

Sustainable events

at the Sydney Opera House



At the Sydney Opera House, we believe that creativity can build a better world.

As a global icon, a community meeting place and the symbol of modern Australia, we have a responsibility to create the world we want to see.

The Opera House was the first major arts institution in Australia to commit to the UN Global Goals because we wanted to join an international movement fighting the challenges that threaten our future.

We want to inspire the community to build a more equitable, sustainable and fairer future. This drives everything we do, from the performances we present on our stages to the way we open up the Opera House to more of the community to the importance we place on reducing the impact of both our activities and the building itself.

In a typical year, more than 1.4 million people attend more than 1,800 performances and events across 10 venues at the Opera House. These events provide opportunities for connection, celebration and expression. They entertain, challenge and inspire. They also provide an opportunity for us to challenge ourselves and our industry to think differently about how we present events and to ensure that sustainability is considered at every step of the way.

There's no time to wait. This is no longer business as usual. Together we can make a difference. Together we can think big.

Sustainable Event Management Principles

At the Opera House, we have placed the international standard for sustainable event management, ISO 20121, at the centre of our event delivery process to ensure we responsibly manage the impact of events on site.

This standard provides a framework to embed sustainability into our event management lifecycle – from planning and delivery through to monitoring, reporting and evaluation.



Sustainable Event Management Principles

We have collaborated with a range of subject matter experts, including our in-house team at Sydney Opera House Presents, event operations and planning staff, community and commercial hirers, resident companies, associated artists, resident contractors, partners and suppliers, to develop a set of sustainable event principles. Together with our Sustainable Event Delivery Checklist, these principles guide us and will help us to collectively drive positive change in our industry.

The principles align with a number of the Opera House's plans and strategies, including our Environment, Reconciliation, Accessibility, Heritage Action Plans, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Strategy, Artistic Strategy, and Visitor Experience and Engagement Strategy.

They also contribute to our role as a World Heritage-listed performing arts centre, which is carbon-neutral certified and rated 6-Star Green Star by the Green Building Council of Australia.

“It’s always a pleasure to play at the Sydney Opera House. We’ve done so many shows here over the years and to watch their environmental initiatives grow has inspired many of our own sustainability programs on tour. I love playing the Opera House knowing they are continually having a positive impact and leading the way as an iconic world renowned venue.”

Jack Johnson

Singer-songwriter

Goodwill Ambassador - UN Environment Programme



Our Principles

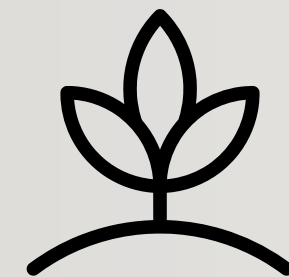
The planning and delivery of events, festivals and programs at the Sydney Opera House are guided by 10 principles that go hand-in-hand with our values as an organisation.



RESPECT



LEAD



EMBED

Our Principles

RESPECT



Deaf patrons trialling haptic vests at the Fat Freddy's Drop Forecourt concert at the Sydney Opera House.





Care for Country

We acknowledge the Gadigal of the Eora Nation, traditional custodians of Tubowgule, the land on which the Opera House stands. Through our events and experiences, 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.

Respect heritage

We are committed to caring for all aspects of our heritage – the performing arts, building and site – by meeting our statutory obligations and by implementing and integrating the Opera House’s Conservation Management Plan and Utzon Design Principles. By embedding heritage management and conservation practices into our event delivery, we will be creative, collaborative and respectful of our heritage significance.

Accessible and inclusive site

We are committed to achieving the Opera House’s diversity, inclusion & belonging (DI&B) vision: that the Opera House reflects and respects the diversity of the community in who we are and everything we do. We seek to deepen our engagement with the community and drive equity through inclusive content, products and services on site and on line, ensuring that the physical environment, technology and facilities meet the diverse needs of our community. This means embedding DI&B into decision-making around the creation and delivery of events and experiences, presenting a diverse range of experiences and increasing representation of diversity in storytelling.

Our Principles

LEAD



Together with our Partner Archie Rose Distilling Co., the Opera House's 2023 Mardi Gras float 'Be Extraordinary!' celebrates diversity, inclusiveness and love to inspire change and build a better future.





Engage and inspire

Through our commitment to the UN Global Goals, we seek to engage and inspire our local and international communities to make positive change. We lead by example through demonstrating social, environmental and financial sustainability best practice, working collaboratively with other cultural organisations to share knowledge and learn from our collective experience. We will build the capacity of our staff to deliver best practice event management through professional development training.

Innovate

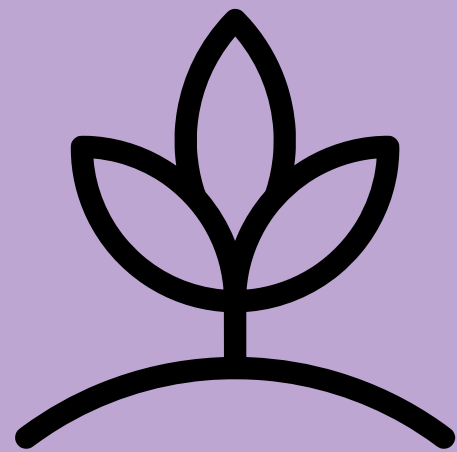
We embrace creativity and innovation and collaborate with stakeholders that enable us to implement leading-edge products and technologies to improve outcomes for sustainability. We encourage innovative technologies that minimise environmental impact, improve staff and audience safety, wellbeing or experience or enable events to be more accessible.

Partner for impact

We seek to stage, host and promote events that strengthen our relationships with our values-aligned network and elevate urgent social and environmental issues. Collective action is key to enhancing sustainable performance and event outcomes. We aim to maximise our impact by bringing together current and prospective commercial partners, donors, government, industry partners and the wider community in collaboration with onsite operators, contractors, suppliers, resident companies, artists and hirers.

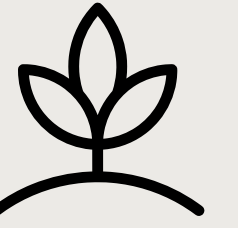
Our Principles

EMBED



By working with key collaborators such as Quayclean, Sydney Opera House is diverting waste away from landfill by implementing reusable food and beverage options.





Safety and wellbeing

Physical, cultural and psychological safety is our greatest responsibility. We are committed to ensuring the health and safety of all workers, patrons and performers attending a performance or event by applying systems to identify, mitigate risk and increase resilience. We will implement initiatives that aim to monitor and support the health and wellbeing of event workers and attendees.

Environmental stewardship

As custodians of our natural world, we are continually improving our performance-related activities and reducing our environmental impact. We do this by minimising resource consumption and waste production, and by taking climate action and implementing initiatives that result in positive environmental outcomes. Our digital offering improves accessibility and reduces the travel footprint of online audiences. We respect our connection to the natural world by caring for the local environment.

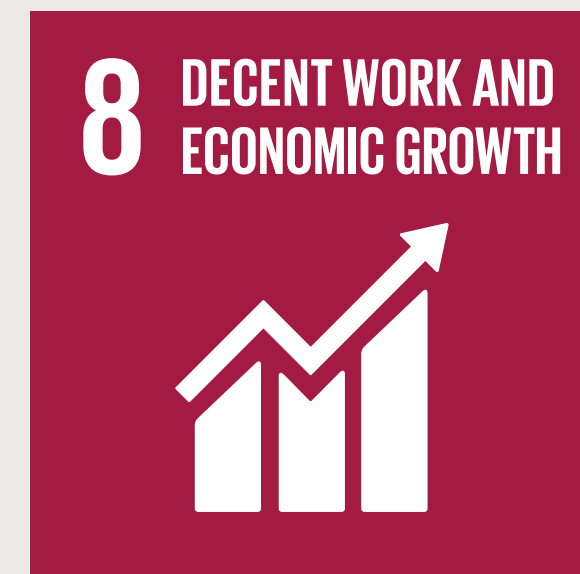
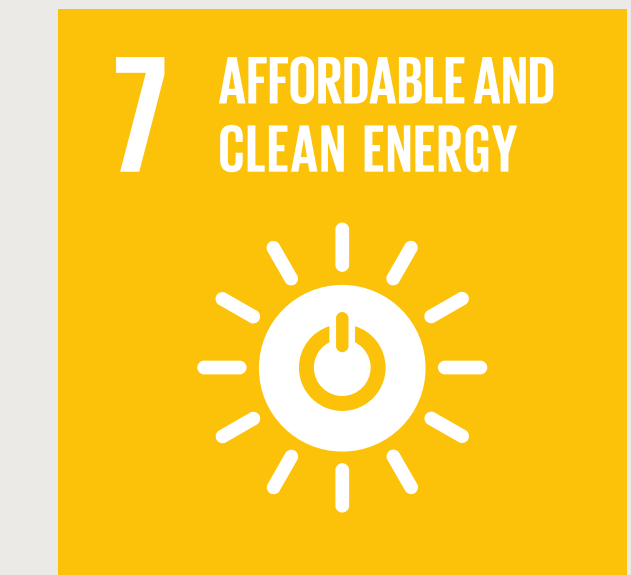
Sustainable transport

The Opera House is located in a transport hub in Circular Quay and is accessible by a variety of modes of transport including ferry, train, bus and light rail. There are accessible options for people who require assistance arriving at site, including a complimentary shuttle bus from Circular Quay scheduled around performance times and a wheelchair accessible buggy that operates across the Forecourt. The Opera House has dedicated facilities for bicycles. We encourage sustainable travel options wherever possible.

Responsible supply chain

Our commitment extends to our supply chain by communicating clear expectations with suppliers. Through responsible procurement we aim to encourage diversity, provide fairness and transparency in the opportunities to compete. We endeavour to support SMEs, regional business, Aboriginal enterprises and Australian disability enterprises. We respect human rights and will seek to ensure goods and services procured are not a product of modern slavery.

Importantly, our adoption of the international standard for sustainable events also recognises and contributes to 11 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (Global Goals).



Thank you

