

Facts and Figures, Questions and Answers

More detailed information on all of these topics is available at <http://www.horshamtownhall.com.au/> or by requesting a copy from Angela Murphy at the Council office by **phoning 5382 9777**.
Please let us know if you have any other questions.

The **FUNCTION ROOM** in the redeveloped Town Hall will hold:

- 500 people at a public meeting
- 420 people at round tables
- 300 people at a dinner dance or Deb Ball
- 235 people at a theatre or music performance

The **THEATRE** will hold:

- 516 people in comfortable tiered seating

1. Where will we be able to fit a crowd of 1000 people?

The redeveloped Town Hall will hold over 1000 people by connecting the 516-seat theatre and the Function room with audio and video links.

There are also other good venue options around Horsham for a large crowd. They are the Wimmera Events Centre (field days site), Horsham Showgrounds and Horsham Lanes and Games. Outdoor venues such as the Soundshell in Sawyer Park, Natimuk Oval and the City Oval all hold several thousand people. Both the Spirit of the Bush and One Night Stand concerts were very successful outdoor shows that attracted large numbers of people.

The current Town Hall has a seating capacity of 874 with poor visibility and variable acoustics.

2. How much will it cost to hire the new venue? Will we still be able to afford to use it?

We expect to keep all hire fees substantially the same for existing users during the first year of the redeveloped Town Hall's operation. We are building a performing arts centre and function centre for our community to use and we will ensure it is affordable.

When we set the new fee structure in the second year of operation, the fee will still be affordable and will include sound and light equipment which users currently have to hire separately. There will be a community access kitchen allowing fundraising events to be held, as they are now.

3. Where will we park?

Council will provide around 185 new car parking spaces to replace the 59 that will be lost in the redevelopment, and to accommodate bigger crowds at the venue. We have identified possible locations for the new spaces in our Parking Strategy, which will be finalised soon.

4. Will we still be able to have our Deb Ball?

The Town Hall hosts 4 nights of Deb Balls each year and we are keen to continue our involvement in this important event in our young people's lives.

The new function room will hold 300 people at large round tables, with a dance floor. Deb Ball committees may be able to increase their fundraising by holding two or three balls over consecutive nights. We will negotiate a reduced hire fee for multi-night bookings.

Alternatively, the Debs could be presented on the stage of the theatre, where families and guests will be able to watch them dance on stage. All Debs and guests would then be able to move into the function room for supper and dancing. This would accommodate around 500 people.

The redeveloped Town Hall will have professional dressing rooms for use by the Debs.



The redevelopment project will preserve the Art Deco frontage of Horsham's former Municipal Offices in Wilson Street, now the Art Gallery.

5. Why not build a performing arts centre on a new site, such as by the river?

There are two important issues here – the costs associated with a new site, and the risk of separating our cultural venues.

Cost: To build a performing and visual arts centre on a new site would cost around \$18 million – even more if we had to purchase land.

Location: The new venue will attract thousands of visitors each year. We want those people to be in the middle of town when they attend performances so they can also visit shops, restaurants and cafes. We run the risk of missing out on their business if we build the venue away from the CBD.

We have visited performing arts centres built away from the CBD in other regional cities, such as Benalla, and found they have not proven as successful as those built within the main business district.

Our work so far...

- > **2006** - Council Plan resolution to "draw up a master plan for redevelopment of the Town Hall"
- > **2007** - Agreement with the State Government to work on redevelopment of the Town Hall
- > **2008** - Appointment of Graeme Russell as venue manager so that a Council officer could guide the redevelopment and professionalise the management of the Town Hall
- > **2008-2009** - Review of Horsham's cultural venues and meetings with users to make sure the Town Hall and Art Gallery redevelopment would meet the needs of our performers and artists. Meetings held with Deb Ball committees, expo users and dinner dance hirers. Venues reviewed: Town Hall, Horsham Cinema, Jubilee Hall (former Wesley Sunday School/Avenue Dance Studio) and Wesley Performing Arts Centre.
- > **2009** - \$10 million received from State and Federal governments for redevelopment of the Town Hall and Art Gallery at the existing site.

6. Why not restore the current Town Hall?

We will preserve the Art Deco frontage of the former Municipal Offices in Wilson Street (now the Horsham Regional Art Gallery). The view of the building from Wilson Street will not change.

We will also preserve some of the historical and decorative aspects of the current building such as the light fittings, theatre curtain and the terrazzo seal in the art gallery entrance. We will also reuse the timber from the Town Hall floor.

The current building has a very limited use, whereas the new design allows for a wide range of performance spaces – a theatre, dance hall, conference and smaller meeting rooms. The spaces will be able to be used simultaneously.

7. How much will it cost to run the new building and how many staff will you need?

Just like many other services the Council provides for the community such as the library, botanic gardens and City Oval, the new performing arts centre and gallery will cost money to run.

We have researched these questions thoroughly in our business plan and estimate it will be an additional net cost of \$200,000 per year to operate the facility. We will need a further one full-time and three part-time staff as well as some casual workers.

New job opportunities are always welcome in this region, as is the economic input from visiting audiences, performers and artists.

8. Horsham is growing, why are we building a smaller building?

We believe this redevelopment will support continued growth in our city and our region and reflect the needs of our population, just as the current Town Hall reflected the needs of the population when it was built in 1939.

The new venue will host many new and different forms of entertainment, community events and conferencing – much more than the current Town Hall can accommodate. This means that the redeveloped Town Hall will be used much more often than is currently the case.

A 500-seat theatre is an industry benchmark for touring shows, as shown in other regional centres such as Bendigo, Wangaratta and Hamilton. We will be able to host many popular music performers, comedians and other entertainers who currently will not come to Horsham.