



A facilities audit and governance advice for Victoria's key cultural precinct

> THE CONTEXT

Southbank – now Melbourne Arts Precinct – is Victoria's key cultural precinct. In 2012, the Premier initiated a Southbank Blueprint project to provide guidance to Government on the realistic and sustainable implementation of a more vibrant cultural area. The Blueprint which emerged provided a clear framework for the further development of the precinct, and especially the use of the few undeveloped sites within it.

In 2017, a decision was made to update this audit, with a view to informing productive uses of the 'Y-site' adjacent to the Australian Ballet building, and further plan precinct development.

> THE BRIEF

In 2012 Positive Solutions was engaged by Arts Victoria to audit all current facilities in the Precinct, and their utilisation, to advise on options for governance arrangements for the Precinct. We worked alongside Pricewaterhouse Coopers who were examining precinct commercial opportunities.

From our research, the Arts Precinct's ability to meet demand, and options for prioritised delivery of additional facilities, could be determined. In 2017, Positive Solutions was asked to update the initial audit.

> OUR APPROACH

After reviewing relevant planning and research documentation, Positive Solutions surveyed the venues. Quantitative data was secured through a survey completed by all venue managers. Responses to the survey provided details of spaces and their utilisation, and data on visitation levels and other factors. Interviews were held with venue managers and with a selection of resident organisations and hirers of the venues.

> THE RESULTS

The 2012 audit provided information on the nature of existing facilities, their level of utilisation, audience attendance patterns, staffing, and opening hours, as well as broader contextual commentary on the mix of provision in cultural precincts in other locations, including overseas. The report provided commentary on options for the development of additional facilities within the Arts Precinct, and potential implications for Southbank.

The 2017 audit highlighted the major changes that have occurred since 2012 whilst identifying the gaps in infrastructure. The re-development was announced in mid-2018.