



# The Wesley FAQs

## 1. Why did The Wesley close to the public?

Following a safety audit in 2017, Wesley had an Emergency Order issued on it by HRCC's Municipal Building Surveyor, prohibiting use due to fire and safety compliance issues. It subsequently closed in Dec 2017.

Since this time Council and the Committee have been working together to develop a new, demand-based proposition that will restore the building and see the facility sustainably managed into the future.

## 2. What is the future plan for The Wesley?

Ultimately Council will take ownership of the facility, and post-remediation works will see The Wesley complement the Horsham Town Hall (HTH) venue.

This addresses the unmet needs for smaller events, performances, and functions that the HTH cannot currently meet. The facility will also provide the community and promoters with an alternate events space that can be used for multiple purposes, is fully accessible, flexible, intimate, and available at a lower cost to hire.

The running costs, administration, programming, and management of the facility will come under the direction of the Arts, Culture & Recreation Team at HRCC, utilizing staff, resources, and expertise at the HTH.

## 3. What will change in the building?

- ▶ Main hall will be flexible and adaptive with a new flat floor design.
- ▶ Whole venue will be on the same level, eliminating need for ramps or lifts, this is a significant improvement for audience, performances or users of the space.
- ▶ Back of house area will be fully accessible and provide child-safe compliance.
- ▶ The redesigned entrance will be compliant for people with disabilities or mobility issues.

- ▶ Movable seating, sound and light equipment will be fit for purpose.
- ▶ Heritage listed organ pipes will remain in the same place.
- ▶ Portable staging can be customised/ repositioned for any type of performance.
- ▶ Building will meet all current regulations and compliance standards.
- ▶ Creates a small venue for public use, in the central activity district, identified as an infrastructure gap.

#### **4. Who will use The Wesley?**

The facility will be able to accommodate dinners and receptions as well as conferences and presentations.

Utilising portable staging, the stage arrangement will be customised, enabling a much more varied type of performance to be hosted. In essence, this design has ‘reimagined’ The Wesley as a creative hub to support new collaborations and bring together artists, performers, producers, presenters, event organisers and the wider public in a cost-effective and appropriately accessible space.

#### **5. How much money is needed?**

A complete scope of works has now been developed and documented. The project is ready to go to tender, once funds are secured. Cost of works is \$2 Million.

As of Feb. 2024:

The Wesley’s cash commitment to project:	\$226,000
Confirmed HRCC cash commitment:	\$224,000
Total cash commitment to project:	\$450,000

The Shortfall

The Wesley’s fundraising target is:	\$550,000
A \$ for \$ government grant will be sought of:	\$1,000,000
This will meet the current project budget of:	\$2,000,000

The longer the project is delayed, the more expensive it becomes.

#### **6. Is there demand for The Wesley once it is upgraded?**

Before closing (2016/17), The Wesley hosted 47 events, attracting 6,647 attendees.

When re-opened, forecast programming will expand to 156 individual hires per year with approximately 8,110 attendees.

Events include local and touring performances, small conferences, civil ceremonies, weddings, funerals, forums, meetings, symposiums, workshops, consultations, musical recitals, eisteddfods, youth events and film nights.

Each event will likely generate economic output mainly for the hospitality and accommodation industries, like the benefit of events held at the HTH. The estimated Economic Impact of the activation of The Wesley is estimated to be an additional \$300,000 per annum. (RemPlan 2022)

At present the HTH is NOT able to schedule and service all of the hire requests it receives, and it is estimated that 15% of all enquiries cannot be currently met.

## **6. How will The Wesley be managed when it reopens?**

The Wesley will be managed by the team at the Horsham Town Hall, specifically the Performing Arts Team who have diverse expertise and experience and whom will oversee and manage risk, finance, and programming for the facility.

Staff are keen to get the facility up and running and see the benefit of overseeing the facility professionally and cost-effectively.

The HTH cannot service increasing levels of demand for meeting spaces, smaller-scale performances, community or school-based events. The Wesley can provide an appropriately scaled, flexible and cost-effective alternative to hirers where the HTH is either too large, too costly, or already booked.

Wesley provides a solution for both Council and the community by increasing programming and growing demand at the right price point and scale.