the visual impact of the infrastructure, 2022.

(Photographer: Ken Leanfore. Source: Sydney Opera House)



Figure 31: View to the stage and back of house compound, ANZAC Day Event, this event was hosted prior to the trial of the updated event layout, 2025.

(Photographer: Euan Carlisle. Source: Sydney Opera House)



Figure 32: View to setup for the 'On The Steps' concerts from southern approach at Primary viewpoint 2 on *Site Activation Areas, Primary Views & Event Zones* plan in *Outdoor Event Heritage Guidelines*, (at top of centre stair from Lower Concourse), December 2025.

Note stage and 'sound wall' in preferred colour for this location. Removal of security function to the Covered Concourse provides clearer view lines. Whole assembly setup complies with Guidelines.

(Source: Alan Croker, Design 5)

In summer 2024-25 and 2025-26, SOH trialled event site infrastructure layouts plans for events permitted under MOD 4 to improve patron experience and reduce heritage impacts of the temporary infrastructure to the SOH.

Trial site layout configuration changes include:

- Temporary event infrastructure was rationalised including some infrastructure within the event footprint reduced or relocated.
- Removing the security marquee and queuing from the front of site near East Circular Quay entrance, and toilet amenities and first aid from the eastern Forecourt, to the Covered Concourse.

These changes reduce the visual impacts at site entry to the SOH and improve patron safety and amenity (particularly on hot and sunny days) by moving security, queuing and patron amenities infrastructure to the Covered Concourse.

This revised layout was a trial to consider the impacts to the heritage values and amenity of the Covered Concourse during the event footprint, as the CMP4 and Heritage Guidelines discourage the use of temporary infrastructure in this location.

The trial will inform the next update to the Heritage Guidelines.



Figure 33: Revised configuration for a Forecourt concert, this configuration minimises clutter and impacts on significant view lines upon approach from south, 2025.

(Source: Matthew Byrnes, Design 5)



Figure 34: Revised configuration that positions queuing and amenities under the Covered Concourse. This layout addresses impacts of hot/poor weather, pedestrian movement, overcrowding, and improves visual impacts.

(Source: Alan Croker, Design 5)



Figure 35:: View to black clad BAR and MERCH tents arranged in a single row in proximity to the Tarpein Wall. Temporary self-adhesive nosing strips are added to the Monumental Steps for events and then later removed. Testing has been undertaken to ensure that the adhesive does not dislodge granite chips when removed.

(Source: Alan Croker, Design 5)



Figure 36: Lighting and speaker towers are black and less visually intrusive as has previously been silver. The use of low height Mojo screens define the edge of the walkway whilst maintain open views across the site.

(Source: Matthew Byrnes, Design 5)

3 Proposal – Fifth Modification to the Forecourt DA

3.1 Forecourt DA MOD 5

SOH is now seeking a fifth modification application (MOD 5) to amend the Forecourt DA (DA 445-10-2003) (the Proposal). The proposed changes focus on acoustic and operational enhancements to better support dynamic outdoor programming.

This HIS considers only the changes of the proposal that have implications for the cultural heritage values of the SOH.

The Proposal seeks to amend Condition 5 of the Forecourt DA to increase the allowable event duration to two events up to 25 days, one event up to 16 days, and four events of up to 11 days. The maximum allowable days (99) per annum remains unchanged. It is anticipated that a longer event periods will facilitate opportunities for the shared use of event infrastructure and associated costs (i.e. between hirers), enabling increased diversity of programming.

The Proposal also seeks to increase the capacity per performance from 6,000 to 7,000 people. This will have some impacts on temporary infrastructure (e.g. increased number of toilets, etc) located within a event footprint. The potential impacts of increase capacity on event infrastructure has been considered in this HIS.

A comparison of the number and duration of events between MOD 4 and the proposed MOD 5 is outlined below.

Table 6: Proposed modification to event number and duration

Criteria	Forecourt DA MOD 4 (current)	Forecourt DA MOD 5 (proposed)
Duration	3 events of max. 20 days 5 events max 11 days (includes bump in/out and event days)	2 events of max. 25 days 1 event of max. 16 days 4 events of max. 11 days (includes bump in/out and event days)
Event days per annum	99 days per annum maximum.	No change – retain 99 days per annum maximum.

3.2 Context of SOH outdoor event planning and heritage reform

The proposal aligns with the proposed reforms to the SEPP framework for the Opera House which may be finalised in 2026.

These reforms ensure the contemporary operating needs of the Opera House are supported, which also supports its ongoing contribution to the arts and cultural sector and the economy of NSW. The Proposal sits within this context.

Table 7: Summary of proposed framework modifications under the Forecourt DA and SEPP

	Existing Framework under the Forecourt DA and SEPP	Proposed Framework under the Forecourt DA and SEPP
Total days of activities permitted	Permitted to have more than 198 days of outdoor events and activities	Permitted to have more than 198 days of outdoor events and activities
Forecourt DA consent and associated section 60 heritage approval	99 days per year of high impact, large scale Forecourt concert events comprising: 3 events of max. 20 days 5 events max 11 days (includes bump in/out and event days)	99 days per year of high impact, large scale Forecourt concert events comprising: 2 events of max. 25 days 1 event of max. 16 days 4 events of max. 11 days (includes bump in/out and event days)
SEPP	Unlimited free community events Up to 40 days of minimal-impact paid events per year, including 80 bump in and out days.	Unlimited free community events The proposed reform increases this to a maximum of 120 days of paid events per year, with bump in and bump out days counted within that limit. This allows SOH to tailor event planning to operational needs, including weather related adjustments or extending event durations.
Heritage SSE	99 days of events (including bump in and out) per annum comprising Low impact events - 24 days including 12 events up to 2 days each. Medium impact events – max 50 days including 9 events up to 11 days each High impact events – max 25 days including 5 events of up to 7 days each	Retain 99 days (including bump in and out) per annum comprising Low impact events – number of events are not limited, maximum of 14 days per event Medium impact events – 56 days maximum, number of events unspecified, max 14 days per event. High impact events – maximum 28 days, number of events not specified, maximum 14 days per event. Updated definitions of low, medium and high impact.
Heritage approvals	Additional events may be permitted under fast track section 60 heritage approval, where it meets the definitions of “community” or “primary” events under the SEPP.	Additional events may be permitted under fast track section 60 heritage approval, where it meets the definitions of “community” or “primary” events under the SEPP.

4 Heritage Impact Assessment

4.1 Basis of assessment

Given the multiple heritage listings, the statutory framework for approvals for the SOH is presently governed by the following legislation:

- Commonwealth: Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act).
- State (Planning): Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) and State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011.
- State (Planning): Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000 (Regulation).
- State (Planning): State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts–Eastern Harbour City) 2021 (SEPP–EHC).
- State (Heritage): Heritage Act 1977.

The assessment for the modification is made against the relevant guidelines, policies and principles of the following documents:

- *Respecting the Vision, Sydney Opera House – a Conservation Management Plan*, by Alan Croker. Fourth Edition, SOHT July 2017 (referred to as CMP4).
- *Sydney Opera House, Utzon Design Principles*, SOHT May 2022 (referred to as UDP).
- State Heritage Values of the Sydney Opera House.
- National Heritage Values of the Sydney Opera House.
- *Matters of National Environmental Significance – Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1*, EPBC Act 1999, Department of the Environment 2013.
- UNESCO World Heritage Listing Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Sydney Opera House.

4.2 Assessment against the Statement of Significance and policies of the *Conservation Management Plan*, 4th Edition

The SOH Management Plan 2005 (MP) was prepared under the EPBC Act for the purposes of a bilateral agreement with the NSW Government. The MP was given legal effect in NSW through EP&A Act Amendment (Sydney Opera House Management Plan) Regulation 2005 (EP&A Act Regulation).

When the bilateral agreement expired, the then Department of Energy & Environment advised SOH that the MP was no longer required and had been superseded by the CMP4. However, the MP was still in effect at a State level through the EPA Regulation. In December 2021, the new EP&A Regulation 2021 commenced, resolving the above inconsistency by requiring consent authorities for SOH-related development applications to consider the CMP4 instead of the MP.

In 2022, an update to the EP&A Act regulations updated the definitions and regulation to refer to the conservation management plan (gazetted) as the SOH Management Plan. Refer to clause 65 Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021 - NSW Legislation - it is still referring to the Sydney Opera House Conservation Plan means the conservation management plan for the Sydney Opera House entitled “Respecting the Vision”, 4th edition, published in July 2017 on the Sydney Opera House Trust’s website.

The CMP4 incorporates considerations of all heritage listings (World, National & State).

This HIS includes an assessment of impact to the values identified CMP4 and relevant policies.

4.2.1 Assessment against Statement of Significance

The following is the Statement of Significance from the CMP4, **emphasis added** on aspects of significance relevant to this assessment.

The Sydney Opera House is a masterpiece of 20th century architecture and a world-renowned performing arts centre. It is universally valued for its unparalleled design, form and response to its setting; and its exceptional engineering achievements and technological innovations. It is an internationally recognised landmark, an architectural icon, a symbol of Sydney and Australia, and holds a unique place in the Australian psyche as a focus for national celebrations and events.

The design of the Sydney Opera House by Danish architect, Jørn Utzon, represents an extraordinary and inspired response to the peninsular setting in Sydney Harbour and the 1956 competition brief. Its spectacular quality as a monumental sculpture in the round, both by day and night, is enhanced by its relationship to the harbour and the city. The approach and arrival sequence, and the majestic quality of the public spaces, contained by powerful structural forms, provide an exceptional experience for users and visitors. Utzon's vision created a truly remarkable place, a structure that elevates and celebrates the human experience of the performing arts, as well as of the place itself. These attributes are true to the original design and continue to be credibly expressed.

The Sydney Opera House is a work of human creative genius; a daring and visionary experiment that has had a seminal and enduring influence on the emergent architecture of the late 20th century. This vision utilised the plastic arts (three-dimensional works or effects from sculpting, modelling and moulding), geometry and technology to create a structure at the leading edge of human endeavour, at the very edge of the possible. Utzon's original design concept, his emphasis on innovation and his unique approach to building gave impetus to a collective creativity of architects, engineers and builders. He inspired others to strive for and achieve excellence, particularly at this site.

The high-quality completion of the work by Sydney architects Hall, Todd & Littlemore, the technical support given by the internationally renowned engineering firm of Ove Arup & Partners, and the inventive contractor M.R. Hornibrook, helped make Utzon's vision a reality. In its construction and fabric, the Sydney Opera House reflects the contemporary philosophy of assembling and creating refined forms from prefabricated components. The Sydney Opera House retains a very high level of authenticity.

At national, state and local levels, the site has significant associations with important past events, activities and uses in the site's evolution, including Aboriginal and European contact. Indigenous cultural values associated with the Sydney Opera House site relate to both tangible remains (for example, potential surviving middens or other physical relics) as well as intangible meanings, associations, stories, memories and histories. The site has been used for cultural exchange and performance since at least the 1790s and is associated with a major meeting area and place for ceremony and corroboree at the adjacent Farm Cove. Bennelong Point is a place of early contact between local Aboriginal people and European settlers and takes its name from Bennelong, a Wangal man whose hut was provided by the Europeans and located on the western side of the point. Other significant historical associations include: defence (Governor Arthur Phillip's 1788 redoubt to convict architect Francis Greenway's Fort Macquarie, 1817–1901); picturesque planning (Governor Lachlan Macquarie to Utzon); and marine and urban transport and trade (overseas shipping and local ferry wharves, tram terminal and depot).

The Sydney Opera House has an almost mythological status as a cultural icon (then and now) arising from all the above, from the high public interest in its protracted and controversial development, and from its power to attract performers, patrons and visitors on a national and international level. As Australia's pre-eminent performing arts centre, it has the ability to encourage and inspire the pursuit of excellence and

innovation in those who use it or are associated with it: all are inspired to achieve an outcome 'worthy of the Sydney Opera House'.

The inscription of the Sydney Opera House on the World Heritage List in 2007 recognises its Outstanding Universal Value.

Comment

The bolded text in the summary statement above highlights most of the key values of the Opera House:

- A masterpiece of 20th century architecture;
- A world-renowned performing arts centre;
- Its design, form and response to its setting;
- An internationally recognised landmark and cultural icon;
- A symbol of Sydney and Australia;
- A focus for national celebrations and events;
- Jørn Utzon's inspired design;
- A monumental sculpture in the round;
- Utzon's intended approach and arrival sequence providing an exceptional experience for uses and visitors;
- Its power to attract performers, patrons and visitors on a national and international level;
- Its ability to encourage and inspire the pursuit of excellence and innovation in all who use it or are associated with it.

While the first two values (a masterpiece of 20th century architecture and a world-renowned performing arts centre) may appear to have potentially conflicting priorities, the use of the Opera House as a centre for the performing arts is fundamental to its conception and design and the two values cannot be separated.

The staging of outdoor performing arts events at the Opera House is generally consistent with Utzon's concepts for the place as a performing arts centre. However, the visual and access impacts caused by large scale event infrastructure, required by events in the Proposal, has the potential to have a negative, although temporary, impact on the appreciation and experience of the building as an architectural masterpiece.

Utzon's approach and arrival sequence is a fundamental part of the experience of the Opera House and should not be denied to any visitor or patron. Therefore, all infrastructure for any event or activity on the Forecourt, Monumental Steps and adjacent areas should retain and respect this, and these elements of the Opera House that are one of the most visible and sensitive parts of the site.

Utzon's design intent for the Opera House was that it be visible from all sides, set on the peninsula within Sydney Harbour. The location, scale and configuration of the Proposal's event infrastructure elements and their length of time on site, must be considered for their potential impact on the setting, views, vistas and experience of the Opera House. It is not only those who attend the Forecourt event that must be considered, but all those who are visiting the site whilst the event infrastructure is being installed and dismantled (bump in and bump out) and used for performances.

Since the first planning consent in 2003 that permitted large-scale events on the Forecourt, the Opera House management, staff, consultants and contractors, with the co-operation of event hirers have developed strategies and guidelines that allow these potential negative impacts of these events to be managed. This has been balanced with often increasing demand for a range of events outdoors, and more complex staging requirements for the type of event under the Proposal over the past two decades.

The SOH management (with Design 5 as heritage consultants) developed the *Sydney Opera House Outdoor Event Heritage Guidelines* (Heritage Guidelines) as part of the conditions of the MOD 4 planning consent and heritage approval in 2016, and SOH management is responsible for its implementation. The Heritage Guidelines were a mitigation to the MOD 4 changes and sought to address the negative impacts and provide tighter guidance on location and design for all events that may be held outdoors and their infrastructure. The 2016 Heritage Guidelines set an agenda and

direction for improvements in setup, staging and managing outdoor events with the ultimate aim of minimising negative impacts, while facilitating the highest standards in performance and presentation. These objectives align with the heritage values emphasised above.

The Heritage Guidelines have been regularly revised and updated, in accordance with the planning consent and heritage approval. The latest version of the Heritage Guidelines is the June 2024 edition and is required to be updated by 21 December 2026 under the s60.

Design and layout improvements of event infrastructure is a work in progress, however, substantial improvements have been made over the last decade that mitigate against many of the negative impacts of outdoor events that arose in the past where hirer demands resulted in patron and visitor experience of the place being compromised.

The Proposal will increase the duration of the large-scale Forecourt style concert event footprint for several events but will retain the present maximum of 99 event days per annum, including bump in and out.

The temporary infrastructure for these events will have some negative impacts to heritage values identified in the CMP4 statement of significance while in situ, including negative impacts to the Opera House as a masterpiece of 20th century architecture, its design, form and response to its setting; as a monumental sculpture in the round; and Utzon's intended approach and arrival sequence providing an exceptional experience for uses and visitors. A risk with the increased duration of two of these events, including from 20 to 25 days could result in the perception that the installation has become longer, less temporary and thus more intrusive.

These negative impacts, while temporary and reversible, need to be managed and mitigated. This is where the continued implementation and refinement of the Heritage Guidelines is crucial in reducing negative impacts so they could be considered acceptable for the duration of the event. It will be important in the future to assess cumulative positive and negative impacts of all temporary outdoor activities and events to the heritage values of the Opera House, so the Proposal can be understood in the broader context of outdoor events activities, and to ensure the Proposal is achieving its objectives.

Detailed discussion of positive and negative impacts on the cultural heritage values and policies in the CMP4 are discussed below.

4.2.2 Levels of Significance

The CMP4 provides a summary schedule of levels of significance for varying elements of the site whilst identifying its overall exceptional level of significance. The definitions of these levels of significance is summarised below.²

Table 7: Definitions of levels of significance

Level of significance	Definition
(A) Exceptional significance	These elements are essential to the significance of the place. They play a crucial role in supporting this significance.
(B) High Significance	These elements are of high significance. They play an important but not necessarily crucial role in supporting the significance of the place.

² Alan Croker, *Respecting the Vision: Sydney Opera House- a Conservation Management Plan, 4th Edition* (Sydney Opera House, 2017), p. 42

(C) Moderate Significance	These elements are of moderate significance and provide support to elements or functions of higher significance. They play a role in supporting the significance of the place, but may be inadequate in their current configuration or use.
(D) Low Significance	These elements are of low significance. They play a minor role in supporting the significance of the place, or may have been compromised by later changes.
(Int) Intrusive	This relates to an item or component that obscures, impedes, diminishes or otherwise damages the significance of an element or its component parts.

The elements that have the potential to be impacted by the proposed amendment are included below with their respective level of significance as defined by the CMP4.

Sydney Opera House generally – Significance ranking A

- *Its form and fabric as an iconic architectural sculpture in the round in its harbour and urban setting.*
- *Its context and setting.*
- *Its function as a world-renowned centre for the performing arts.*
- *Original concept of sequential experiences on approach, arrival, entry and circulation.*
- *Its complete assemblage comprising flat open Forecourt and Broadwalk surrounding a massive, pink granite clad Podium, with Monumental Steps ascending from Forecourt, supporting 3 groupings of soaring curved, ribbed concrete shells, white ceramic tiled roof shells, and their associated structural systems of unpainted folded, cranked and post-tensioned concrete beams and ribs.*
- *Planning hierarchy – front-of-house / back-of-house / support services – which manifests itself externally, internally, horizontally and vertically.*

Exterior

Roof shells – Significance ranking A

- *Three groupings of soaring curved, concrete framed roof shells, clad with white ceramic tiled lid panels, surmounted by fine curved stainless steel lightning rails and infilled by glass walls.*

Podium exterior – Significance ranking A

- *Massive ‘solid headland plateau’ structure supporting white tiled shell groups with minimal external penetrations and clad in precast pink granite slabs of monumental size, including hoods and Western Colonnade protecting deeply shaded openings. Approach and ascent of Podium via uninterrupted sweep of full width Monumental Steps rising from Forecourt.*

Broadwalk – Significance ranking A

- *Flat, open and uncluttered platform paved with precast pink granite paving units, surrounding the massive Podium ‘headland’ of the main structure on the west, north and eastern sides.*

Forecourt – Significance ranking A

- *Broad, open and hard-paved level platform, serving as the principal land approach path to the building and as the immediate setting for the Monumental Steps and Podium.*

Covered (Vehicle) Concourse – Significance ranking A

- *Undercover pedestrian arrival 'foyer' space for those arriving by vehicle and Lower Concourse, or to enter Stage Door. Spatial character dominated by the form of the unpainted concrete folded beams overhead.*

Tarpeian Wall (adjacent to SOH site) – Significance ranking A

- *Quarried weathered sandstone cliff face, with stone steps and iron railing, defining the land entry and southern boundary to the site, and providing the enclosing 'backstage wall' to the open Forecourt space.*

4.2.3 Assessment against Relevant Policies

Policy 1.1 – Protecting Utzon's masterpiece

All work on the Sydney Opera House must be carried out within the framework of the Utzon Design Principles published in 2002 and in accordance with this CMP.

Policy 1.2 – Utzon concepts (relevant concepts quoted below)

The following elements and qualities of the building are essential to Utzon's concept for the place and must be retained in accordance with the Utzon Design Principles and this CMP:

- a. the visually free-standing sculptural form of the building in its setting as a counterpoint to the city, unobstructed by adjacent objects or structures;*
- d. the open and uncluttered relationship between the Forecourt, Monumental Steps, Podium and Broadwalks;*
- e. the visually open relationship between the Podium and its setting, including the Bennelong Restaurant and foyers encircling the auditoria;*
- f. the sequence and intended qualities of approach and arrival spaces and experiences;*
- n. the primary function of the Sydney Opera House as a cultural venue that inspires and presents work of the highest quality in the performing arts.*

Comment:

Policies 1.1 and 1.2 are addressed here together.

Utzon's concepts for the Forecourt, Monumental Steps and Podium relate primarily to the quality, clarity and experience of the approach to and arrival at the Opera House, the building itself, its setting surrounded on three sides by the harbour and on the fourth (south), by the city and that these should not be cluttered in any way. The Covered (Vehicle) Concourse is the primary under cover arrivals area designed by Utzon to achieve the same qualities of arrival via the Monumental Steps.

Referring to its iconic presence in Sydney Harbour:

The character which is most prominent about the Opera House is it's being free in the centre of the Sydney Harbour, free from all sides, visible from all sides. UDP 2002, p63.

Utzon described the experience of sitting on the Monumental Steps and having the city as the backdrop to whatever activity was taking place on the Forecourt:

This outdoor auditorium created by the grand staircase is of course part of the townscape and is also very dependent upon what goes on elsewhere in the city. Because as you sit on these stairs you look towards the city, and you have the city and its buildings as a background to whatever happens on the forecourt. UDP 2002, p67.

Also in relation to these steps, Utzon referred to the possible use of the Podium 'plateau':

This plateau also functions as a gathering place, a town square and outdoor auditorium. UDP 2002, p10.

He also warned against these outdoor spaces being cluttered:

One of the great features of the Opera House is the approach, the openness, the fluidity of people's movements through the house, and once you clutter this you have a problem.
UDP 2002, p49.

Forecourt should not be cluttered with new buildings at any size. UDP 2002, p50.

If you clutter the new spaces around such a significant building then you obscure the building, and can obscure it to an extent that it no longer retains its value in the city or its character... it will lose its importance as an icon or as a landmark for the city. UDP 2002, p49.

In a recorded and translated commentary of Jørn Utzon reviewing videos taken on site by his son Jan, he noted:

Temporary equipment for performances and happenings in the Forecourt are welcome, as long as they are temporary and related to specific events. Virtual Tour, July 2001, p11.

It is noted that Utzon's 2001 comments were based on the scale of temporary event infrastructure and frequency of events at that time. Over the past 25 years, outdoor events at the Opera House have evolved and increased in scale, number and duration, including the events outlined in the Proposal.

These quotations confirm Utzon's cautionary support for the use of the Forecourt as a community and performance space and it was following his reengagement and the publication of the UDP that its use became more structured and progressively formalised.

Utzon's approach and arrival sequence is a fundamental part of the experience of the Opera House and should not be denied to any visitor or patron. Therefore, all infrastructure for any event or activity on the Forecourt should retain and respect this. Retaining and respecting principal views, visual openness and maximising public access are fundamental to this. A plan exists in the Heritage Guidelines with clearly marked view corridors and infrastructure zones that must be retained and respected for the events under the Proposal to minimise impacts on this approach and arrival sequence and respect Utzon's principles.

The location, scale and configuration of all event infrastructure elements must be considered for their potential impact on the setting, views, and vistas of the Opera House. It is not only those who attend the event that must be considered, but all those who are visiting the site whilst the event is being installed, used or dismantled. The quality of their experience will be determined by how well the event infrastructure has been designed and how sensitively it has been sited.

The Proposal would increase the duration of a limited number large scale outdoor events and will not increase the total number of permissible event days per annum. It is noted that over the past decade, the Opera House has not used the total permissible days for Forecourt DA events (see graph in Figure 20), it is likely that in the future the Opera House and NSW Government will seek to utilise more of the permissible days under the Proposal based on SOH management's organisational strategy and NSW Government's vibrancy reforms and priorities.

There would be no permanent or long-term impact on Utzon's concepts by the Proposal however there may be a public perception of higher short-term impact on account of the potential longer event durations. To mitigate the negative impacts to heritage values, the Heritage Guidelines must continue to be implemented and regularly reviewed and updated to guide the quality, design, event free days and configuration of event infrastructure to mitigate against any negative impacts. Cumulative impacts, of the Proposal and in context of other permitted outdoor events and activities, will be useful to understand longer term positive and negative impacts or perceived impacts.

The intent of the Proposal is to allow for a greater diversity of programming through enabling shared infrastructure across an increased event footprint durations, reducing time and cost for setting up and packing up and maximising performance days (including a third weekend within a 25 day footprint). This is assessed as the maximum acceptable duration and number for such large scale events. Shared infrastructure would likely be less financially onerous for the SOH and hirers and would facilitate increased diversity of performances, greater access to Opera House performances for new audiences, and an overall a positive impact to Utzon's concept 'n' in Policy 1.2 above which

recognises that the primary function of the Opera House is a performing arts venue that is inclusive and inspires excellence.

Policy 2.3 – Protect setting

In addition to Policy 2.2, all agencies involved in assessing, planning or overseeing development proposals on or near Bennelong Point and nearby peninsulas and bays must give consideration to the creation, retention and recovery of the following views and vistas to and from the Sydney Opera House:

– Unencumbered exposure to the harbour on three sides, permitting views to the Opera House from all approaches and angles in 3 dimensions, and from neighbouring ridges and headlands, including: the waters of the harbour; Dawes Point; Millers Point; Observatory Hill; Mrs Macquarie's Point; Garden Island; Fort Denison; Bradley's Head; Cremorne Point; Kurraba Point; Kirribilli; Milson's Point; McMahon's Point; city buildings; and the Harbour Bridge

– open relationship with the Bennelong Precinct including the Botanic Gardens and the sandstone face of the Tarpeian Wall;

– vistas, progressively or suddenly enlarging to views, from The Rocks, the northern end of Circular Quay, East Circular Quay, Macquarie Street, the Botanic Gardens and the harbour.

No development should compete with or diminish the prominence and distinctiveness of the form and silhouette of Sydney Opera House to these views and vistas. These objectives should be progressively incorporated into any relevant development strategies.

Comment:

The Heritage Guidelines identifies key view lines and vistas and provides direction on where infrastructure can be positioned to mitigate against any negative impacts or obstructions to these views and the setting of the Opera House as listed in this Policy.

It is recommended that Heritage Guidelines continue to be reviewed and regularly updated to ensure that events continue to respond appropriately, mitigating against any negative impacts on the setting in compliance with this policy.

Policy 3.1 – World, National and State Heritage values

The Outstanding Universal Values of the Sydney Opera House, defined by its World Heritage Listing and the values defined in Section 3.1 of this CMP, as well as those identified and included in its listing on the National Heritage List and State Heritage Register, must be retained, conserved, managed and protected for present and future generations in accordance with the policies in this CMP. This must continue beyond any changes in personnel or legislation

Comment:

This Heritage Impact Statement assesses the potential impacts on the World, National and State Heritage values in compliance with this policy.

Policy 3.2 – Primary use as performing arts centre

The Sydney Opera House must continue its primary use as a nationally significant performing arts centre and its importance as a tourist attraction be recognised. The building, its site and its setting must not accommodate, or be altered to accommodate, uses or events that will vitiate its significance, character or primary use.

Comment:

The use of the Opera House as a centre for the performing arts is fundamental to its conception and design. The risk is that the Forecourt, Monumental Steps, and Podium, are one the most visible and sensitive parts of the site, will be negatively impacted by long term temporary outdoor events while they are in situ. It is essential that with the Proposal, the Heritage Guidelines continue to be implemented, refined and updated as necessary to mitigate against negative impacts to other heritage values of the Sydney Opera House. In addition, 25 days is considered an upper limit to the duration of a large scale event setup to ensure the performing arts values and the other heritage values of the site can be conserved, retained and enjoyed.

The Proposal allows for the extended duration of a limited number of events and thus better utilisation of infrastructure by multiple hirers and available performance days. The reduction in bump-in and bump-out days would also reduce the operational and visual impacts of these often inconvenient and intrusive activities (trucks, cranes, deliveries etc).

The Proposal facilitates more diverse programming and ultimately attract the quality of acts befitting the Opera House, ensuring its ongoing viability as a world class performing arts centre in compliance with this policy.

Policy 3.3 – Responsibility

Responsibility for heritage matters rests with all those involved with Sydney Opera House, from Trustees and senior management to tradesperson, technician, lessee or hirer. All must be guided by this CMP in all deliberations, decisions and actions. This responsibility must be included in job descriptions and evaluations of all positions and incorporated into all inductions, training and manuals.

Comment:

The responsibility for the implementation and compliance of the planning consent and heritage approvals associated with the Proposal rests within a robust governance and SOH management structure including an in-house heritage team, in addition to event operations and building operations teams. Responsibilities for temporary outdoor events is clearly defined within these teams and the Directors responsible. SOH has a pre-qualified panel of suitably qualified and experienced heritage consultants to draw on for additional advice or additional support. SOH management reports three times per year (minimum) to the SOH Trust committee – Conservation Council (established in 1998) for conservation matters and a Design Advisory Panel (established in 2010) who advise on design matters.

The proposed mitigation measures including the ongoing implementation of the Heritage Guidelines, monitoring, cumulative impact assessment of all outdoor activities on heritage values, associated training for SOH staff and contractors, and risk management will support the Proposal's compliance with this policy.

Policy 4.12 – Levels of Significance – general policy (relevant significance levels quoted below)

The following general policy statements have been formulated to guide changes and works at the place and may be supplemented by more detailed policies for each element, and guidance for change on each component in the Tolerance for Change and Opportunities for Change tables in this CMP. The levels of significance refer to Section 3.3, Summary Schedule of Levels of Significance, and are to be considered as part of this policy.

A Exceptional significance:

Alteration of grade A elements is not permitted unless otherwise mentioned in Section 4 of this CMP.

Maintenance, preservation and repair are permitted to ensure their ongoing function and to retain significance.

It is essential that the original design intent of the element is retained and respected.

Comment:

All site elements potentially impacted by the Proposal have been assessed as having Exceptional significance 'A'.

The Proposal does not alter the Grade A elements.

The nature of the impacts of the Proposal are temporary and limited (for a maximum of 11-25 days event footprint for a total of 99 days per annum). They are fully reversible and leave no permanent impacts, thus complying with this policy.

However, the design intent of the Grade A elements is negatively impacted by the Proposal. The impacts result in elements of the design intent of the Grade A elements being somewhat visually obscured and reduced public access during an event footprint. These primarily visual impacts are minimised through the implementation of the Heritage Guidelines, ensuring as much as possible of the design intent of these elements are able to be enjoyed and experienced during the event periods.

Policy 5.2 – Temporary or short-term installations and objects

Temporary installations or objects should only be permitted on the Forecourt, Broadwalks, Podium platforms and steps if they:

- have no impact, either short or long term, on the fabric or significance of the place;*
- have no long-term impact, and minimal short-term impact on public spaces;*
- minimise their impact on views to and from, and across the site;*
- maintain as much public access as possible to and across the site;*
- communicate clearly their function and duration to the public in an appropriate manner;*
- comply with policies in Sections 4.6 Events and uses externally, 4.7.4 Podium, 4.7.5 Monumental Steps and 4.6.8 Exterior furniture.*

Comment:

The required footprint, configuration and design of infrastructure for events that would be enabled by the Proposal has been tested and refined over a number of years. This process of refinement has ensured that infrastructure elements installed on the Forecourt for events leave no physical impact on the fabric, and any impacts on significant view lines, vistas and public walkways are minimised and are temporary.

Specifically, the Proposal's temporary event infrastructure:

- Is unlikely to negatively impact on the significant fabric of the place, and there will be no long term impacts to fabric. Dilapidation surveys are undertaken before and after the event footprint of large scale Forecourt events to record impacts and where additional cleaning or repair may be required.
- has a temporary negative impact on some of the heritage values of the Opera House for the duration that the infrastructure is in place. Cumulative impacts across a year are also a consideration, as the maximum number of days permitted for these type of events is 99 days per annum, and are in context of other permitted events (under separate planning and heritage instruments).. The Proposal includes an increase in duration of two events from 20 to 25 days, extending this impact for an additional five days. A footprint of no more than 25 days for large scale concert style events is considered a maximum acceptable number and duration for temporary event infrastructure to be installed on site, and should be mitigated by

a clear day period of no (or low impact events) only before and after the event footprint. The impacts of the Proposal's events are reduced and/or mitigated through the implementation of the Heritage Guidelines to minimise impacts to view lines, public access, and experience of the site

- follows the Heritage Guidelines, minimising their impact to views to and from, and across the site. Further aesthetic and design enhancements should be scoped and implemented to ensure ongoing improvements to view lines for the Proposal. These developments should be identified in the Heritage Guidelines and reported to Heritage Council of NSW (or its delegate) annually.
- enables public access for as long as possible to the Forecourt and Monumental Steps as much as possible during the event. Access to the Monumental Steps typically closes several hours prior to a performance (typically starting around 7pm) and reopens the next morning.
- Signage communicates to the public onsite that major concert events are being bumped in/out and what performances will occur. Further improvements could be made for standardised informational signage on site for each event, and improvements made to the SOH website Visitor information page relating to disruptions onsite.

With implementation of the above mitigations, the Proposal should achieve compliance with this policy.

Policy 5.3 – Tarpeian Wall

The drama, scale and simplicity of the quarried sandstone face of the Tarpeian Wall plays a crucial role in the Buffer Zone and setting for the site and should remain as an unadorned sandstone face with its surviving evidence and remnants of its history. It defines and contains the exceptionally significant Forecourt space and must not be regarded as a location for temporary signage, advertising, further memorials or other forms of fixed interpretation. It must be managed by the Royal Botanic Gardens & Domain Trust in close association with the Sydney Opera House Trust. Therefore, for the purposes of assessing any proposal involving or affecting it, it should be considered as if it were legally part of the Sydney Opera House site and comply with the Utzon Design Principles and this CMP.

Comment:

Large-scale events, like those in the Proposal, have a negative visual impact on the Tarpeian Wall by obscuring it to varying degrees from public view due to the scale and amount of temporary infrastructure required for these events. It should be noted that the temporary event infrastructure has only visual, and no physical impact on the Tarpeian Wall.

Event Infrastructure Zones, as defined in the Heritage Guidelines, have reduced the visual impacts to the Tarpeian Wall by identifying the position and maximum acceptable heights of infrastructure within the Forecourt and other outdoor spaces. In addition, tests of different colours for scrim on event infrastructure elements have provided a range of tones and colours (neutral mid-greys and black) that sit comfortably with the darkened sandstone face of the wall. For example, Tea House Grey by Dulux has been found to be the optimal colour to minimise the visual impact of staging structure positioned adjacent to the Tarpeian Wall as well as minimising impact on the views the roof shells. Smaller scale infrastructure adjacent to the Wall (e.g. bars, merchandise marquees) uses Black that effectively minimises visual impacts.

Placement of temporary large event infrastructure elements close to the Tarpeian Wall considerably reduces potential visual and functional impacts on the setting of the Podium, Monumental Steps and roof shells, allowing the northern part of the Forecourt adjacent to the base of the Monumental Steps to be relatively free and visually open.

In a similar manner to the Forecourt, impacts to the Tarpeian Wall due to the extended maximum event duration included in the Proposal will be dependant on the scale and design of event

infrastructure. Adherence to the Heritage Guidelines is essential in reducing and mitigating negative impacts.



Figure 37: View to the Opera House with a stage scrimmed in Tea House grey in proximity to the Tarpeian Wall.

(Photographer: Laura Matarese.
Source: Sydney Opera House)



Figure 38: View of the bar in Black against the Tarpeian Wall.

(Photographer: Laura Matarese.
Source: Sydney Opera House)

Policy 6.1 – Events externally

Any outside event must entail the minimal infrastructure necessary to stage and support it, and when it is over, all traces must be removed as quickly as possible, leaving the place and its fabric without damage and as it was before.

Events that may be visually intrusive, or disruptive in terms of public access could be acceptable if they occur only infrequently and for the shortest practical duration.

Any proposal for the frequent or long-term erection of any venue or event infrastructure, facilities or barrier fencing on any external area at the Sydney Opera House (except on the Lower Concourse in accordance with Policies 6.6 and 7.17) would substantially impact on its setting, views and public access, and would be unacceptable.

To minimise visual impacts, external events and associated infrastructure anywhere on the site must be in accordance with the Sydney Opera House – Outdoor Events & Activities – Heritage Guidelines.

In addition, event infrastructure on the Forecourt and Western Broadwalk should be located within the Event and Infrastructure zones identified on Figure 4.79. Event infrastructure anywhere on the highly visible Northern Broadwalk must be located to minimise visual impacts on views to and from the Opera House.

Adherence to and appropriateness of these guidelines must be regularly reviewed and if necessary adjusted to ensure compliance with the Policies in Sections 4.5 and 4.6 of this CMP.

Comment:

The Proposal includes for an adjustment of the maximum duration of a limited number of allowable events from 20 to 25 days, and one 16 day event (instead of 11), and an addition 1,000 people per performance and associated additional infrastructure required for this capacity. It is not proposed that the total event days permitted per annum (99 days) be increased.

These are temporary events that are installed for a limited period - no infrastructure is permanent. All infrastructure is designed to be erected, used, and dismantled without damage or alteration to fabric and within Event Infrastructure Zones as defined by the Heritage Guidelines. Testing and prototyping has informed infrastructure configuration, layout, design and the colours to be used on the Forecourt and other outdoor spaces to mitigate visual impacts, including:

- Coconut Husk (Dulux) has been determined to be the preferred colour for use in proximity to the Podium and Forecourt granite.
- Tea House Grey (Dulux) has been determined to be the preferred colour for use in proximity to the Tarpeian Wall.
- Black (Dulux) and Tea House Grey (Dulux) has been determined to be the preferred colour for smaller scale infrastructure against the Tarpeian Wall (e.g. marquees or containers for bars).

Many elements of the infrastructure required for outdoor events have been refined over the past decade from being considered intrusive to being acceptable within this significant Opera House context and setting.

The Heritage Guidelines states the document 'must be regularly reviewed and if necessary adjusted to ensure compliance with' this and other CMP Policies (Heritage Guidelines, June 2024). This ongoing commitment to refinement of infrastructure for outdoor events and performances, with the aim of excellence in performance presentation and experience, matched by excellence in experience and presentation of the Opera House itself, is essential to upholding, honouring and celebrating the State, National and World Heritage values of this remarkable place.

With implementation of the mitigation initiatives noted above, the Proposal should achieve compliance with this policy.



Figure 39: View to the Opera House with a stage scrimmed in Tea House grey. March 2025 Music concert series.

(Photographer: Laura Matarese.
Source: Sydney Opera House)

Policy 6.2 – Design quality

The design and execution of any installation, infrastructure or object for any event, activity or use, must be of exceptionally high quality and respect the unique setting, character, quality and significance of Sydney Opera House, and not detract from or compete with it.

Comment:

The comments above for Policy 6.1 apply equally here. With implementation of the mitigation initiatives noted Policy 6.1, the Proposal should achieve compliance with this policy.

Policy 6.4 – Food and beverage externally

Crucial factors in determining the acceptability of food and beverage facilities externally will be their:

- design and placement;*
- impact on public access and views;*
- appropriateness in the setting;*
- requirements for associated services and infrastructure including facilities such as furniture, waiter stations, signage, heating, shelter and waste;*
- accommodation of all associated services, storage and food preparation areas, and all enclosed spaces within the physical limitations of the Podium; and*
- reversibility.*

Food and beverage options that are likely to stain, discolour or otherwise damage the precast or solid granite paving are not to be offered on the Forecourt, Broadwalks or Podium.

Comment:

Food and beverage has in the past been one of the challenging event infrastructure elements, due in large part to it necessarily being a collection of infrastructure from a range of different suppliers and contractors with what is available on the market, and the potential staining of outdoor fabric. The trial event setups for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 performances on the Forecourt, have identified a design language and set of solutions that SOH propose could be further refined and applied over time to all food and beverage tents, vans, trucks etc.

Proposed solutions include 'flat-pack' container units that can be folded down when not in use. Other proposed changes include scoping replacing food trucks with higher design quality units or marquees. The intent is they will present as a tidy, well designed and cohesive collection of units and be far less intrusive than they have been in the past. This is necessarily a slow process of implementation as more of the approved pool of food providers come on board and improved design becomes increasingly cost effective. This should be scoped, developed and implemented as part of mitigation measures for the Proposal.

The Opera House has set of guidelines on what food and beverage are not allowed on the site for fabric protection, and this is managed by the Event Operations team. The Building Operations team has developed strategies and temporary protection for the Forecourt and Podium paving and dilapidation surveys are undertaken before event bump in and after event bump out.

With implementation of the mitigation initiatives noted above, the Proposal should achieve compliance with this policy.



Figure 40: View of the food outlets (food trucks) during a concert event. These stay in situ throughout the event. From March 2025 concert series

(Photographer: Laura Matarese.
Source: Sydney Opera House)



Figure 41: Image black 'flat pack' containers that may be able to be used to improve the look and design of food and beverage outlets.

(Photographer: Alan Croker, Design 5)



Figure 42: Image of black marquees for bars that may be able to be used to improve the look and design of food outlets

(Photographer: Laura Matarese.
Source: Sydney Opera House)

Policy 6.5 – Seating and umbrellas for outdoor events

Temporary seating and purpose designed fixed umbrellas suitable for wind conditions on site may be used to support outdoor events. The period in which these temporary facilities are deployed must be counted as event days and should only be used sparingly. All furniture and umbrellas, temporary or permanent, must comply with the guidelines and policies for the affected space / element, Section 4.6.8 Exterior Furniture, and with the Sydney Opera House – Outdoor Events & Activities – Heritage Guidelines.

Comment:

Temporary seating is a large component some of the large scale Forecourt events for particular audiences or genres. The Opera House has a selection of outdoor seating from venue hires that are acceptable for the duration required. Strategies for when and where these can remain in place between performances may need further testing and refinement as part of the mitigation measures of the Proposal with the limited number of extended duration events proposed in this modification, particularly with potentially more frequent performances within this event period.

Umbrellas or shade devices over seating or queuing areas are not generally allowed or used for outdoor events, particularly on the Forecourt and Monumental Steps, in the Heritage Guidelines. Seat cushions for patron comfort that comply with the Opera House colour palette for external furniture would be acceptable but the impacts of additional labour to set out and collect as well on-site storage also need to be considered. The objective should be to simplify and minimise infrastructure, including furniture. Incidental cushions, personal umbrellas or other personal comfort supports brought by patrons are beyond the consideration of this policy and assessment.

With the recent trials, the queuing and security areas for event patrons is now almost fully contained in the Covered Concourse, under the Monumental Steps. It is located adjacent to other Opera House patron and visitor arrival and security areas for the internal venues. This has considerably improved safety and shelter for outdoor event patrons and removed the necessity for visually intrusive marquees and shade devices on the western side of the Forecourt. No seating or umbrellas are used in the Covered Concourse for these event patrons.

The Proposal complies with this policy.



Figure 43: Example of seating located on the Forecourt. Lest We Forget concert, April 2025.

(Photographer: Euan Carlisle.
Source: Sydney Opera House)



Figure 44: Example of seating located on the Podium for accessible patrons. March 2025 concert series.

(Photographer: Euan Carlisle.
Source: Sydney Opera House)

Policy 6.6 – Shelter on Podium and Lower Concourse

No umbrellas or other forms of shelter or tall objects, either temporary or permanent, should be placed on: – any external areas of the Podium platform itself; – the roof of the Colonnade; – any areas of the raised waterside walkway on the Lower Concourse.

Comment:

Refer to comments for Policy 6.5 above.

The only structures or event facilities that require weather protection that are occasionally placed on the Monumental Steps or Podium for events under the Proposal are the sound or lighting control booths. These are now typically placed on the Forecourt for concerts, but occasionally must be located on the Steps or Podium for a parade or broadcast style concert set up.

These structures when placed on the Monumental Steps or Podium are particularly visually intrusive. Considerable effort has been made over time to reduce both the need for these and their size on these locations. The Proposal should continue to ensure objects are not placed on these locations. Options to refine these should be explored and tested, both functionally and visually to find the optimal solution if they are ever required on the Steps or Podium.

With implementation of the mitigations and SOH Event Operations team ongoing efforts to minimise use of sheltered structures on the Podium and Monumental Steps, the Proposal should achieve closer compliance with this policy.



Figure 45: Example of sound control booth located on Forecourt (as indicated by a red arrow)

(Photographer: Euan Carlisle.
Source: Sydney Opera House)



Figure 46: Example of sound booth located on Steps/Podium (as indicated by a red arrow). These are used less frequently in these locations. Forecourt concert, November 2022.

(Photographer: Laura Matarese.
Source: Sydney Opera House)

Policy 6.8 – Exterior furniture and objects

Design, selection and quality of exterior furniture, signage and other objects, including temporary installations and events, on any external area including the Covered (Vehicle) Concourse must:

- *be appropriate of the Sydney Opera House standard of excellence;*
- *not use white or off-white, except for lettering on signage;*
- *avoid high reflectivity and harsh tonal contrasts with the natural palette of external materials;*
- *not use materials or fixings that will stain, degrade or otherwise impact on significant fabric;*

External furniture and objects must be kept to a minimum and none should obscure the base of the roof shells, glass walls, structure of the Western Colonnade, or the base of the Podium.

Comment:

Temporary event infrastructure required for events in the Proposal comprises stage, seating on the Forecourt (for some events), barriers and fencing of various sizes, marquees, food trucks, toilets, water stations, security infrastructure, box office, sound control station, and lighting and sound towers. These infrastructure elements and objects are typically hired from external companies. The Heritage Guidelines identify a set of standards for the design quality of the furniture and objects for these events, and substantial improvements over the past decade have been made to ensure these objects meet SOH's standards of excellence. No white, off-white or reflective colours are used for event infrastructure in the Proposal.

Potential physical impacts to the paving and fabric of the Forecourt are addressed and mitigated in the Heritage Guidelines and current event management practices, including dilapidation surveys and cleaning.

Further design quality and aesthetic improvements can be made for these events as a mitigations for the revised duration and infrastructure footprint of this Proposal, including improvements to food and beverage infrastructure, improvements to fencing types (such as crowd control barriers and high 'Mojo' and other types of fencing), and improvements to signage and 'scrim' design that covers some fencing types.

With implementation of the mitigation initiatives noted above, the Proposal should achieve closer compliance with this policy.

Policy 6.9 – Soft landscaping inappropriate

The whole of the Opera House site is a 'rock-like' man-made landscape and must be free of trees, flowerbeds, and planters.

Comment:

The temporary events do not include soft landscaping. The Proposal complies with this policy.

Policy 7.1 – Crucial elements in sculptural assemblage

It is essential that crucial elements and components in the sculptural assemblage of the Sydney Opera House, including their form, colour and materials and the proportional, spatial and geometric relationships between the parts be retained and remain unchanged. These elements comprise:

- *three groupings of soaring curved, concrete ribbed, white ceramic tiled roof shells;*
- *massive pink granite clad Podium with minimal openings; and*
- *Monumental Steps ascending from the flat open Forecourt and Broadwalk surrounding the Podium to the perimeter of the site.*

Comment:

The Proposal has some negative impacts on reading the crucial assemblage of the roof shells, Podium and Monumental Steps due to the scale and duration (up to 25 days) of the event infrastructure (for a maximum of 99 days per annum, effectively over a quarter of a year), particularly when entering the site from the southern entries.

These negative impacts to the ability to view and experience the elements of the crucial assemblage become potentially more critical the longer the event infrastructure is in place as this can lead to a public perception that the event is becoming semi-permanent. In this respect, two 25 day event including bump in and out, outlined in the Proposal, is the maximum period that is considered acceptable duration for this style of event. The infrastructure that causes negative impacts include:

- Lighting and speaker towers, control booths, particularly when covered, will likely have potentially adverse visual impacts depending on their scale, location and design.
- Barriers and fences. During the event footprint, the Forecourt can visually become divided due to the use of high fencing on the western and eastern sides of the site. When the barriers and other infrastructure such as seating that divide or restrict these areas are removed, reduced or opened outside rehearsal or performance times, the adverse impacts can be partially mitigated. However, when they remain in place, functional and frequently visual access is denied leading to patron and visitor disappointment that may substantially impact a long anticipated visit.
- Large stage and support structures such as projection screens, lighting and speaker arrays, control booths etc that must remain in place between bump in and bump out.

Design, scale and placement of other elements are critical in determining the degree of negative impacts.

Negative heritage (visual) impacts to the crucial assemblage are substantially reduced and mitigated through the implementation of the existing Heritage Guidelines, that includes:

- Configuration and location of Event Infrastructure Zones that reduce negative visual impacts on the sculptural assemblage and iconic profile of the Opera House, when viewed from the

main southern approach, the Overseas Passengers terminal (west) or Mrs Macquarie's Chair (east) enabling the geometric relationships of these elements to remain visually intact.

- Positioning of Event Infrastructure Zones, ensuring the large stage is tucked in near the Tarpeian Wall, enabling a clear view of the roof shells. The Teahouse Grey scrim behind the stage blends with the sky and Tarpeian Wall, enabling the viewer to look past this infrastructure and appreciate the significant view toward the Opera House roof shells.
- Specific colours for scrim, tents, kiosks and hoardings that have been tested in-situ (Black, Teahouse Grey and Coconut Husk), minimising the visual impacts of infrastructure, and ability to 'look past' the infrastructure to still understand the main sculptural assemblage components and as a whole.
- The Monumental Steps being kept clear of intrusive temporary event infrastructure and remaining open for the majority of the day when a performance is held.

This draws attention to the importance of not only adhering to the controls and measures in the current Heritage Guidelines, but wherever possible refining and revising them to further reduce impacts over time.

Additional mitigations to reduce the negative (visual) impacts of the assemblage include:

- Maximising public access and view lines across, between and connecting the Forecourt to adjacent spaces in order to respect Utzon's key concept of maintaining an uncluttered and unobstructed setting and approach to the building. Recent trials of revised infrastructure locations have reduced a number of adverse visual and functional impacts, however there is potential to refine these further through review of fencing types.
- Recently trialled revised infrastructure locations that have reduced adverse visual impacts (moving security and queuing functions from the Forecourt to the Covered Concourse).
- Clear days between high impact events that are essential to reduce the actual and perceived notion that event infrastructure is in place over long periods. A proposed minimum 11 day gap, including two weekends, before or after event footprints over 20 days is recommended.

These mitigations should be addressed in an update to the Heritage Guidelines.

Potential physical impacts to the Podium and Monumental Steps are managed by Building Operations and Event Operations teams, before, during and after the event footprint. Dilapidation reports record any damage and the repairs, usually cleaning, that is undertaken.

Noting that any negative impacts arising from the Proposal will only be temporary, with implementation of the mitigation measures noted above, the Proposal should achieve closer compliance with this policy while the event infrastructure is in place.



Figure 47: View to the Opera House with event infrastructure located to minimise impacts to views towards the roof shell assemblage, Steps, and Podium. March 2025 Music concert series.

(Photographer: Laura Matarese. Source: Sydney Opera House)



Figure 48: View from Overseas Passengers Terminal while an event is being held, showing the full sculptural assemblage (Shells, Podium, Steps) remain legible. March 2025 Music concert series.

(Photographer: Laura Matarese. Source: Sydney Opera House)

Policy 7.14 – Monumental Steps

The Monumental Steps on the Podium must remain open and free of any obstruction for their full width, except for the bronze rails on their east and west edges, especially on the widest (86m) section.

If, for public safety or accessibility reasons, the Monumental Steps are to be modified, and changes must:

- *retain their existing material, profiles and configuration;*
- *not disfigure the unified open character of their broad uninterrupted sweep;*
- *not detract from their simplicity or unity; or*
- *not otherwise diminish their significance, including their role in Utzon's approach and arrival sequence.*

If potentially intrusive changes are unavoidable, they should be confined to the end of each flight, or the narrower flight at the eastern end of the Podium.

Comment:

The Monumental Steps are used in the events as seating and standing locations during performance. Access to the Monumental Steps is closed several hours before the start of a performance (typically starting in the evening) and reopened the following morning (for runners and others who enjoy the

morning use of the Steps and norther Forecourt). Visitors and patrons to the Opera House can continue to enjoy this space as Utzon intended, including climbing the steps and 'looking back' to the city while open and outdoor event patrons can enjoy this element during the performance or event.

During a the performance, the Monumental Steps retain their profile, configuration, and their broad sweep is uninterrupted except for patrons enjoying the outdoor concert.

There is a temporary negative impact to the visitor when they cannot access the Monumental Steps on performance days. This lack of access will increase as the Proposal includes increasing the duration of up to two events from 20 to 25 days. This negative impact can be somewhat mitigated through improved informational signage regarding the closure onsite, and improved information on access and closure days and times on the Opera House website, so visitors can plan their around these closures for a full experience of the Monumental Steps.

During the event footprint, temporary infrastructure may include removable safety tape to improve visual amenity of aisles in the evening performances. The tape is removed at the end of an event footprint with no damage to the stair treads. This is recorded as part of the Building Operation team dilapidation surveys.

The Proposal complies with this policy.

Policy 7.23 – Covered (Vehicle) Concourse

The Covered Concourse space must retain its use as the principal undercover arrivals concourse for pedestrians and, potentially, those arriving by boat. It must remain uncluttered, offer generous pedestrian space, and with its east and west ends visually open. No permanent or long stay structure or installation should be permitted to encumber or diminish the space, or to obscure and part of the folded beams.

Comment:

The Covered Concourse is the principal covered arrivals foyer to performance spaces as well as administration and back-stage areas and facilities within and above the Podium. It is an important element in Utzon's approach and arrival sequence, but is more internal and visually contained than the Forecourt or Broadwalks. For these reasons and since opening in 1973, it has also been a convenient place for parking, site sheds and temporary facilities that would otherwise be even more intrusive if placed on the Forecourt or Broadwalks. Nonetheless these objects and infrastructure have always been considered intrusive within the Covered Concourse.

For many years the accepted approach for large scale concert events was to accommodate event patron queuing, box office, entry and security screening on the western side of the Forecourt. However, this narrowed the available public access for other patrons and visitors and this main approach was visually and functionally cluttered with marquees, barriers and prominent event signage. Alternative event entry configurations were tested including a visually obtrusive location for the security marquee close to the main entrance from East Circular Quay.

In anticipation of the Proposal, and ongoing improvements for event layout and infrastructure, the use of the Covered Concourse for security, box office and queuing was trialled for the MOD4 events over 2024/25 and 2025/26 summer seasons.

Removing the queuing (and associated signage, fencing) and the security function from the western Forecourt to the Covered Concourse has substantially reduced negative visual and functional impacts of the event when entering from East Circular Quay/Macquarie Street, improving visitor and patron experience, increasing pedestrian space and decluttering key view lines to the Opera House. In addition, this Covered Concourse location provides safer, more comfortable and sheltered queuing areas for event patrons during summer and removes the necessity for a marquee for security.

Moving these functions to the Covered Concourse does have some negative impacts to the heritage values of this space for the period they are in place. If the Covered Concourse is be used for the Proposal's events, it could result in temporary event infrastructure in the Covered Concourse for up to

99 days per year, in addition to other uses under other instruments – over a quarter of the year. In addition the infrastructure would occur in the Covered Concourse for up to 25 days at a time. This could result in a substantial period of time per annum for temporary infrastructure to be located in this typically unused arrivals or foyer-like space .

The Covered Concourse is very broad, but some aspects of these temporary installations, installed for other events in previous years, have not sat comfortably with patrons arriving for performances in venues such as the Concert Hall and Joan Sutherland Theatre, due to the design of barriers and screening, sounds and odours (such as the sound of toilet doors slamming behind the fencing, smell of bins in the morning). More efficient and better designed portable toilets have since become available, considerably reducing their negative qualities, allowing them to be placed within the Concourse, screened behind the queueing areas but further refinements are needed.

For this most recent trial setup in 2024/5 and 2025/26 summer seasons, event infrastructure in the Covered Concourse was placed as close as possible to the southern edge of the space, obscuring the dramatic cranked southern ends of the concrete beams.

It is proposed these negative impacts are mitigated as much as possible through the update and implementation of revised Heritage Guidelines.

It is undeniable that the presence of these temporary facilities has a negative impact on the quality and experience of the Covered Concourse while in situ, however, it facilitates a substantially reduced impact on the quality and experience of the Forecourt, views to the crucial assemblage, setting and main southern approach to the site and is therefore considered acceptable and is supported.

This revised setup configuration coupled with the potential impact of an extended duration of a limited number of events in the Proposal is considered acceptable. However cumulative impact assessment over time will further determine this, in context of the full utilisation of the Proposal maximum number of days and other planning and heritage instruments that permit outdoor events and activities. There is potential to further refine this revised configuration and improve design of a number of its elements, particularly screening and acoustics of amenities. These configurations and measures should be included in a revised and updated issue of the Heritage Guidelines along with an agenda for further refinements.

Noting that any negative impacts arising from the Proposal will only be temporary, with implementation of the mitigation measures noted above, the Proposal should achieve closer compliance with this policy while the event infrastructure is in place.



Figure 49: View to the Covered Concourse with event entry from the west. March 2025 Music series.

(Photographer: Laura Matarese.
Source: Sydney Opera House)



Figure 50: View to the Covered Concourse with event entry scrim fencing hiding toilets. . March 2025 Music series.

(Photographer: Laura Matarese.
Source: Sydney Opera House)



Figure 51: View to the Covered Concourse eastern side with event entry fencing, scrim, security layer, and box office. Food trucks are visible. March 2025 Music series.

(Photographer: Laura Matarese.
Source: Sydney Opera House)

Policy 20.7 – Heritage advice

Continuity of relevant and experienced heritage conservation and Conservation Council advice must be provided as part of the process by which temporary or permanent changes to the Sydney Opera House and its setting are developed and executed. The timing of this advice is important. For major projects it should be drawn upon:

- *initially at concept stage;*
- *during development and refinement, or alteration of the proposal;*
- *for a formal statement of heritage impact, or its equivalent, in response to a completed development application; and*
- *to keep a watchful eye on work actually underway.*

Comment:

The Proposal has been carefully developed with the in-house heritage team and external heritage consultants (Design 5) from conception to planning and heritage impact assessment.

SOH has provided updates Conservation Council regarding the Proposal and its potential heritage impacts for over 18 months (last paper on the matter is dated 18 March 2026). A regular standing paper is provided to the Council during their meetings (three times per year) on SOH outdoor events, including those under the Forecourt DA MOD4, for advice, feedback and compliance.

SOH management will continue to ensure the planning and in-house heritage team, heritage consultants, and Conservation Council provide advice on the Proposal and its implementation.

The Proposal compiles with this policy.

Policy 20.7 – Heritage awareness and training

All Sydney Opera House Trust members, management, staff, contractors, lessees, hirers and consultants must have access to a copy of the CMP. A heritage component must be incorporated into the induction and training of senior and medium-level staff and all involved in any repair, maintenance or changes to the building and its setting, and also those involved in events, marketing and presentation. This includes building workers, event workers, marketing and commercial partnerships, and tourism. (Staff turnover will make continuity of training a necessity.).

Comment:

The SOH CMP is made available to all those who work here for free via the internet. Access to the CMP is included in onboarding inductions, in addition to the SAFER program to log heritage risks or incidents. SOH heritage training and awareness raising for all those who work here, including Forecourt events, comprise inductions and 'toolbox' talks for those working in daily activities relating to events and building operations.

It is recommended the operation heritage risk assessments continue to be reviewed, updated and implemented, and the existing heritage training and awareness for those involved in planning and executing outdoor events be review, updated and implemented.

Based on these mitigation, the Proposal complies with this policy.

Policy 20.17 – Heritage Risk Management

Any future revision of the SOH Heritage Risk Management Plan and associated documents must reflect the current CMP

Comment:

The SOH management has three operational heritage risk assessments for Event Operations, Food and Beverage, and Building Operations teams that reflect the policies of the CMP4. These risk assessments are reviewed a minimum of twice per year with the risk owners and SOH Heritage team and Risk Management teams. Potential risks associated with outdoor events and activities, including those in the Proposal, are addressed in these documents. SOH management is responsible for ongoing implementation, review and update of these risk assessments to ensure negative heritage risks and impacts are eliminated, controlled and/or mitigated.

Through ongoing heritage risk management and training, the Proposal complies with this policy.

Policy 20.18 – Statutory approvals

Consideration of any proposed works or development must first be assessed internally by the Sydney Opera House in accordance with the process described in Section 1.5 of this CMP. If external approval is required, it must be carried out within the statutory framework current at the time

Comment:

The SOH management, including planning, heritage and event operations teams have developed the Proposal and undertaken internal assessment. The heritage assessment process has been documented in this HIS, and other elements (capacity review, planning) documented in their respective reports as part of the planning submission.

The Proposal complies with this policy.

4.2.4 Summary assessment against CMP4

The Sydney Opera House is a masterpiece of 20th century architecture and a world-renowned performing arts centre (from CMP4 Statement of Significance). While these two aspects of its significance may appear to be potential sources of conflicting priorities, the use of the Opera House as a centre for the performing arts is fundamental to its conception and design and the two cannot be separated.

The staging of outdoor performing arts events at the Opera House is generally consistent with Utzon's concepts for the place as a performing arts centre. However, the visual and access impacts caused by large scale event infrastructure, required by events in the Proposal, has the potential to have a negative, although temporary, impact on the appreciation and experience of the building as an architectural masterpiece.

The staging of outdoor events on the Forecourt has been happening since the Opera House was opened in 1973 and is general consistent with Utzon's design concept pf the place as a performing arts centre.

While outdoor performances and events are supported, the functional and visual impacts of the infrastructure required for the events in the Proposal can have a though temporary negative impact on the setting of the Opera House and appreciation of it as a masterpiece of 20th century architecture. In 2001-2, Utzon emphasised the importance of maintaining the Forecourt as an open uncluttered space while also expressing support for its temporary use as a community and performance space with minimal 'temporary equipment' related to these events.

Utzon's approach and arrival sequence is a fundamental part of the experience of the Opera House and should not be denied to any visitor or patron, including those visiting the site whilst an event is being installed, used or dismantled. Therefore, all infrastructure for any event or activity on the Forecourt, Monumental Steps and adjacent areas should retain and respect this, and these elements of the Opera House that are one of the most visible and sensitive parts of the site.

The *Sydney Opera House Outdoor Event Heritage Guidelines* addresses these complexities and provide tighter guidance on location and design for event infrastructure.

Variations on the required footprint, configuration and design of infrastructure for events have been tested and refined over a number of years. Many of them previously considered intrusive have evolved to being visually comfortable and acceptable within this significant Opera House context and setting. This refinement process has ensured that temporary event infrastructure elements installed on the Forecourt leave no physical impact on the fabric, and that any impacts on significant view lines, vistas and public access are minimised. This is a work in progress.

The Proposal will increase the permitted maximum duration of two outdoor events on the Forecourt from 20 to 25 days (including bump-in and bump-out) but would not increase the total number of 99 permissible event days per annum. It is important to note there would be no long-term physical or visual impacts on Utzon's concepts, or on the setting and fabric of the place, however there may be a public perception of higher short-term impact on account of the potential longer event duration. It is recommended that a significant gap with no infrastructure or event that has a minimum duration of 11 days and includes at least two weekends be required before or after any major event, particularly over 20 days, to mitigate against this perception.

The intent of the Proposal, particularly the longer duration for a limited number of events, is to enable sharing of infrastructure across an increased timeframe, reducing time and cost for setting up and packing up (bump-in and bump-out), maximising performance days (including weekends) which in turn enables reduced costs for hirers and potential for a greater diversity of programming which may otherwise be cost prohibitive. This would facilitate greater access to Sydney Opera House performances for new audiences, a positive impact which recognises that the primary function of the Opera House is a performing arts venue that is inclusive and inspires excellence.

Recent trials of revised design, configuration and location of event infrastructure have reduced negative visual and functional impacts, however there is potential to refine these further. These

configurations and measures should be included in a revised and updated issue of the Heritage Guidelines. It is recommended that this document continue to be reviewed and regularly updated to ensure that events continue to respond appropriately, mitigating against and potentially reducing negative impacts.

This ongoing commitment to refinement of infrastructure for outdoor events and performances, with the overarching aim of excellence in performance presentation and experience, matched by excellence in experience and presentation of the Opera House itself, is essential to upholding, honouring and celebrating the State, National and World Heritage values of this remarkable place.

The CMP4 has assessed all of the areas potentially affected by large scale Forecourt events as having Exceptional Significance (A). Summarising the potential negative impacts of the Proposal:

- **Setting, views to crucial assemblage.**

Views towards the roof shells, Podium, Monumental Steps and Forecourt, particularly on approach from the south could be partially impacted by events in the Proposal by extending the duration of some events and associated infrastructure with an increased capacity. Updates and ongoing adherence to the Heritage Guidelines should protect these views and minimise adverse impacts for patrons and visitors, whether or not they attend the outdoor event.

- **Public access.**

Maximising public access and view lines across the Forecourt and connecting spaces are crucial considerations in order to respect Utzon's key concept of maintaining an uncluttered and unobstructed setting and approach to the building. Improvements to visitor information on site and online will empower visitors, patrons and tourists to plan their visit and any disruptions due to the Proposal's event footprints.

- **Forecourt.**

The Forecourt is the primary location for event infrastructure of the events in the Proposal. Negative impacts arise from a lack of public access to the Forecourt, and visually intrusive infrastructure blocking views across the Forecourt and other significant building elements. The Proposal includes two footprints of extended duration that potentially become more critical the longer the event infrastructure is in place as this can lead to a public perception that the event is becoming semi-permanent.

The trial event setups for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 performances have identified a design language and set of solutions that SOH propose could be further refined and applied over time, including to all food and beverage tents, vans, trucks etc. These trials, and additional design and layout improvements and clear periods between events, to be addressed by an update to the Heritage Guidelines, will mitigate negative impacts of the Proposal on the Forecourt.

The Proposal has some temporary negative impacts to heritage values of the Opera House as it includes an increased event footprint from 20 to 25 days, increasing the time for the major event infrastructure to be *in situ*, resulting in longer negative visual and experiential impacts.

The two 25 day footprints (including bump-in and bump-out) are assessed as an acceptable upper limit for the duration for a major Forecourt event if the mitigation measures identified in this HIS and the recommendations below are in place and implemented and the heritage values of the Opera House are conserved, respected and enjoyed in accordance with the CMP4.

- **Covered (Vehicle) Concourse**

The Covered Concourse is the principal covered arrivals foyer to performance spaces as well as administration and back-stage areas and facilities within and above the Podium. For many years the accepted approach for large scale concert events was to accommodate event patron queuing, box office, entry and security screening on the western side of the Forecourt. The trial event setups for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 performances explored the use of the Covered Concourse for the Proposal's event security check in, box office and queuing functions.

Removing the queuing (and associated signage, fencing) and the security function to the Covered Concourse substantially reduced negative visual and functional impacts of the event when entering from East Circular Quay, improving visitor and patron experience, increasing pedestrian space on the western Forecourt, and decluttering key view lines to the Opera House. In addition, this Covered Concourse location provides safer, more comfortable and sheltered queuing areas for event patrons and removes the necessity for a marquee for security.

Moving these functions to the Covered Concourse however does have some negative impacts to the heritage values of this space for the period they are in place. While it is undeniable that the presence of these temporary facilities has a negative impact on the quality and experience of the Covered Concourse, it facilitates a substantially reduced impact on the quality and experience of the Forecourt, setting and main southern approach to the site and is therefore considered acceptable and is supported.

This revised setup configuration coupled with the potential impact of an extended duration of a limited number of events described the Proposal is considered acceptable.

Recommendations/ Mitigations

Several mitigations are proposed throughout the HIS and summarised in the Executive Summary as Recommendations. Negative impacts are significantly reduced or mitigated through compliance monitoring, assessment (including cumulative positive and negative impacts to heritage values of outdoor activities) and reporting; updating the Sydney Opera House Heritage Guidelines for Outdoor Events and Activities (June 2024); timing between events and associated clear days; and temporary infrastructure design and revised layout improvements.

These mitigations ensure that the Proposal is acceptable and supported and comply with CMP4 policies.

4.3 Assessment against the Criteria of the State Heritage Values of the Sydney Opera House

4.3.1 State Heritage Statement of Significance

The following is the Statement of Significance of the State Heritage values of the Sydney Opera House. **Emphasis added** on aspects of significance relevant to this assessment.

*The Sydney Opera House is of State significance as a twentieth century architectural masterpiece sited on a prominent peninsular in Sydney Harbour. In association with the Sydney Harbour Bridge it has become an internationally recognised symbol of Sydney and Australia, which is also widely admired by local citizens. Designed for the NSW Government by renowned Danish architect Jørn Utzon between 1957 and 1966, and completed in 1973 by Hall, Todd and Littlemore, **the building has exceptional aesthetic significance because of its quality as a monumental sculpture in the round, both day and night, and because of the appropriateness of its design to its picturesque setting. Its public spaces and promenades have a majestic quality, endowed by powerful structural forms and enhanced by vistas to the harbour and the city.** An icon of modern architecture, the Sydney Opera House uses the precise technology of the machine age to express organic form. It has scientific and technical significance for the ways in which its construction continually pushed engineering and building technologies to the limit. It also has significance for the extensive associations of the site with many famous people and important themes in Australian history. Abutting the site of the first settlement of Europeans in Australia at Sydney Cove, the Sydney Opera House stands on Bennelong Point, Aboriginal land which was named after a Wangal Aboriginal man and which is of significance in the history of the entanglements and interactions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures in Australia. Other historic themes associated with the site include the arrival of the First Fleet in Sydney Cove, scientific investigation, defence, picturesque planning, marine and urban transport and most recently, cultural showcasing. Since its official opening by the Queen (Queen Elizabeth) in 1973, **the Sydney Opera House has been the scene of many notable achievements in the performing arts and has associations with many nationally and internationally renowned artistic performers. The Sydney Opera House provides an outstanding visual, cultural and tourist focal point for Sydney and Australia.***

Comment:

The bolded text in the State Heritage Significance Statement above highlights most of the key values of the Opera House:

- the building has exceptional aesthetic significance because of its quality as a monumental sculpture in the round, both day and night, and because of the appropriateness of its design to its picturesque setting. Its public spaces and promenades have a majestic quality, endowed by powerful structural forms and enhanced by vistas to the harbour and the city.
- The Sydney Opera House provides an outstanding visual, cultural and tourist focal point for Sydney and Australia.
- The Sydney Opera House has been the scene of many notable achievements in the performing arts and has associations with many nationally and internationally renowned artistic performers.

These values – as a building of exceptional aesthetic value and its role as a performing arts centre - may appear to be potentially conflicting priorities however the use of the Opera House as a centre for the performing arts is fundamental to its conception and design and the two cannot be separated. The Proposal has both positive and negative impacts these values identified in the State Heritage Significance of the Opera House.

The Proposal will increase duration of some large scale event footprints to accommodate increase diversity and quality of performances by enabling shared infrastructure between hirers, and reducing

costs by increasing capacity and duration of the performances. This supports the Opera House's role and heritage value as a dynamic and diverse performing arts centre and place of the community.

However, the staging of these events in the Proposal is located on the Forecourt, Monumental Steps, Podium and Covered Concourse – some of the most visible and sensitive parts of the site to gain an understanding the place's cultural significance. The proposed extended duration of two event footprints will result in negative impacts to the aesthetic qualities of the Opera House within a picturesque setting, in areas that are open to the public.

The infrastructure for the events is of a large scale with negative visual and public access impacts to the Forecourt, Monumental Steps, Podium and Covered Concourse for the duration of the event footprint. During the event footprint, the majority of the Forecourt is inaccessible to the public, and the Monumental Steps are closed from several hours before a performance to the following morning (for night-time shows). The Proposal increases the duration of several event footprints (for example from 20 to 25 days) that could result in the perception that the event infrastructure installation has become less temporary and thus more intrusive, with key elements of the building inaccessible for longer periods. Currently, these negative impacts of outdoor events, while temporary and reversible are currently mitigated by the implementation, and ongoing review and update, of the *Sydney Opera House Heritage Guidelines for Outdoor Events and Activations* (current version – June 2024).

This HIS has identified additional mitigation measures to further reduce or mitigate negative impacts including compliance monitoring, assessment (including cumulative impacts of outdoor events) and reporting; updating the Heritage Guidelines; ensuring robust timing between events and associated clear days; improved communication to visitors onsite and online; temporary infrastructure design and revised layout improvements, risk management, and heritage training and awareness raising. These are detailed in the Executive Summary Recommendations.

The continued implementation and refinement of the Heritage Guidelines is crucial in reducing or mitigating negative impacts of the Proposal to the State Heritage significance of the Opera House so they could possibly be considered acceptable but necessary. It will be important in the future to assess cumulative positive and negative impacts of all temporary outdoor activities and events to the heritage values of the Opera House, to ensure the Proposal when implemented can be understood in the broader context of activities, and ensure the Proposal is achieving its objectives.

The Sydney Opera House is listed on the SHR for meeting all its listing criteria (a)-(g). The values of the Sydney Opera House that meet these criteria are set out in full in the NSW Heritage Database, available online at:

<https://www.hms.heritage.nsw.gov.au/App/Item/ViewItem?itemId=5054880>

The extracts from the SHR values, under each of the criteria below, summarise and draw attention to those aspects of significance that are relevant to this assessment.

SHR criterion a) Historical significance

An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history.

Relevant SOH key values from SHR values:

- The Sydney Opera House has historical significance as a modern architectural masterpiece, recognised internationally as a symbol of Sydney and Australia,

Comment:

The Proposal will increase duration of some large scale event footprints to accommodate increased diversity and quality of performances by enabling shared infrastructure between hirers, and reducing costs by increasing capacity and duration of the performances. This supports the Opera House's role and heritage value as a dynamic and diverse performing arts centre and place of the community, potentially enhancing its role as a symbol of Sydney and Australia, in relation to its function.

However, the staging of these events in the Proposal is located in some of the most visible and sensitive parts of the site to understand the place's cultural significance as an architectural masterpiece. The proposed extended duration of event footprints will result in negative impacts to these qualities for the additional time period.

The continued implementation and refinement of the *Heritage Guidelines* is crucial in reducing or mitigating negative impacts of the Proposal to the values of the site as an architectural masterpiece and symbol, in relation to its architectural qualities, as identified in criterion a. Mitigation measures to further reduce or mitigate negative impacts of the Proposal include:

- updating the *Heritage Guidelines*;
- ensuring robust timing between events and associated clear days between longer footprints
- improvements to temporary infrastructure design and revised layout.
- annual compliance monitoring, assessment (including cumulative impacts of outdoor events) and reporting;
- review, update and implement heritage risk management, and training and awareness raising; and
- improving visitor communications onsite and online regarding restrictions to the site during event footprints.

SHR criterion b) Associative significance

An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history.

Relevant SOH key values from SHR values:

- Many famous artistic performers from Australia and overseas have been associated with the Sydney Opera House since its completion, indeed, its success as a performing arts centre has been described as "spectacular" partly because of the building's "ability to attract great artists from all over the world".

Comment:

There are no significant associative values from the SHR listing that are impacted by the Proposal.

The Proposal would facilitate more diverse programming and further encourage exceptional artistic performances from local and international artists, a positive impact.

SHR criterion c) Aesthetic significance

An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW.

Relevant SOH key values from SHR values:

- The Sydney Opera House has exceptional aesthetic significance because of its quality as a monumental sculpture in the round, both day and night, and because of the appropriateness of its design to its setting and the picturesque quality of the setting.

Comment:

The Proposal will increase duration of some large scale event footprints to accommodate increase diversity and quality of performances by enabling shared infrastructure between hirers, and reducing costs by increasing capacity and duration of the performances. This supports the Opera House's role and heritage value as a dynamic and diverse performing arts centre and place of the community, potentially enhancing its role as a symbol of Sydney and Australia, in relation to its function.

The Proposal will have a negative impacts on its values as a monumental sculpture in the round, in the day and night due to the duration and location of the event footprint. The events in the Proposal are located in some of the most visible and sensitive parts of the site primarily the Forecourt as well as the Monumental Steps, Podium, and Covered Concourse. The key impact on this criterion is the visual impacts to those elements when approaching from East Circular Quay/Macquarie Street, and general visitation to the site while the event footprint is in place. The proposed extended duration of event footprints will result in negative impacts to these qualities for the additional time period.

These style of Forecourt performance events can already be undertaken (under MOD 4), and negative impacts to the quality of the experience of the Opera House as a monument in the round have been substantially reduced through the implementation and ongoing refinement of the Heritage Guidelines.

The negative impacts are temporary and reversible, but must be reduced, mitigated and managed.

In advance of the Proposal, revised infrastructure layouts were trialled as a potential mitigation, removing the infrastructure associated with security check in and queuing from the front of the site and western Forecourt to the Covered Concourse. This has resulted in improvements to viewing the Opera House as a monument in the round, both day and night. In addition to this mitigation for the negative impacts to the heritage values identified in this criterion, it is recommended that the Heritage Guidelines are updated and implemented, timing between events and associated clear days between longer footprints is in place and temporary infrastructure design and revised layout improvements are scoped and implemented.

SHR criterion d) Social significance

An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

Relevant SOH key values from SHR values:

- The Sydney Opera House is of social significance as an internationally recognised symbol of Sydney, one of Australia's leading tourist attractions and a focal point for community events. It is also widely admired by Sydneysiders and can be seen to contribute importantly to the sense of place in the Sydney CBD.
- It has also hosted many "everyday" cultural activities as well as providing free public access to its harbour-side Broadwalk.
- Of the 85,000 people estimated to visit each week in 2003, about a quarter came for performance-related reasons while the rest came to experience the building and its environment.
- As a world-class performing arts centre, the Sydney Opera House has enhanced the cultural vitality of the nation. It has also hosted many "everyday" cultural activities as well as providing free public access to its harbour-side Broadwalk.

Comment:

The Proposal seeks to extend the duration of a limited number of event footprints to facilitate more diverse programming by enabling shared footprint for hirers and reducing costs through sharing infrastructure and increasing capacity of events. The Proposal would allow for varied audiences to experience outdoor performances, including community events, on the Forecourt. This would result in a positive impact to the values of the Opera House as a tourist attraction, focal point for community events, and its role as a world class performing arts centre.

However some negative impacts from the Proposal may be experienced by the visitors to the site who were not intending on seeing a performance outdoors, but anticipated seeing the Opera House as a tourist attraction, to experience the building and its environment, with access to all public areas. The Proposal extends the duration of some event footprints. During the event footprint, the majority of the

Forecourt is inaccessible to the public, and the Monumental Steps are closed from several hours before a performance to the following morning (for night-time shows). The Proposal increases the duration of several event footprints (for example from 20 to 25 days) that could result in the perception that the event infrastructure installation has become less temporary and thus more intrusive, with key elements of the building inaccessible for longer periods.

Further refinement of the Heritage Guidelines would mitigate any potential negative heritage impacts to the experience of visitors to the site during periods where the event infrastructure is in place, in addition to a clear day period between events. Mitigations to reduce impacts to these visitors include:

- updating the *Heritage Guidelines*;
- ensuring robust timing between events and associated clear days between longer footprints
- temporary infrastructure design and revised layout improvements.
- annual compliance monitoring, assessment (including cumulative impacts of outdoor events) and reporting;
- review, update and implement heritage risk management, and training and awareness raising.
- improving visitor communications onsite and online regarding restrictions to the site during event footprints.

SHR criterion e) Research potential

An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history.

Relevant SOH key values from SHR values:

- The Sydney Opera House is significant for its research potential as an internationally recognised icon of modern architecture. The development of the roof shell design was a difficult and lengthy process that extended skills and pushed technology to the limit. There is also research potential in investigating Utzon's design motivations and methods.

Comment:

There are no significant research potential values identified from the SHR listing that are impacted by the Proposal.

SHR criterion f) Rarity

An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history.

Relevant SOH key values from SHR values:

- It is an exceptional landscape (and seascape) monument because of its quality as a sculpture in the round, both day and night, and because of the appropriateness of its design to its setting and the picturesque quality of the setting.

Comment:

Refer to the comments made in relation to Criterion C.

SHR criterion g) Representativeness

An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's cultural or natural places; or cultural or natural environments.

Relevant key values from SHR values:

- The Sydney Opera House has significance for being an internationally recognised building representative of major performance arts centres.
- It is outstanding because of its innovative design appropriate both to its entertainment functions and to its harbour-side setting, and because of the esteem in which it is held in Australia and internationally.
- Its success as a performing arts centre has been described as "spectacular" partly because of the building's "ability to attract great artists from all over the world."
- **Comment:**

The comments made on the other Criteria also apply here.

4.3.2 Summary assessment of impact against State Heritage values

The key State Heritage values for the Opera House that are likely to be impacted by the Proposal – as a building of exceptional aesthetic value and its role as a performing arts centre – may appear to be potentially conflicting priorities, however the use of the Opera House as a centre for the performing arts is fundamental to its conception and design and the two cannot be separated. These are identified in criteria a (historical), c (aesthetic), d (social) and f (rarity).

The Proposal has both positive and negative impacts on the values identified in the State Heritage listing of the Opera House. The Proposal has positive impacts to the heritage values as a performing arts and community centre. However, the staging of the events in the Proposal and changes to the event footprint duration to a maximum of 25 days for two events and additional infrastructure required for an increased capacity, will have some temporary negative impacts to the building's aesthetic and visual values, and a visitor's experience of it.

This HIS has identified additional mitigation measures to further reduce or mitigate these negative impacts including compliance monitoring, assessment (including cumulative impacts of outdoor events) and reporting; updating the Heritage Guidelines; timing between events and associated clear days; temporary infrastructure design and revised layout improvements, heritage risk management, and heritage training and awareness raising. These are detailed in the Executive Summary Recommendations.

The continued implementation and refinement of the Heritage Guidelines is crucial in reducing or mitigating negative impacts of the Proposal to the State Heritage significance of the Opera House so they could possibly be considered acceptable but necessary. It will be important in the future to assess cumulative positive and negative impacts of all temporary outdoor activities and events to the heritage values of the Opera House, to ensure these impacts can be understood in the broader context of activities, and the Proposal is achieving its objectives.

In conclusion, while the Proposal has temporary negative impacts on the State heritage values, there are no permanent or long-lasting impacts. Negative impacts will be substantially reduced and managed through mitigations identified throughout the HIS, that have been collated in the Executive Summary Recommendations. On the assumption that these Recommendations are carried out, the Proposal is supported.

4.4 Assessment of impact on National Heritage Values of the Sydney Opera House

4.4.1 National Heritage Summary Statement of Significance

The following is the Summary Statement of Significance of the National Heritage values of the Sydney Opera House. **Emphasis added** on aspects of significance relevant to the assessment of heritage impact of this proposal.

The Sydney Opera House, constructed between 1957 and 1973, is a masterpiece of modern architectural design, engineering and construction technology in Australia. It exhibits the creative genius of its designer, the Danish architect Jørn Utzon and the contributions to its successful completion by the engineering firm Ove Arup and Partners, the building contractors M.R. Hornibrook, and the architects Hall, Todd and Littlemore. It is an exceptional creative and technical achievement in the national history of building design and construction in Australia.

Since its completion the Sydney Opera House has attracted world wide acclaim for its distinctive design, enhanced by its prominent location on Bennelong Point within a superb harbour setting. With its soaring white roof shells set above a massive podium, the Sydney Opera House is a monumental urban sculpture, internationally acclaimed as an architectural icon of the twentieth century. Its many national and international awards reflect its pivotal place in the national story of creative and technical achievement in Australia. The challenges involved in executing Utzon's design inspired innovative technical and creative solutions that were groundbreaking in the history of architectural design and building construction in Australia, particularly the roof shells that were based on the geometry of the sphere and demonstrated the extraordinary creative potential of the assembly of prefabricated, repeated components.

The interior spaces also reflect the creative genius of Utzon and his successors, Todd, Hall and Littlemore, who completed the building after Utzon's departure from the project in 1966.

The Sydney Opera House is the most widely recognised building in Australia, and is cherished as a national icon and world-class performing arts centre. It represents an enduring symbol of modern Sydney and Australia, both nationally and internationally, reflecting changing social attitudes towards Australian cultural life in the decades after World War II. The Sydney Opera House has played a seminal role in the development of Australia's performing arts, enhancing the cultural vitality of the nation. It continually attracts nationally and internationally acclaimed performers, and is a mecca for visitors from around Australia and overseas.

The peninsula on which the Sydney Opera House now stands has a special association with Bennelong, an Aboriginal man who became a prominent and influential figure in the early colony and played a significant role in mediating interactions between Aboriginal people and early settlers.

Comment:

The bolded text in the National Heritage Summary Statement of Significance highlights the key nationally significant heritage values in relation to the Proposal:

- Sydney Opera House has attracted world wide acclaim for its distinctive design, enhanced by its prominent location on Bennelong Point within a superb harbour setting. With its soaring white roof shells set above a massive podium, the Sydney Opera House is a monumental urban sculpture, internationally acclaimed as an architectural icon of the twentieth century.
- The Sydney Opera House is the most widely recognised building in Australia, and is cherished as a national icon and world-class performing arts centre. It represents an enduring symbol of modern Sydney and Australia, both nationally and internationally...The Sydney Opera House has played a seminal role in the development of Australia's performing arts,

enhancing the cultural vitality of the nation. It continually attracts nationally and internationally acclaimed performers, and is a mecca for visitors from around Australia and overseas.

These values – as a architectural icon of world wide acclaim for its distinctive design in its waterscape setting; its role as a world class performing arts centre and national icon, and its role as a tourist destination - may appear to be potentially conflicting priorities however the use of the Opera House as a centre for the performing arts is fundamental to its conception and design and the two cannot be separated.

The Proposal has both positive and negative impacts on these National heritage values.

The Proposal will increase duration of some large scale event footprints to accommodate increased diversity and quality of performances by enabling shared infrastructure between hirers, and reducing costs by increasing capacity and duration of the performances. This supports the Opera House's National heritage significance as a 'world class performing arts centre' ensuring it continues to have a 'seminal role' in Australia's performing arts scene, and will ensure that it 'continually attracts nationally and internationally acclaimed performers' from around the world to perform in the Forecourt, showcasing their diversity and excellence to a wider audience.

However the staging of these events, and the Proposal's increased duration of the event footprint and potential increase in infrastructure for additional capacity, will have some negative impacts on the place's National heritage significance in relation to the ability to view its 'distinctive design' and as a 'monumental urban sculpture' by the 'visitors from around Australia and overseas' who come to see the building in its setting without visual interruption or clutter.

While temporary and reversible, these negative impacts to the National heritage values of the Proposal are due to the infrastructure for large scale events and consequent impacts to visual and public access to the Forecourt, Monumental Steps, Podium and Covered Concourse for the duration of the event footprint. During the event footprint, the majority of the Forecourt is inaccessible to the public, and the Monumental Steps are closed from several hours before a performance to the following morning (for night-time shows). The Proposal increases the duration of two event footprints from 20 to 25 days that could result in the perception that the event infrastructure installation has become less temporary and thus more intrusive, with key elements of the building inaccessible for longer periods.

Currently, negative impacts for these large scale outdoor events are mitigated by the implementation, and ongoing review and update, of the *Sydney Opera House Heritage Guidelines for Outdoor Events and Activations* (current version – June 2024).

The continued implementation and refinement of the Heritage Guidelines is crucial in reducing or mitigating negative impacts of the Proposal to the National Heritage significance of the Opera House so they could possibly be considered acceptable but necessary. It will be important in the future to assess cumulative positive and negative impacts of all temporary outdoor activities and events to the heritage values of the Opera House, to ensure the Proposal when implemented can be understood in the broader context of activities, and ensure the Proposal is achieving its objectives.

This HIS has identified additional mitigation measures to further reduce or mitigate these negative impacts including compliance monitoring, assessment (including cumulative impacts of outdoor events) and reporting; updating the Heritage Guidelines; timing between events and associated clear days; temporary infrastructure design and revised layout improvements, heritage risk management, and heritage training and awareness raising. These are detailed in the Executive Summary Recommendations.

See below for more detailed listed values of the place under each of the National Heritage criterion below. A summary assessment of the impact to the National Heritage significance and criterion is included at the end of this section.

4.4.2 National Heritage Criteria

The values of the Sydney Opera House that meet the National Heritage criteria are set out in full in Appendix B of the CMP4 and also in the listing on the National Heritage List, available <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/parks-heritage/heritage/places/national/sydney-opera-house>.

The extracts from the National Heritage values, under each of the criteria below, summarise and draw attention to the aspects of significance that are relevant to the assessment of heritage impact of the proposal. The assessment of heritage impact on these values is summarised at the end of this section.

NHL Criterion A Events, Processes

(A) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history.

Relevant SOH key values from National Heritage values:

- *"The Sydney Opera House is significant in the course of Australia's cultural history, both for its place in the national history of building design and construction, as well as the history of the performing arts in Australia."*
- *"Sydney Opera House has played a seminal role in Australia's performing arts history, enhancing the cultural vitality of the nation and continuously attracting nationally and internationally recognised performers from around the world."*

Comment:

The Proposal has positive and negative impacts to this National heritage value.

The Proposal includes an extension to the duration of a limited number of Forecourt events (while not increasing the total number of permissible days) and potential increase in infrastructure due to an additional capacity of 1,000 people. These changes will not negatively impact the significance of the *history* of the Opera House's design and construction, but will have some negative impacts to viewing and understanding the Opera House's design and construction while the event infrastructure is in situ. These impacts are temporary and reversible and further refinement of the Heritage Guidelines would ensure that these values are respected and mitigate against negative impacts.

The negative impacts are temporary (only during the event footprint) and reversible with no permanent or long lasting impact. The negative impacts arising from the Proposal will be substantially reduced through mitigation measures to further reduce or mitigate these negative impacts including compliance monitoring, assessment (including cumulative impacts of outdoor events) and reporting; updating the Heritage Guidelines; timing between events and associated clear days; temporary infrastructure design and revised layout improvements, heritage risk management, and heritage training and awareness raising. These are detailed in the Executive Summary Recommendations.

The Proposal has a positive impact on the performing arts values of the Opera House by enhancing the seminal role this place has played and continues to play in the development of Australia's performing arts and enhancing its cultural vitality and international reputation. The objectives of the Proposal would enhance the reputation of the Opera House as an exceptional place to visit, perform, or attend a performance, both inside and outdoors.

NHL Criterion B Rarity

(B) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history.

Relevant SOH key values from National Heritage values:

- *"... the Sydney Opera House is the most widely recognised building in Australia, and one of the most definitive national architectural icons of the twentieth century. It is also a rare example of a national cultural centre that has gained widespread recognition and respect as a performing arts venue."*

Comment:

Refer to comments for Criterion A above.

NHL Criterion E Aesthetic characteristics

(E) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group.

Relevant SOH key values from National Heritage values:

- *"The design, form, scale and location of the Opera House make it one of the most significant landmarks in Australia."*
- *"The building's ability to emotionally move people and invoke a strong aesthetic response is enhanced by the experience of approaching, entering and moving around the building and surrounds. The public promenades including the Forecourt, Broadwalk, and podium platform and steps contribute to the majestic qualities of the place. The large forecourt and sweeping podium steps prepare the visitor for the majestic quality of the soaring internal spaces including the folded concrete beams throughout the building, and the reinforced radial cranked beams in the northern foyers."*

Comment:

The Opera House is a significant masterpiece of 20th century architecture in its own right as well as a renowned performing arts venue, adding to its status as 'one of the most significant landmarks in Australia'. Its 'ability to emotionally move people and invoke a strong aesthetic response' is in large part dependent on maintaining the openness, clarity and design integrity of Utzon's carefully designed sequence of spaces that comprise his approach and arrival to the building. The Forecourt, Broadwalk, Podium, Monumental Steps and Covered Concourse as major components of this approach sequence, are also the most adversely impacted by large scale events on the Forecourt that are the focus of this Proposal.

For many Australian and international visitors, it is possibly their most anticipated destination on a trip to Sydney. Their visit, whether or not, an outdoor event is set up, should be an enjoyable and memorable, one that is not impacted by poorly located or ill-considered event infrastructure, particularly if it is in place for an extended period of time. If the proposed events are staged and managed in accordance with the Heritage Guidelines there should be no permanent or lasting impacts on the fabric or setting of the place and limited impact on views and public appreciation of the place. During an event period, the majority of the Forecourt is inaccessible to the public, and the Monumental Steps are closed from several hours before a performance to the following morning (for night-time shows).

The Proposal increases the duration of event footprints (from 20 to 25 days), and increases capacity potential resulting in more infrastructure within the event footprint. These changes could result in the perception that the event infrastructure installation has become less temporary and thus more intrusive, with key elements of the building inaccessible for longer periods, negatively impacting this National heritage value. These impacts are also temporary and reversible, but still persist for the duration of the event.

As noted above, negative impacts for these large scale outdoor events are currently mitigated by the implementation, and ongoing review and update, of the *Sydney Opera House Heritage Guidelines for Outdoor Events and Activations* (current version – June 2024).

Implementation of already proven and potential further refinements in configuration and design of event infrastructure would further mitigate against negative impacts on the immediate setting and patron and visitor experience of the Opera House with the proposed extended duration of these Forecourt events footprints.

This HIS has identified additional mitigation measures to further reduce or mitigate these negative impacts including compliance monitoring, assessment (including cumulative impacts of outdoor events) and reporting; updating the Heritage Guidelines; timing between events and associated clear

days; temporary infrastructure design and revised layout improvements, heritage risk management, and heritage training and awareness raising. These are detailed in the Executive Summary Recommendations.

NHL Criterion F Creative or technical achievement

(F) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

Relevant SOH key values from National Heritage values:

- *"The design of the building reflects Utzon's intention to create a sculptural form that would be both a focal point in Sydney Harbour and a reflection of its character."*

Comment:

Refer to comments for Criterion E above.

NHL Criterion G Social value

(G) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

Relevant SOH key values from National Heritage values:

- *"The Sydney Opera House is an enduring symbol of modern Sydney and Australia, both nationally and internationally. Indeed, the profile of the distinctive ceramic clad roof shells has become an instantly-recognisable national emblem."*
- *"The building's role as a cultural icon is also derived from the numerous performances conducted there (100,000 since 1973), and the place's role as a focal point for community events. The Sydney Opera House is a mecca for both Australian and international visitors to Sydney, attracting over 100 million visitors since the opening in 1973."*

Comment

The Proposal has positive and negative impacts to this National heritage value.

The Proposal would extend the duration of a limited number of Forecourt events to 25 days, including bump-in and bump-out, but not increase the total number of 99 permissible days for such events. This could lead to a public perception of the event infrastructure being in place on the Forecourt on a semi-permanent basis, and it is in this respect that any negative impacts are mitigated as much as possible so that the social values identified above are not compromised or diminished.

Adherence to the Heritage Guidelines would control and mitigate potentially negative impacts from event infrastructure that would obscure or interrupt key views towards the Opera House or detract from its design and setting. Implementation of already proven and potential further refinements in configuration and design of event infrastructure would further mitigate against negative impacts on the immediate setting and patron and visitor experience of the Sydney Opera House, internally, outdoors generally and most importantly on and around the Forecourt.

This HIS has identified additional mitigation measures to further reduce or mitigate these negative impacts including compliance monitoring, assessment (including cumulative impacts of outdoor events) and reporting; updating the Heritage Guidelines; timing between events and associated clear days; temporary infrastructure design and revised layout improvements, heritage risk management, and heritage training and awareness raising. These are detailed in the Executive Summary Recommendations.

It is our assessment that the Proposal, with implementation of the measures described above will positively strengthen the Opera House's 'role as a focal point for community events' and 'a mecca for both Australian and international visitors to Sydney'.

NHL Criterion H Significant people

(H) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Australia's natural or cultural history.

Relevant key values from National Heritage values:

- "The Sydney Opera House is directly associated with Jørn Utzon"
- "The peninsula on which the Sydney Opera House now stands has a special association with Bennelong, an Aboriginal man 'captured' by Governor Arthur Phillip in 1789."

Comment

The Proposal would not have any negative impact on the associations with Bennelong. However depending on the scale and location of event infrastructure, it could impact on the associations with Utzon, obscuring an appreciation of his remarkable design and its response to its setting. This HIS has identified measures to reduce or mitigate these negative impacts including compliance monitoring, assessment (including cumulative impacts of outdoor events) and reporting; updating the Heritage Guidelines; timing between events and associated clear days; temporary infrastructure design and revised layout improvements, heritage risk management, and heritage training and awareness raising. These are detailed in the Executive Summary Recommendations.

4.4.3 Summary assessment of impact on National Heritage values

. The National Heritage values of the Sydney Opera House are primarily related to Jørn Utzon's distinctive design of a monumental urban sculpture and architectural icon, making it one of the most significant landmarks in Australia, a focus for community events, and a destination for national and international visitors and performers. The majestic qualities of its spaces, both externally and internally invoke an emotional response that elevates the experience of the place for all who come here to experience it first hand. These values include it being a cherished performing arts centre of national and international standing.

This ability to emotionally move people and invoke a strong aesthetic response is in large part dependent on maintaining the openness, clarity and design integrity of Utzon's carefully designed sequence of spaces that comprise his approach and arrival to the building and the performances it hosts. The Forecourt, Broadwalk, Podium, Monumental Steps and Covered Concourse as major components of this approach sequence, are also the negatively impacted by large scale events on the Forecourt that are the focus of this Proposal.

The Proposal has both positive and negative impacts on the values identified in the National Heritage listing of the Opera House.

Positive impacts relate to the National values of the Opera House as a world class performing arts centre', and its' seminal role' in Australia performing arts. The Proposal will enhance these values by increasing the diversity and access of programming for large-scale outdoor events. It will enable the Opera House to continually attract nationally and internationally acclaimed performers, by increasing the capacity of events and event footprint duration.

The Proposal has positive and negative impacts as 'a mecca for visitors from around Australia and overseas'. Visitors may be attracted to see one of the outdoor performances facilitated by the Proposal and its objectives. On the other hand, some visitors may have intended to experience the Opera House as originally intended and the events in the Proposal may negatively impact this experience. For visitors to the Opera House, whether or not an outdoor event is set up, should be an enjoyable and memorable, one that is not impacted by poorly considered or located event infrastructure that clutters or obscures primary views and access, particularly if it is in place for an extended period of time. These matters are substantially mitigated by the Heritage Guidelines, and proposed mitigations identified throughout the HIS.

This Proposal increases the duration of several event footprints (for example from 20 to 25 days) that could result in the perception that the event infrastructure installation has become less temporary and thus more intrusive, with key elements of the building screened from view or inaccessible for longer periods, negatively impacting these Nationally significant aesthetic characteristics. These impacts are temporary and reversible, but they persist for the duration of the event. Negative impacts for these large scale outdoor events are currently mitigated by the implementation of the *Sydney Opera House Heritage Guidelines for Outdoor Events and Activations* (current version – June 2024).

The continued implementation and refinement of the Heritage Guidelines is crucial in reducing or mitigating negative impacts of the Proposal to the National Heritage values of the Opera House so they could possibly be considered acceptable but necessary. It will be important in the future to assess cumulative positive and negative impacts of all temporary outdoor activities and events to these heritage values of the Opera House, to ensure these impacts can be understood in the broader context of activities, and the Proposal is achieving its objectives.

In conclusion, while the Proposal has temporary negative impacts on the National heritage values, there are no permanent or long-lasting impacts. Negative impacts will be substantially reduced and managed through mitigations identified throughout the HIS, that have been collated in the Executive Summary Recommendations. On the assumption that these Recommendation are carried out, the Proposal is supported, and National heritage values are assessed as not being significantly impacted.

4.5 Assessment of impact on World Heritage Values of the Sydney Opera House

In 2007, the Sydney Opera House was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List (WHL) for its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) as a 'masterpiece of human creative genius' under criterion (i) of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*.

The Sydney Opera House was inscribed on the WHL for the following values (**emphasis added** on aspects of significance relevant to the heritage impact of the proposal):

Outstanding Universal Values

*The Sydney Opera House constitutes a masterpiece of 20th century architecture. Its significance is based on its unparalleled design and construction; its exceptional engineering achievements and technological innovation and **its position as a world-famous icon of architecture**. It is a daring and visionary experiment that has had an enduring influence on the emergent architecture of the late 20th century. Utzon's original design concept and his unique approach to building gave impetus to a collective creativity of architects, engineers and builders. Ove Arup's engineering achievements helped make Utzon's vision a reality. **The design represents an extraordinary interpretation and response to the setting in Sydney Harbour**. The Sydney Opera House is also of outstanding universal value for its achievements in structural engineering and building technology. **The building is a great artistic monument and an icon, accessible to society at large.***

Criterion (i)

The Sydney Opera House is a great architectural work of the 20th century. It represents multiple strands of creativity, both in architectural form and structural design, a great urban sculpture carefully set in a remarkable waterscape and a world famous iconic building.

All elements necessary to express the values of the Sydney Opera House are included within the boundaries of the nominated area and buffer zone. This ensures the complete representation of its significance as an architectural object of great beauty in its waterscape setting. The Sydney Opera House continues to perform its function as a world-class performing arts centre. The Conservation Plan specifies the need to balance the roles of the building as an architectural monument and as a state of the art performing centre, thus retaining its authenticity of use and function. Attention given to retaining the building's authenticity culminated with the Conservation Plan and the Utzon Design Principles.

The Sydney Opera House was included in the National Heritage List in 2005 under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and on the State Heritage Register of New South Wales in 2003 under the Heritage Act 1977. Listing in the National Heritage List implies that any proposed action to be taken inside or outside the boundaries of a National Heritage place or a World Heritage property that may have a significant impact on the heritage values is prohibited without the approval of the Minister for the Environment and Heritage. A buffer zone has been established.

The present state of conservation is very good. The property is maintained and preserved through regular and rigorous repair and conservation programmes. The management system of the Sydney Opera House takes into account a wide range of measures provided under planning and heritage legislation and policies of both the Australian Government and the New South Wales Government. The Management Plan for the Sydney Opera House, the Conservation Plan and the Utzon Design Principles together provide the policy framework for the conservation and management of the Sydney Opera House.

Comment:

The Sydney Opera House is inscribed on the World Heritage List for its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) as one of the greatest architectural masterpieces of the 20th century, an object of great sculptural beauty in a remarkable harbour setting. It is also a world renowned performing arts centre.

These characteristics and qualities make it an important destination for visitors and performers, both nationally and internationally who want to see and experience it for themselves. Outdoor performing arts and community events support and celebrate the OUV of the Sydney Opera House and promote creativity and excellence in the performing arts.

The Forecourt has been the focus of some of the most important performing arts and community events in Sydney and Australia's recent history and should continue. These occasions attract national and international performers and also audiences that may not normally attend internal performances at the Opera House, thus broadening access and appreciation of the place among a wider audience.

The Proposal comprises large scale events on the Forecourt. Depending on the scale and placement, this infrastructure has the potential to have a substantial impact on the OUV of the Opera House, and impact the experience and enjoyment of visitors and patrons to the place. Specifically the Proposal has the potential to impact on the ability of the place to be appreciated as a world famous icon of architecture and its architectural form as a great urban sculpture in an extraordinary setting. Design and placement of infrastructure can substantially impact key approach views towards the Opera House, and be visible in longer views from within its Buffer Zone and potentially detract from the OUV.

In order to mitigate potentially negative impacts to the OUV from Proposal, a number of mitigations are proposed, including updating and ongoing adherence to the *Sydney Opera House Heritage Guidelines for Outdoor Events and Activities*. The Heritage Guidelines comprise a series of principles pertaining to the use of outdoor spaces at the Opera House.

Adherence to the Heritage Guidelines over the past decade has demonstrated the negative impacts large scale Forecourt events can be managed and mitigated. The continued implementation and refinement of the Heritage Guidelines is crucial in reducing or mitigating negative impacts of the Proposal to the State Heritage significance of the Opera House so they could possibly be considered acceptable but necessary. It will be important in the future to assess cumulative positive and negative impacts of all temporary outdoor activities and events to the heritage values of the Opera House, to ensure these impacts can be understood in the broader context of activities, and the Proposal is achieving its objectives.

This HIS has identified additional measures to further reduce or mitigate negative impacts to the OUV including compliance monitoring, assessment (including cumulative impacts of outdoor events) and reporting; updating the Heritage Guidelines; timing between events and associated clear days; temporary infrastructure design and revised layout improvements, heritage risk management, and heritage training and awareness raising. These are detailed in the Executive Summary Recommendations.

In conclusion, while the Proposal has temporary negative impacts on elements of the Sydney Opera House's OUV. There are no permanent or long-lasting impacts. Negative impacts will be substantially reduced and managed through mitigations identified throughout the HIS, that have been collated in the Executive Summary Recommendations.

On the assumption that these Recommendation are carried out, the Proposal is supported.

Attachment 1 – Sydney Opera House Heritage Guidelines for Outdoor Events and Activities, June 2024.

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE – OUTDOOR EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

HERITAGE GUIDELINES & KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Purpose of Heritage Guidelines

For many visitors to the Sydney Opera House, their experience is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that should be enhanced and not hindered. The purpose of this document is to guide the scale, design and placement of event infrastructure on external areas, and to define and outline the spread of event free days throughout the year, so that this experience and significant values of Sydney Opera House are maintained and respected. Zones for event infrastructure are identified and defined by primary views and vistas to and from the Opera House that should remain unobstructed. These guidelines apply to any outdoor event or activity on the Sydney Opera House site (except maintenance / works), including community events. These guidelines must be considered as a complete set and are to be applied in an integrated manner. They are based on ***Respecting The Vision, Sydney Opera House – a Conservation Management Plan***, 4th edition, July 2017 (CMP).

Compliance with Heritage Guidelines

Every event and set-up has different requirements and from time to time events or infrastructure, including security, may be required outside of the limits of these guidelines. In limited instances, based on a solid rationale, agreement may be reached with either the Opera House's heritage consultant, the Design Advisory Panel or the Conservation Council to permit the event or infrastructure. Consideration must be given to reducing the impacts, particularly visual, on primary views and public access.

Note that temporary security-related infrastructure is permissible across the site, inside and outside Event Infrastructure Zones, under clause 12 of the Opera House's Site Specific Exemptions under the Heritage Act 1977.

Nothing in this document detracts from any obligation to comply with all applicable regulatory requirements.

To ensure objectives are being achieved, these guidelines are to be reviewed and updated in accordance with the review periods of the Forecourt Events DA and Section 60 heritage approval.

Heritage Guidelines structure

The guidelines are set out in the following order:

- 1.0 Relevant CMP Policies
- 2.0 Outdoor performing arts & community events – generally
- 3.0 Outdoor performing arts & community events – whole of site – high impact on setting and heritage values
- 4.0 Outdoor performing arts & community events – not whole of site – high impact on setting and heritage values
- 5.0 Outdoor performing arts & community events – medium impact on setting and heritage values
- 6.0 Events / activation – low impact on setting and heritage values
- Figure 1 Plan showing Primary Views & Event Zones
- 7.0 Primary views towards Sydney Opera House on approach and from setting – images and descriptions

1.0 RELEVANT CMP POLICIES	
1.1 CMP 4th Edition (July 2017) Policy purpose & framework Policy 1.0 – Policy context and interdependence <i>Policies must only be considered with reference to the supporting discussion as it will make their context and meaning clear. They must not be considered in isolation from other policies related to them and are to applied in an integrated manner.</i> Policy 1.0 above sets the framework for reading and understanding all policies in the CMP. 1.2 Relevant CMP 4th Edition policies are as follows: Section 4.1 The Primacy of Jørn Utzon’s Vision - Policy 1.1 – <i>Protecting Utzon’s masterpiece</i> - Policy 1.2 – <i>Utzon concepts</i> Section 4.2 Importance of setting - Policy 2.1 – <i>Landmark qualities</i> - Policy 2.3 – <i>Protect setting</i> Section 4.3 Protecting the values - Policy 3.1 – <i>World, National and State Heritage values</i> - Policy 3.2 – <i>Primary use as performing arts centre</i> - Policy 3.3 – <i>Responsibility</i> Section 4.4 Utzon, Hall & the approach to change - Policy 4.1 – <i>Research to inform decisions</i> - Policy 4.11 – <i>Significance, tolerance and opportunities for change</i> - Policy 4.12 – <i>Levels of Significance – general policy</i> Section 4.5 Open & uncluttered setting - Policy 5.1 – <i>Permanent or semi-permanent structures or objects</i> - Policy 5.2 – <i>Temporary or short-term installations and objects</i> - Policy 5.3 – <i>Tarpeian Wall</i>	Section 4.6 Events & uses externally - Policy 6.1 – <i>Events externally</i> - Policy 6.2 – <i>Design quality</i> - Policy 6.3 – <i>Commercial leases and other uses</i> - Policy 6.4 – <i>Food and beverage externally</i> - Policy 6.5 – <i>Seating and umbrellas for outdoor events</i> - Policy 6.6 – <i>Shelter on Podium and Lower Concourse</i> - Policy 6.7 – <i>Western Colonnade open and unobstructed</i> - Policy 6.8 – <i>Exterior furniture and objects</i> - Policy 6.9 – <i>Soft landscaping inappropriate</i> Section 4.7 Conserving the exterior - Policy 7.17 – <i>Fitouts in Lower Concourse</i> - Policy 7.23 – <i>Covered (Vehicle) Concourse</i> Section 4.14 Lighting - Policy 14.1 – <i>Lighting and visitor experience</i> - Policy 14.3 – <i>Temporary lighting projections</i> Section 4.15 Signage - Policy 15.1 – <i>Signage</i> - Policy 15.3 – <i>Promotion and merchandising</i> Section 4.16 Interpretation - Policy 16.1 – <i>Interpretation</i> - Policy 16.4 – <i>Interpretation impacts on use</i> Section 4.18 Care of the fabric & housekeeping - Policy 18.18 – <i>Housekeeping</i> - Policy 18.19 – <i>Housekeeping – training and review</i> Section 4.20 Managing the process of change - Policy 20.2 – <i>Unacceptable uses</i> - Policy 20.3 – <i>Lease and hire agreements</i> - Policy 20.7 – <i>Heritage advice</i> - Policy 20.8 – <i>Heritage awareness and training</i>

2.0 OUTDOOR PERFORMING ARTS & COMMUNITY EVENTS – Generally

2.1 Description

- Temporary outdoor event or activity of any type or duration, whether or not requiring infrastructure including stage, structures, barriers, etc

Note 1 – bump-in and bump-out times are to be included in the total event duration.

Note 2 – Artwork installations are not included in these guidelines and require separate consideration on a case-by-case basis.

Note 3 – Sydney Opera House maintenance and construction works / activities are excluded.

2.2 Key Performance Indicators – any outdoor event or activity

The purpose of these guidelines / key performance indicators is to minimise potential negative impacts for any outdoor event or activity.

2.2.1 Views

- Large structures that may impact on views and vistas towards the Opera House are kept to a minimum, sufficient only to hold the event (these views and vistas are defined in Policy 2.3 in CMP 4th edition) and in Figure 1 attached.
- These guidelines do not include consideration of views or infrastructure zones for events or activations on the Lower Concourse, of which some areas are part of leased premises.
- Event infrastructure that is over 1.5m high on **Forecourt** and **Western Broadwalk** is located within the **Event Infrastructure Zones** described below and identified on Figure 1 attached and does not block **primary views 1a, 2 and 4 towards Sydney Opera House on approach** from the south-east (as indicated on Figure 1). Key elements are the Shells and Podium from a distance expanding to full width of Monumental Steps from closer views.
- Key to outdoor **Event Infrastructure Zones** shown on Figure 1 attached:
 - Zone 1** (Forecourt) protecting primary views towards the Opera House on approach and public access to full width of Monumental Steps.
 - Allowed zone for large structures such as covered stages, services etc, structures that potentially have a substantial visual impact and / or potentially restricted public access. Refer to primary views 1, 1a, 2, 3, 4 and 5.
 - Zone 2** (Forecourt) protecting view of Shells and retaining public access to full width of Monumental Steps but allowing masking of eastern podium in primary views 1, 1a, 2, 3 and 4 towards the Opera House on approach.
 - Extended zone for large structures such as covered stages, front-of-house control towers, etc (**only** where these will not fit into Zone 1) that have a substantial visual impact and / or potentially restricted public access.
 - Zone 3** (Western Broadwalk – north) protecting principal views to and from Western Colonnade and Western Foyers.
 - Allowed zone for max 4m high structures such as covered stages etc, that potentially have a substantial visual impact and / or potentially restricted public access. Refer to primary views 8, 9, 18d, 18e, 19 and 20.
 - Umbrellas permitted only when associated with an event.
 - Zone 4** (Western Broadwalk – south) protecting principal views to and from Western Colonnade and Western Foyers.
 - Allowed zone for max 4m high structures that potentially have a substantial visual impact and / or potentially restricted public access. Refer to primary views 6, 7, 18e, 19 and 20.
 - Umbrellas permitted only when associated with an event.

- **Northern Broadwalk Activation Area**

- The whole of the Northern Broadwalk Activation Area is potentially an Event Infrastructure Zone but must only be used in accordance with these guidelines.
- Visual intrusion of any event or activation on the Northern Broadwalk is minimised, including views to and from the harbour setting, and across this Broadwalk. Because of its location, exposure and visibility, the scale, design and location of infrastructure are crucial factors in minimising impacts across this whole activation area. Refer to primary views 10 to 20.
- Any infrastructure to stage or support an event in the Northern Broadwalk Activation Area is as low scaled as possible for the particular event and no higher than 4m (other than high impact events), and in place for the minimum amount of time.
- High impact staged events on the Northern Broadwalk will occur no more than three times per year (including New Year's Eve staged concert), and event infrastructure including the stage are as low as possible for the event requirements.
- Visual impacts are reduced through the appropriate use of the SOH external colour palette and positioning of temporary infrastructure. The design and placement of event infrastructure is in accordance with Section 2.2.2 Design Quality.

- **Security, Barriers and Fencing generally**

- Low level fencing or barriers are no higher than 1.2m, are of a high design standard, not visually detracting, and of materials that will not damage or stain the granite paving or concrete.
- Fencing or barriers over 1.2m high, designed to block public vision across or into the Forecourt, Broadwalks or Podium are in principle not acceptable, regardless of the activity or event. If screening over 1.2m high is absolutely necessary for security, it should be no higher than the minimum required for the event, only be in place for the minimum time before and during the performance, and removed as soon as it is over. Fencing or barriers over 1.2m to screen back of house facilities only are acceptable for the duration of the event or installation. The objective is always to minimise the restricted area and loss of view.
- To avoid blocking off primary view lines, staffing of perimeters to achieve security is preferred to solid barriers. While meeting temporary security objectives, each installation must try to achieve the best possible outcomes in terms of retaining and respecting key views and a sense of openness.

- **Structures generally**

- No structures or facilities are placed anywhere in the area south of the underground loading dock entry at the southern entry of the site. This is to retain the unobstructed view lines and sense of openness at the main arrival point to the site.
- No covered stage, marquee or shelter structure is erected anywhere on the Podium or Monumental Steps. The Podium is elevated and visible from both short and longer views. Any covered structure on this platform will be visually too close to the Shells. It is preferable to erect Front-of-House lighting or other tower structures for a Forecourt event, on the Forecourt itself and avoid the Monumental Steps or Podium. If there is no alternative to the placement of structures such as sound tents or towers on the Steps or Podium for a Forecourt event, every effort is made to minimise visual impacts of these structures.
- No stage, marquee, lighting or other structure is erected on the Western Colonnade roof.

- No covered stage, marquee or partially / fully enclosed structure is erected anywhere to the west or immediate vicinity of the Colonnade on the Western Broadwalk except in Zones 3 and 4. Minimal arrangement of separate temporary umbrellas permitted in this area.
 - Any structures or infrastructure on the Forecourt, or Western and Northern Broadwalks will be overlooked from the upper Podium, or important spaces within the building, even when screened at their perimeters. Those in the Forecourt will also be seen from the Royal Botanic Gardens from the Tarpeian Steps and the top of the Tarpeian Wall. It is essential that the guidelines noted in 2.2.2 Design Quality, include consideration of these views.
 - Festoon lighting is avoided and if considered, only permitted within Zone 1 and at low level.
 - No lavatories or support facilities are placed on the Podium or western part of the Forecourt, and not on the Broadwalks (except within the 'cleavage' space on the Northern Broadwalk). Such facilities are preferably placed towards the south-east corner of the Forecourt – away from key view lines and public access routes and are appropriately screened from view.
 - Very strong preference that lavatory facilities are not placed anywhere in the Covered Concourse. If they are placed here, they are to be at the south-eastern end, for the minimum period of time, and appropriately screened. (To minimise impact on views and avoid unpleasant environment for other visitors and patrons in this important semi-enclosed arrivals foyer space.)
- **Public access**
 - Bump-in and bump-out times are planned to minimise disruption and maximise public access to as much of the external spaces as possible.

2.2.2 Design quality

- The design, placement and execution of all installations, infrastructure, signage and other objects are of exceptionally high quality, respect the unique location, character, quality and significance of Sydney Opera House and do not detract from or compete with it.
- The colour of all infrastructure and objects associated with the event, including signage, are not white, off-white, highly reflective, harsh tonal contrasts, or a light or distracting colour that may compete with the Shells of the Opera House.
- The SOH external colour palette, in the *Outdoor Event Guide*, is followed to reduce visual impacts of temporary outdoor event infrastructure. Appropriate use of colours for outdoor infrastructure is undertaken in consultation with the heritage architect and developed as part of a 'kit-of-parts' for Sydney Opera House use.
- Preferred colour for any marquee, covering or cladding on structures seen in close relationship to the Podium or roof Shells, is a muted colour equal or close to Dulux 'Coconut Husk'. For those seen in relation to the Tarpeian Wall, the preferred colour is a mid to dark grey tone, such as Dulux 'Teahouse Grey' or Black. Other colours must be muted and have prior approval from Sydney Opera House.
- Preferred colour for umbrellas anywhere on the site is a muted colour equal or close to Dulux 'Coconut Husk'.
- Fencing, barriers, stages and other infrastructure for events at the Opera House to be developed as a 'kit-of-parts' or a set of standards specific for SOH use.

2.2.3 Impact on fabric

- When the event or activity is over, all traces of it are removed as quickly as possible, leaving the place without damage and as it was before.
- Paving and other fabric, including concrete, granite and bronze is carefully and discretely protected from damage for the whole period of the event or activity. On conclusion of the event or activity, all protection is removed and the fabric inspected for damage.
- Food and beverage options that are likely to stain, discolour or otherwise damage the precast or solid granite paving are not offered.
- All damage to the fabric is rectified at the expense of the hirer, organisation, or persons responsible for the event.

2.2.4 Timing between events / activations (To minimise public perception of continuous activation of external areas.)

Generally

- A minimum of two periods of 30 consecutive days with no more than Low Activation is provided for each calendar year.
- A minimum of 11 clear days (including 2 weekends) with no more than Low Activation is provided between any two High and / or Medium Impact events or activations.
- Concurrent medium impact events in two different locations are permitted. Concurrent high impact events or high and medium impact events are not permitted.

Exemptions

- A single instance per calendar year is permitted of less than the required 11 clear days, while still including a **minimum** of 7 clear days with at least one weekend, between any two High Impact events or activations on the Forecourt to accommodate programming constraints. This should not occur in the December – January period.
- Two instances per calendar year are permitted of less than the required 11 clear days, (including preferably at least one weekend), between a High and Medium Impact event in the same or different locations or two Medium Impact events in the same location. This should not occur in the December – January period.

Reporting and review

- An assessment of the heritage impacts of the 11 clear day requirement, including exemptions, between events and activations will be reported annually to Conservation Council and the Design Advisory Panel in consultation with the heritage architect. These requirements will be reviewed in accordance with the timing noted under *Compliance with Heritage Guidelines* above.

2.2.5 Seasonal spread of Low impact events / activation or event free days (based on requirements of the SOH Conservation Council)

- Summer – at least 21 days, including 9 continuous days that include (where possible) 2 weekends during 1st half of January
- Autumn – at least 28 days, including (where possible) 9 continuous days that include 2 weekends during public school holidays
- Winter – at least 28 days, including (where possible) 9 continuous days that include 2 weekends during public school holidays
- Spring – at least 28 days, including (where possible) 9 continuous days that include 2 weekends during public school holidays

3.0 OUTDOOR PERFORMING ARTS & COMMUNITY EVENTS – Whole of site – High Impact on setting and heritage values

3.1 Description

- Event of any type or duration requiring covered stage and / or tall structures / staging towers for lighting, speakers, screens etc on at least one area of the site (refer Figure 1 attached).
- Event of any type having a high impact on close or longer views (defined by Policy 2.3 in CMP 4th edition and Primary Views in Figure 1 below).
- Restricted public access to whole of SOH site (refer to Figure 1 attached)

Examples

- New Year's Eve
- VIVID including Vivid Live on the Northern Broadwalk (NBW) and Vivid Sydney on the Forecourt (FCT)

3.2 Key Performance Indicators

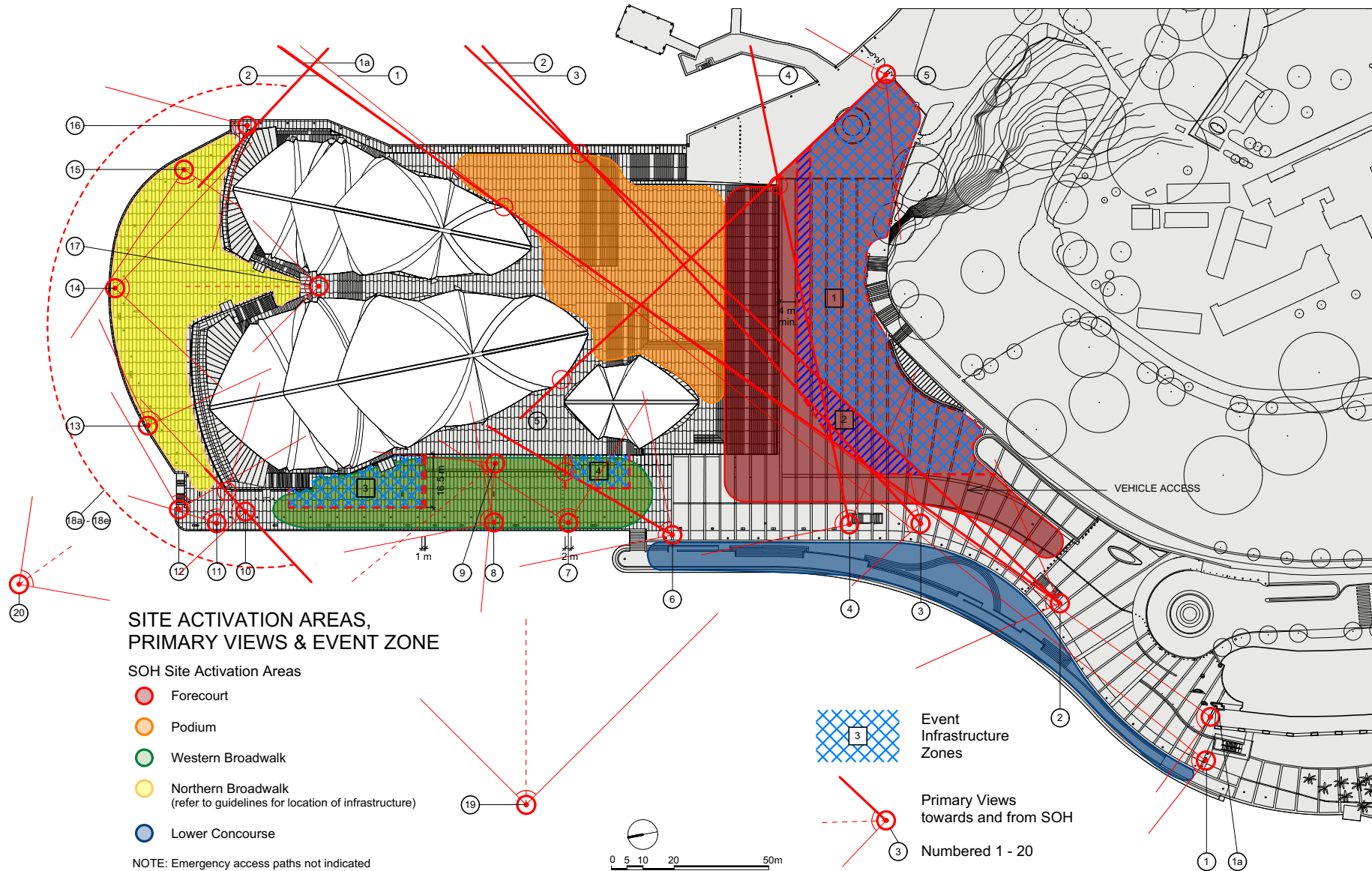
3.2.1 Generally

- **Whole of site High Impact events** to adhere as much as possible to guidelines / key performance indicators described in '2.0 OUTDOOR PERFORMING ARTS & COMMUNITY EVENTS – Generally' above. Barrier fencing and location of lavatories may be an exception.
- **Whole of site High Impact events** at the Opera House because of the status and public esteem of this place. These events have as their focus the building itself, either as the backdrop to activities, or the primary focus of them. All infrastructure should therefore avoid negative visual impacts wherever this is possible.

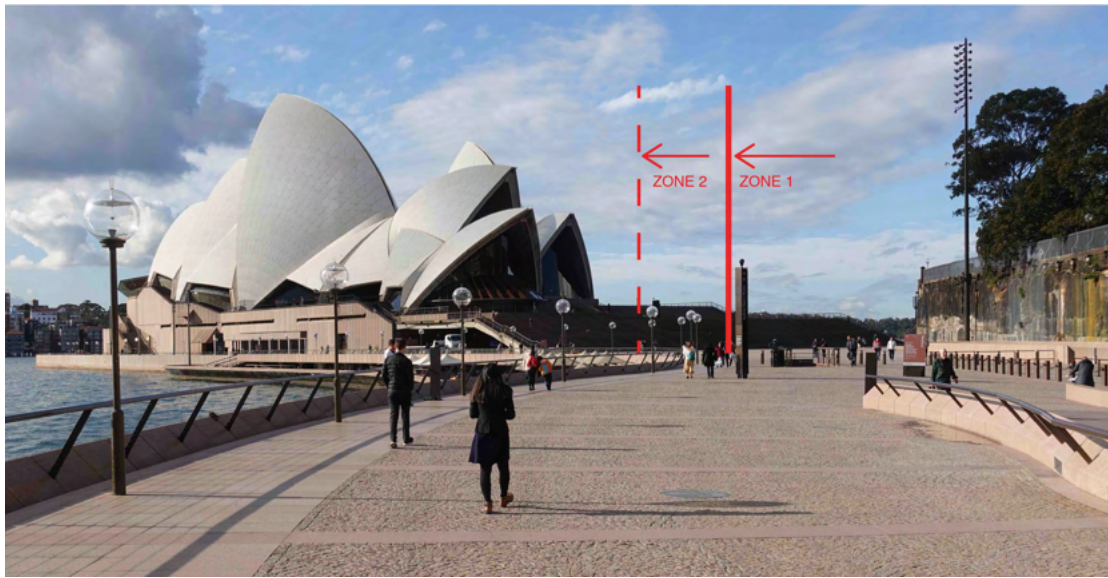
4.0 OUTDOOR PERFORMING ARTS & COMMUNITY EVENTS – High Impact on setting and heritage values		
4.1	Description - Event of any type or duration requiring covered stage and / or tall structures / staging towers for lighting, speakers, screens etc. - Event of any type having a high impact on close or longer views (defined by Policy 2.3 in CMP 4th edition and Primary Views in Figure 1 below). - Restricted public access to at least one area, but not whole of site (refer to Figure 1).	Examples - Staged performances on the Forecourt (FCT) or Northern Broadwalk (NBW) - The National 2018 (FCT) - Oprah 2010 (FCT) - Vivid Live 2019 (NBW)
4.2	Key Performance Indicators	
4.2.1	Generally The guidelines / key performance indicators for High Impact events are as described in ‘2.0 OUTDOOR PERFORMING ARTS & COMMUNITY EVENTS – Generally’ above.	

5.0 PERFORMING ARTS & COMMUNITY EVENTS – Medium Impact on setting and heritage values		
5.1	Description - Event of any type or duration requiring an uncovered stage and / or minimal small-scale infrastructure, barriers etc. - Event of any type having a medium impact on close or longer views (defined by Policy 2.3 in CMP 4th edition and Primary Views in Figure 1 below). - Restricted public access to no more than one area of site (refer to Figure 1 attached).	Examples - Sydney Marathon 2023 (FCT) - Dance Rites 2023 (FCT) - Inside Out Festival 2023 (FCT)
5.2	Key Performance Indicators	
5.2.1	Generally The guidelines / key performance indicators for Medium Impact events are as described in ‘2.0 OUTDOOR PERFORMING ARTS & COMMUNITY EVENTS – Generally’ above with additional performance indicators as follows:	
5.2.2	Scale of infrastructure - No structures or infrastructure at all on Podium, Monumental Steps or Colonnade. - Forecourt – no structures above 5 metres. - Western Broadwalk Event Infrastructure Zones (3 and 4) and the Northern Broadwalk Activation Area – no structures above 4 metres.	

6.0 EVENTS / ACTIVATION – Low Impact on setting and heritage values		
6.1	Description - Event of any type having no impact on close or longer views towards the place (defined by Policy 2.3 in CMP 4th edition and Primary Views in Figure 1 below). - Generally means unrestricted public access to whole of site (refer to Figure 1 attached). - Event or activations of any type requiring no to minimal infrastructure. - Events or activations are for a limited period of time (generally no more than 72 hours).	Examples - Greek National Day - Destructive Steps 2023 (FCT) - Etihad Gala Dinner dance performance (NBW) - Photoshoots requiring minimal infrastructure - Televised event, e.g. live stream of Bob Hawke memorial (FCT) - Ephemeral performance e.g. Chinese Dragons, Circus 1903 2016 (WBW) - Low scaled artwork, e.g. Antidote Festival 2019 – Art Assembly by Jason Phu
6.2	Key Performance Indicators	
6.2.1	Generally The guidelines / key performance indicators for Low Impact events / activation are as described in ‘2.0 OUTDOOR PERFORMING ARTS & COMMUNITY EVENTS – Generally’ above with additional performance indicators as follows:	
6.2.2	Infrastructure - Minimal use of structures or infrastructure on any external areas (e.g. low platforms, TV screens). - Minimal use of barriers or fencing (e.g. crowd control barrier (CCB), rope and bollard). - Minimal use of signage describing the event including artwork and directional signage.	



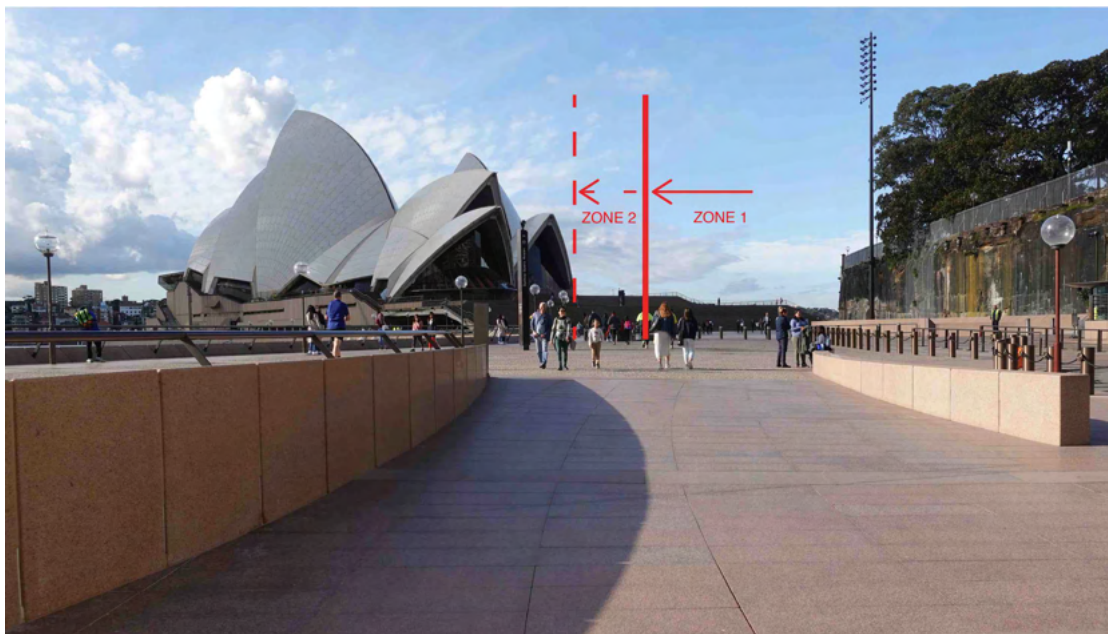
7.0 Primary Views toward Sydney Opera House on approach – refer to Figure 1



View 1 - from southern entry to site at top of western ramp from East Circular Quay

Key aspects are:

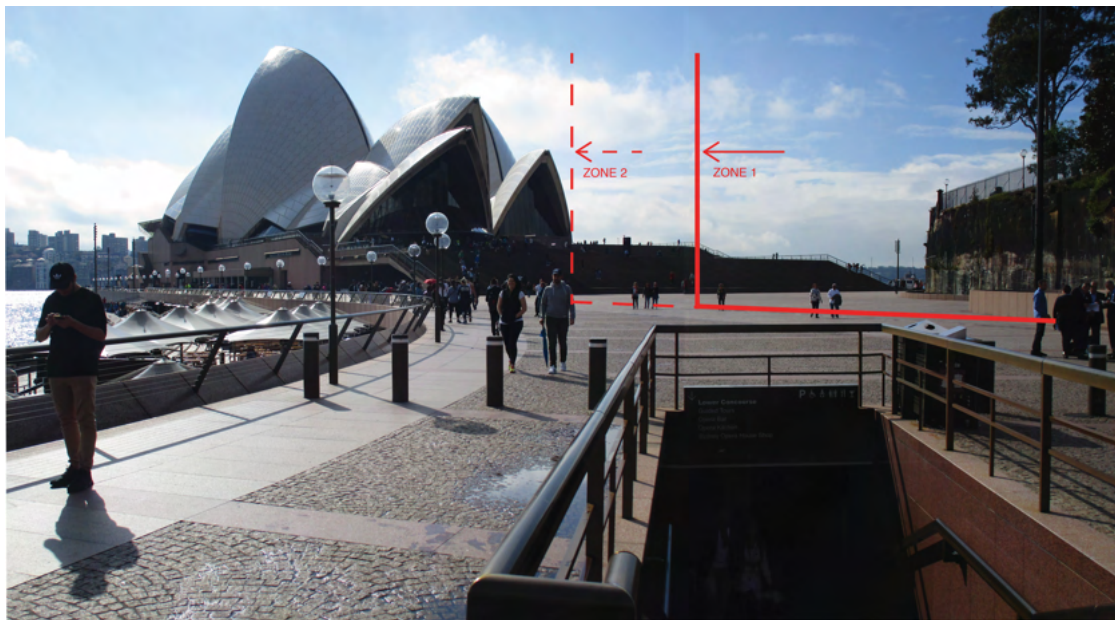
- Full suite of roof shells visible at all times
- Full width of top of podium visible with infrastructure within Zone 1
- East half of Monumental Steps obscured with infrastructure within Zone 1



View 1a – from centreline of north end of west colonnade at N°1 Macquarie Street

Key aspects are:

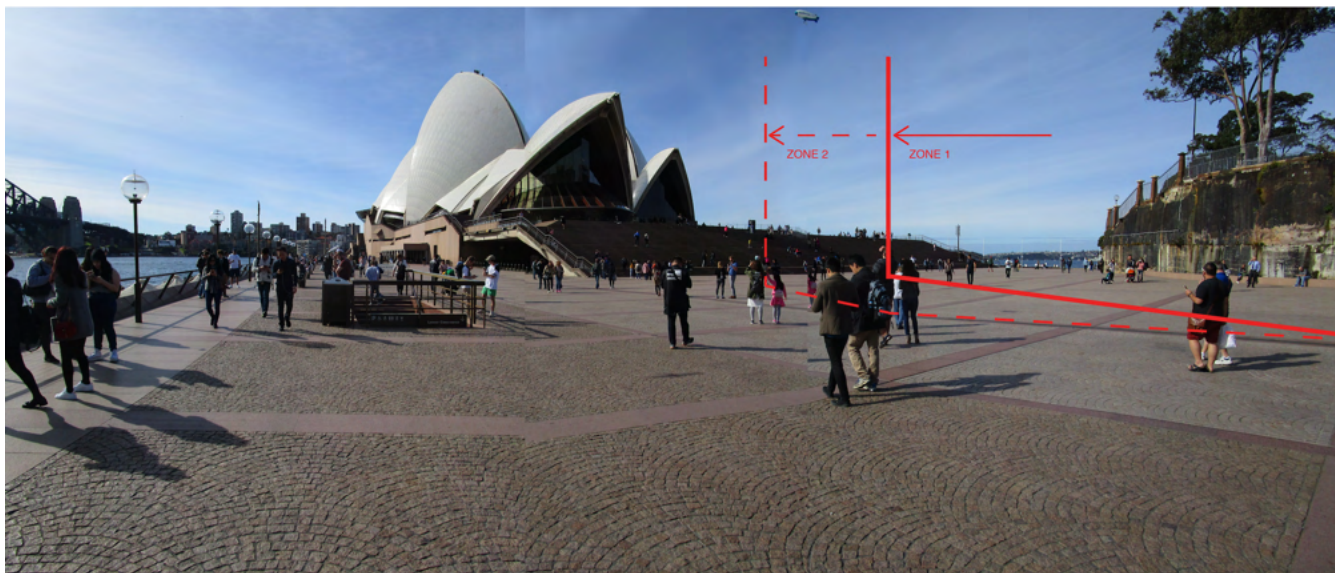
- Full suite of roof shells visible at all times
- Almost full width of top of Podium visible with infrastructure within Zone 1
- East half of Monumental Steps obscured with infrastructure within Zone 1



View 2 – from SW corner of stair to lower concourse and carpark

Key aspects are:

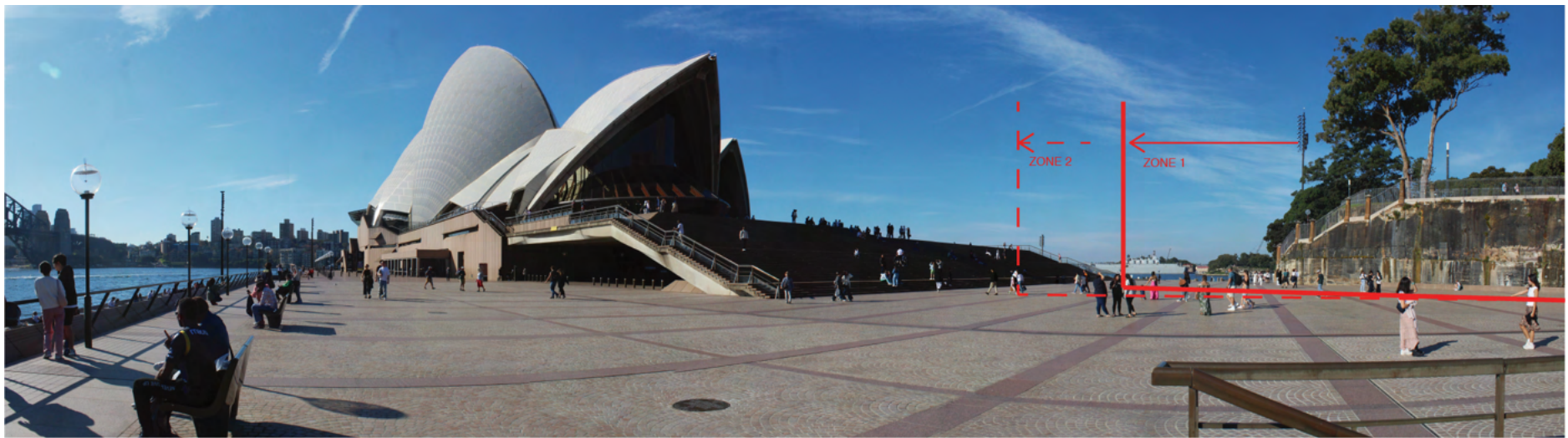
- Full suite of roof shells visible at all times
- Full width of top of Podium and majority of Monumental Steps visible with infrastructure within Zone 1
- East half of Monumental Steps obscured with infrastructure within Zone 1



View 3 – from 3rd granite strip south of stair to lower concourse, Opera Bar and Opera Kitchen

Key aspects are:

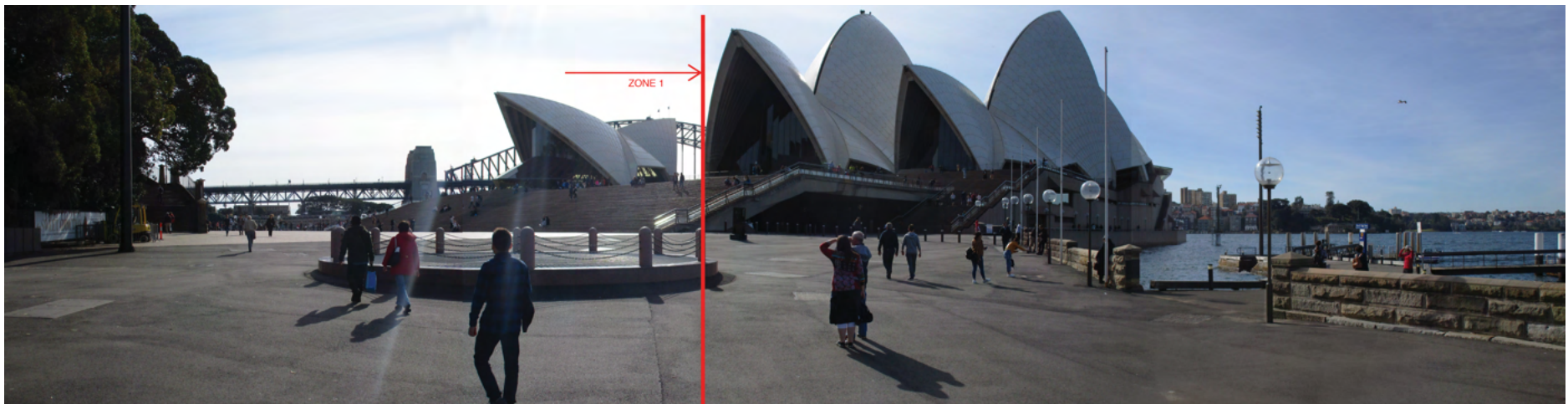
- View opening up to reveal more of eastern part of Podium and Monumental Steps
- East end of Monumental Steps obscured with infrastructure within Zone 1
- Eastern half of Monumental Steps obscured with infrastructure within Zone 2



View 4 – from NW corner of stair from Opera Bar and Opera Kitchen

Key aspects are:

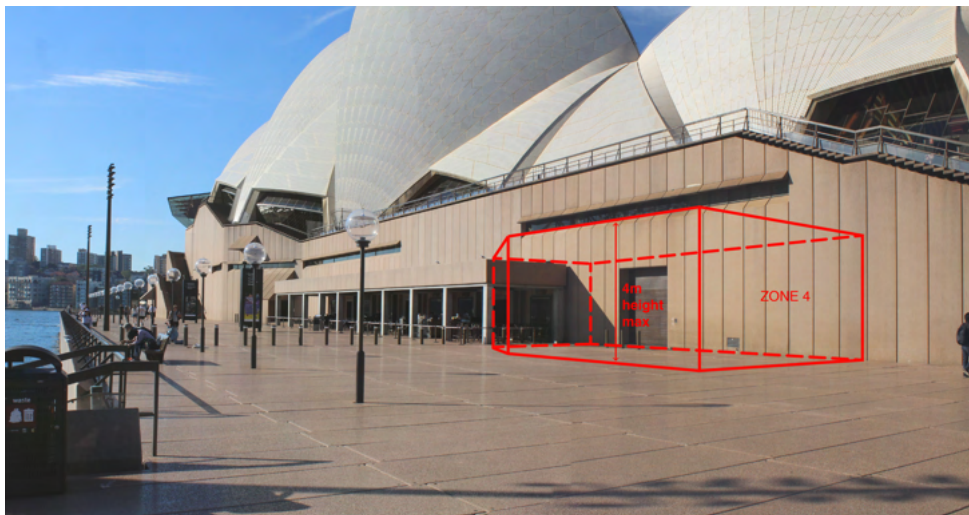
- Full width of roof shells, Podium and all except east end of Monumental Steps visible at all times
- View opens up to reveal full width of Monumental Steps with infrastructure within Zone 2



View 5 – from in front of western pier to main gate to Royal Botanic Gardens

Key aspects are:

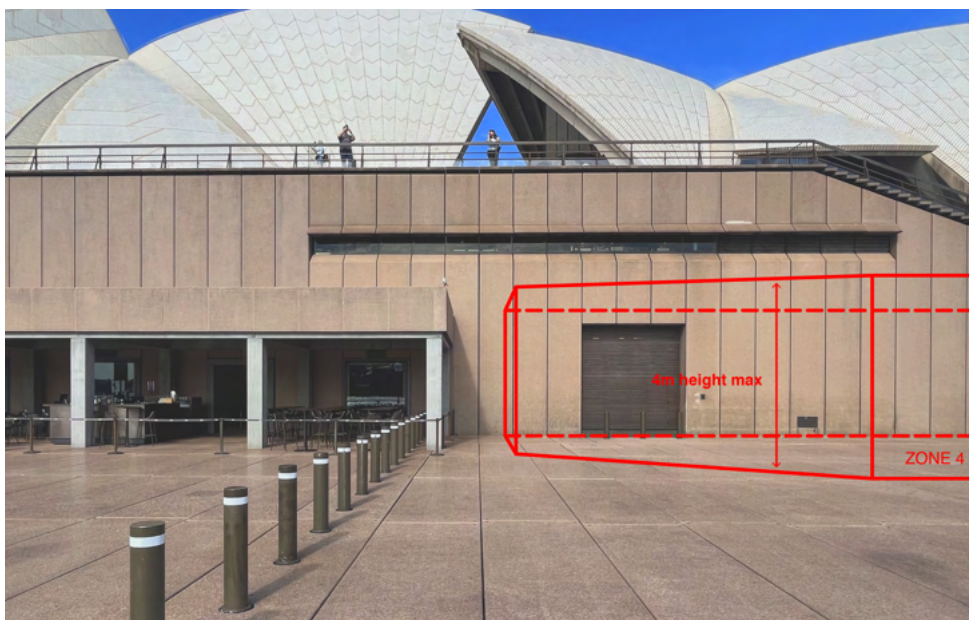
- Full suite of Concert Hall and Joan Sutherland Theatre roof shells visible at all times. Bennelong roof shells may be obscured



View 6 – from north end of Forecourt paving at junction with Western Broadwalk precast paving

Key aspects are:

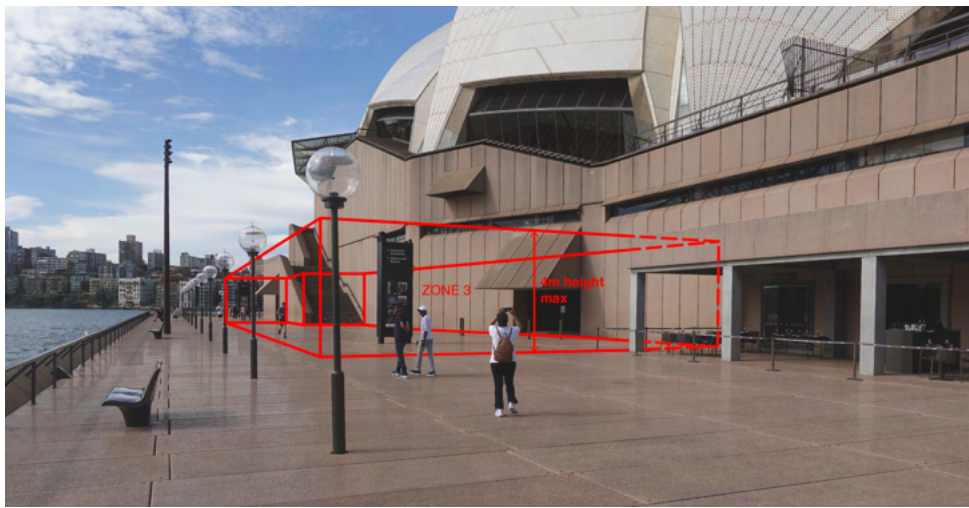
- Full western face of Colonnade visible at all times from this location
- Southern end of Colonnade obscured with infrastructure within Zone 4
- Maximum height of infrastructure in Zone 4 is 4m – below top of parapet to Colonnade



View 7 – from directly west of south end of Western Colonnade

Key aspects are:

- Full extent of Colonnade visible at all times with visual separation at each end to Event Infrastructure Zones 3 and 4
- Maximum height of infrastructure in these zones is 4m – below top of parapet to Colonnade



View 8 – from western side of Western Broadwalk opposite centreline of Western Colonnade

Key aspects are:

- Full extent of Colonnade visible at all times with visual separation at each end to Event Infrastructure Zones 3 and 4
- Maximum height of infrastructure in Zones 3 and 4 is 4m – below top of parapet to Colonnade
- Infrastructure layout in Zone 3 must accommodate public access to Drama Theatre entry beneath granite hood



View 9 – towards Harbour Bridge from within Western Colonnade on its centreline

Key aspects are:

- Full view of Harbour Bridge from centreline with only northern approach to north pylon obstructed by infrastructure within Zone 3
- Unobstructed view directly to and from west Circular Quay



View 10 – from almost north end of Western Broadwalk

Key aspects are:

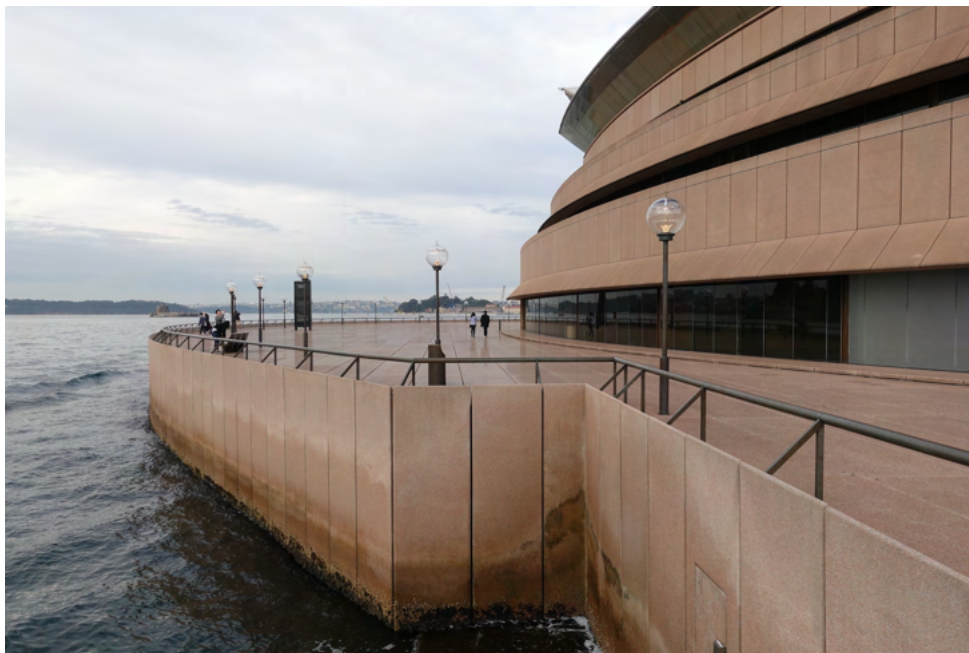
- First glimpse of Northern Broadwalk and expansive view north east towards harbour
- Stark clarity and drama of north west corner of Podium is important



View 11 – from Western Broadwalk, 10m north of View 10, at junction with Northern Broadwalk

Key aspects are:

- Dramatic view of 'headland' quality of north end of western Podium with expansive open views east across Northern Broadwalk to harbout setting
- Open and uncluttered Northern Broadwalk is an essential part of sweeping views from within the Podium and Northern Foyers towards the harbour setting of the Opera House



View 12 – from top of steps to boat landing, north end of Western Broadwalk

Key aspects are:

- Unobstructed view east across Northern Broadwalk and towards harbour
- Unobstructed view of dramatic 'headland' quality of north end of western Podium
- North end of eastern Podium not visible



View 13 – from next to Broadwalk parapet near centreline of western half of Podium

Key aspects are:

- Both eastern and western halves of Podium visible with their respective shell structures and glass walls enclosing the Northern Foyers rising above
- View of 'headland' quality of north ends of Podium rising abruptly from an open and uncluttered Northern Broadwalk with panoramic views to harbout setting
- 'Cleavage' space between Podium projections is not visible
- Open and uncluttered Northern Broadwalk plays an essential part in sweeping views from within the Podium and Northern Foyers towards the harbour setting of the Opera House



View 14 – from northern edge of Northern Broadwalk on centreline of whole building Key aspects are:

- Dramatic view of eastern and western Podium sections with glass walls and shell roofs above, all rising abruptly from open and uncluttered Broadwalk
- Clear and open panoramic views towards the harbour from all levels of the Podium, including Yallamundi Rooms (Broadwalk level +12), Boardroom, executive offices and Green Room (Level 1 +30), Northern Foyer lounge areas (Level 2A), and Northern Foyer granite levels (Levels 3A and 4 +61)
- Deeply shaded central window from Green Room, and upper side foyers and Northern Foyers overlook cleavage space (between Podium projections)
- Any event / activation Infrastructure potentially obscures parts of the Podium and clutters the Broadwalk



View 15 – from east end of Northern Broadwalk in front of Yallamundi Rooms Key aspects are:

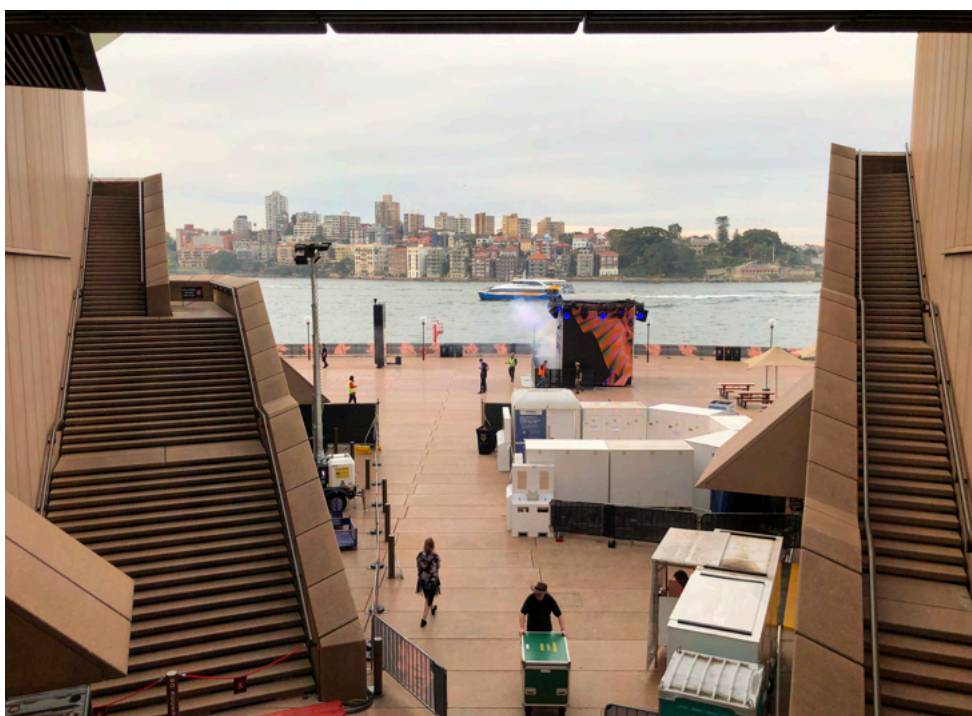
- Dramatic views across Broadwalk to Concert Hall section of Podium and further to Harbour Bridge with sweeping views from Yallamundi Rooms



View 16 – from eastern extremity of Northern Broadwalk at northern end of Eastern Broadwalk, adjacent to Yallamundi Rooms

Key aspects are:

- Dramatic and sweeping view across Northern Broadwalk to harbour setting from Yallamundi Rooms



View 17 – from north end of Green Room on Level 1 +30

Key aspects are:

- Framed view along central axis of deepest section of Northern Broadwalk towards Kirribilli showing event infrastructure in place in May 2019
- 'Cleavage' space, extending to level with northern end of eastern Podium, is preferred location for any event / activation support infrastructure
- 'Cleavage' space between Podium ends is fully visible from the Green Room, from the adjacent ends of the Northern Foyers, and from north extremity of Podium platform externally above (presently not accessible by the public). Screening of detracting and discordant infrastructure in this area from above as well as as at its northern end will minimise visual impacts from these important viewpoints, including across this significant space. Such screening is highly recommended.
- Maximum height for any event / activation infrastructure is 4m



Views 18a to 18e demonstrate the changing views towards the Opera House from its harbour setting revealing the sculptural beauty and genius of Utzon's design

View 18a – from Mary Booth Lookout Reserve, Kirribilli

Key aspects are:

- Full sculptural assemblage of Opera House Podium, glass walls and roof shells rising from the open platform of the Northern Broadwalk
- Views towards this harbour setting from the narrow horizontal window slots in the Podium are all from important public spaces (Yallamundi Rooms and Northern Foyers) or executive offices and Boardroom
- Any event / activation infrastructure on this Northern Broadwalk is fully visible
- Northern end of Zone 3 is visible



View 18b – from Beulah Street Wharf, Kirribilli

Key aspects are:

- The many ferry wharves and public parks and spaces on or near the harbour foreshore provide dramatic views towards the Opera House for residents, commuters, visitors and tourists
- Admiralty House (the Governor General's official Sydney residence) and Kirribilli House (the Prime Minister's official Sydney residence) are respectively 100 and 150 metres east of this wharf. They frequently host visiting heads of state and important visitors.
- Any event / activation infrastructure on this Northern Broadwalk is fully visible – maximum height is 4m (except for limited number of High Impact events)
- Northern end of Zone 3 is visible



View 18c – from the ferry from Neutral Bay

Key aspects are:

- The importance of the open and uncluttered Northern Broadwalk in views to and from the Opera House is evident
- Any event / activation infrastructure on this Northern Broadwalk is fully visible – maximum height is 4m (except for limited number of High Impact events)
- Zone 3 on Western Broadwalk is not visible from this north east view



View 18d – from the ferry heading west towards the Harbour Bridge

Key aspects are:

- Western Broadwalk now visible as well as Northern Broadwalk and sculptural assembly of the Opera House
- Shells over the Bennelong Restaurant and southern Forecourt flanked by the Tarpeian Wall coming into view
- Any event / activation infrastructure on Northern Broadwalk is fully visible
- Zone 3 is coming into view



View 18e – from the ferry approaching Circular Quay

Key aspects are:

- Full peninsular 'headland' form and profile of the Podium rising from the open Broadwalk platform now evident
- Glazed walls of Concert Hall western side foyer provide constant views to harbour setting as their stairs ascend the Podium
- Open Northern and Western Broadwalks provide promenade space for public enjoyment and appreciation of both the Opera House and its harbour setting
- Zones 3 and 4 are both visible
- Any event / activation infrastructure on Northern Broadwalk is also fully visible and will detract from 'headland' profile



View 19 – from ferry approaching Circular Quay Ferry Wharf

Key aspects are:

- The classic Opera House profile of granite clad Podium supporting the white tiled roof shells, all rising from a simple and open horizontal Broadwalks is revealed
- Zones 3 and 4 are fully visible but still allow full length of Western Colonnade to be visible – important for views both towards and from the Opera House
- Any event / activation infrastructure on Northern Broadwalk is also visible and will detract from Opera House profile



View 20 – from Bradfield Park, Milsons Point

Note – this view is representative of views towards the Opera House from public spaces around the harbour.

Key aspects are:

- Full / framed view of the whole sculptural assembly of the Sydney Opera House on Bennelong Point in its harbour setting
- Visual appreciation of the scale, strength and beauty of the sculptural form of the Opera House seen from every direction, including from above.
- Visual appreciation of the Opera House being separated from the built form of the city
- The uncluttered open horizontal Broadwalks and Forecourt that surround the Podium providing a counterpoint to the ‘headland’ form of the Podium and the carefully arranged assembly of white tiled shell roofs that ‘float’ above it
- The visual and physical exposure of all external areas at the Opera House and hence the importance of minimising the scale and visual impacts of any event / activation infrastructure on these views