



MAYORAL MINUTE ADOPTED BY COUNCIL 16 FEBRUARY 2016

Additional submission time

Council formally released the Bondi Pavilion Upgrade and Conservation Project concept design at its meeting on 15 December 2015 and unanimously set a consultation deadline of 28 February. Many stakeholders including key precincts had received the plans on Friday 11 December. Additionally key stakeholders and Councillors were also given a special briefing on 11th December.

At the Meet the Mayor session held on 7 February a number of people said that the existing consultation deadline did not allow them sufficient time to prepare a submission. Many of their comments about putting in a submission related to their incorrect understanding of the project specifically relating to community space. With access to the correct information these concerns may not exist.

I am therefore proposing that the deadline be extended by two weeks and that the correct information be contained in the Mayoral Minute and posted on Council's website.

Key benefits of the project

This project is in the consultation phase and has not been finally approved by Council yet.

The project as proposed is absolutely transformational, restoring the building to its 1930s grandeur, and bringing it up to the standards you would expect of this beautiful heritage landmark. Features of the project include:

- Restoring the building to a true community facility with a pedestrianised grand entrance from Campbell Parade, and a spacious atrium and foyer
- Great new toilet facilities in a new location, with more toilets and showers
- A state-of-the-art, multipurpose theatre equipped for drama and music performances and film screenings, with green room, dressing room and stage
- Two natural amphitheatres
- A great range of cafes and restaurants
- Double the amount of exhibition and gallery space
- A celebration of heritage along with interpretation/education
- Community meeting rooms and function rooms
- Music, theatre and arts programs
- Conservation of the building's heritage fabric, restoration of heritage features and removal of intrusive modern additions.
- Beautiful courtyards and spaces for rest and relaxation

Concerns

A number of concerns have been expressed and I address these below in order to assist the community in the consultation process and in preparing their submissions.

A. Theatre

The Bondi Pavilion Theatre was opened in 1974 in the former Ballroom. It received some renovations in past decades, most recently a series of safety upgrades. The current project plans would see a new theatre built on the ground floor, with state of the art facilities for drama performances, music performances, film screenings, other art events, plus also dance classes



and other recreation classes. The seating will be retractable and will be able to be placed in multiple configurations, allowing all kinds of cultural events to occur.

Our architects, Tonkin Zulaikha Greer are experienced in the design of theatres. Councillors and I visited two of their theatres last week – the flexible theatre spaces of Carriageworks, and the beautiful heritage adaptive re-use project of the Eternity Playhouse in Darlinghurst. Our theatre will be about the same size as the Eternity Playhouse but ours will have retractable seating. I am convinced that the new theatre at Bondi Pavilion will be a tremendous long-term asset to the Waverley community and will be a great stimulus to cultural life.

The current first floor theatre of course would not be demolished – the theatre equipment and modern additions would be removed in order to reveal the original structure of the Ballroom.

B. Commercialisation

Comments have been made about the commercialization of the Pavilion. But as part of its vibrant mix of uses, there are already commercial businesses operating at the Pavilion. This includes the food and beverage outlets, merchandise shop, and commercial recreation. So there is no change. Many of these businesses are much loved by the community and by visitors and many may choose to apply to trade out of the Pavilion in the new structure.

The hireable spaces at Bondi Pavilion are hireable by both not for profit community groups and by commercial businesses. Currently there are 23 hirers who have regular bookings at Bondi Pavilion – and only two of these are not-for-profit organisations. The remainder are businesses or fee-for-service commercial providers providing a terrific range of services to the community, such as dance, baby ballet, kid's arts and crafts, yoga, and meditation.

It is a good thing that Bondi Pavilion includes commercial activity. This is part of what makes the Pavilion a vibrant and lively hub for the community. Of course this needs to be balanced with Council programs and activities and not-for-profit activities as well.

The new Pavilion concept plans include reducing the existing food and beverage tenancy space on the ground floor, and potentially introducing significant new café, restaurant or hospitality tenancy space on the first floor. This would provide new and upgraded café and restaurant facilities. These would be enjoyed by the community and also provide a revenue stream to keep the Pavilion in great condition and to support community and cultural activities there.

C. Community space

Community space can be defined in many different ways.

Public amenities and facilities: The project will see new and better toilets, with a doubling in the number of women's toilets and increased numbers of lockers. There will be a new visitor information and welcome centre to assist our thousands of visitors every week.

Hireable spaces:

The classes and recreation activities at Bondi Pavilion for adults and children are much loved by the people that attend. It is important that a great range of children's and adults classes and activities continue in the Bondi Pavilion and in other venues in Waverley.



Currently, these are the multipurpose meeting room spaces available now, which have been bookable by community and commercial groups:

- High Tide Room
- Sea Gull Room
- Ocean Room
- Dolphin Room

In addition, the theatre was occasionally bookable through the residential theatre company but was often unavailable due to the theatre company's productions.

In the proposed plans, these are the multipurpose meeting room spaces which would be available in future, bookable by community and commercial groups:

- Community Meeting Space 1
- Community Meeting Space 2
- Gallery/Exhibition Space 1
- Gallery Exhibition Space 2 (depending on management approach taken)
- Theatre
- Theatre Foyer
- Plus there is the possibility of an upstairs meeting or function space, not yet determined.

I understand that some people would like to be able to make comparisons of hireable area in square metres. To this end I am requesting that staff prepare this information for public release on our website as soon as possible.

New courtyard spaces

Currently, in the Pavilion if you want to sit down and relax most people would sit down in the foyer area, next to the toilets. This area is also used as change rooms if the toilets are busy. This is not currently a very pleasant area. The new plans propose that the courtyards would become garden spaces for seating and conversation, sheltered from the wind, and family friendly. The courtyard is effectively new useable space for the community that doesn't exist at the moment.

The courtyard spaces could be potentially used also for yoga classes and community markets at certain times as well.

Current hirers

When the Bondi Pavilion Upgrade and Conservation Project is under construction, Council will seek to temporarily relocate regular hirers to other Council venues. It may be that some of the regular commercial hirers will continue to operate at other venues after the construction project is finished. Some of these venues have advantages such as free parking and easier access. This will be negotiated directly with each hirer.

Music programs and studios

The project plans include facilities for music and music programs, but does not include single purpose music studios. The proposed theatre will have acoustic treatment, and community spaces could have such treatment also. This, along with other spaces in the Pavilion, would allow continuation of music programs including:

- Bondi Wave Youth Music training
- Bondi Wave Conference
- Primary School Rock Stars
- Seniors Choir
- Seniors Concerts



- Carols by the Sea.

Rehearsals could take place in the community meeting rooms. It is true that professional quality music recording would not be possible without an isolated control room, which is not currently included in the project plans. Bands which have used our music studios for rehearsal and recording in the past have been able to store their equipment for days at a time and this is more difficult with moving to higher-use flexible use spaces. Council could choose to include a purpose built recording studio in the plans for Bondi Pavilion. Alternatively Council could choose to build an up to date recording studio elsewhere in Waverley where parking, access and storage would be less problematic.

Lease arrangements

No new cost structure or new lease arrangements for the Pavilion have been decided by Council at this time. These discussions will take place once community feedback has been considered by Council and the concept plans amended for approval. It is likely these arrangements will be considered in the 2016-17 financial year.

D. Weather

There have been comments about the project not sufficiently taking into account the impact of weather and the seasons. Expert environmental consultants ARUP are part of the team to look at issues including high winds and the effect of the harsh marine environment. And importantly, we are seeking a five green star environmental rating for the building.

E. Car parking

One flyer has suggested the Bondi Pavilion Upgrade and Conservation Project includes a two storey underground car park. This is not the case. The Pavilion project is independent of any possible long term car park plans. If Council approves the Pavilion project this does not include approval of any underground carpark.

In summary, I hope this proposed extension and additional information will assist the consultation process. I encourage all interested members of the public to lodge a submission in relation to this project.