



Report on what we heard

Community consultation

Community consultation was undertaken from Tuesday 3 October to Monday 4 December 2023, to help inform the planning and design stage of the Canberra Theatre Redevelopment Project.

Key aims

To help the design team understand what people value in their theatre experience, and to capture insights into other considerations and community expectations.

Who engaged

The community was invited to engage through a series of opportunities, including:

- a survey and quick poll at yoursay.act.gov.au asking respondents a series of questions on their theatre experience
- a quick poll kiosk at the Canberra Theatre Centre foyer
- a series of information pop ups in the city area where people could learn about the project and have their say on their theatre experience
- staffed pop ups in the Canberra Theatre Centre where patrons could talk to CommsLink and the Project team in person
- YourSay functionality which asked people to share their positive theatre photos and stories.

More than 1,000 individual responses were received, including:

- 519 YourSay surveys filled
- 222 YourSay quick poll responses
- 272 installation survey responses
- more than 100 conversations at pop up events.

The conversation

Surveys, quick polls and conversations asked people about what they value from their theatre experience.

In gathering feedback from the community, it's clear that people want more than just a good show at the Canberra Theatre Centre (CTC). What stood out is that a positive experience starts right from when they decide to go, with travelling to and arriving at the venue. The community is looking for welcoming places in and around the CTC. They also care about how the theatre and other buildings look and feel. People aren't just looking for a good time inside the CTC; they want the whole night to be easy and enjoyable, from when they get there to when they leave the city. This demonstrates that the community sees the whole area, not just the CTC itself, as a key part of their cultural experience.



Importantly, sentiment across all feedback received has been overwhelmingly positive. Most community members who participated in engagement opportunities were eager to share their visions for the transformed CTC, expressing their anticipation for an enjoyable future experience.

Key insights

Seating in the performance (comfort and sightlines)

- Seating in the performance (comfort and sightlines) was the feature that would matter most for a good experience at the CTC according to 68% of YourSay quick poll respondents (143 people) and 51% of CTC quick poll respondents (57 people).
- Seating that does not require stairs for access, sightlines are not blocked by other patrons, provides more leg room and has wider seats.

Venue features and inclusions

- Experiences and services that are complimentary to a performance at the CTC. This includes restaurants and cafés, bars, free or affordable post-show entertainment and exhibitions.
- An atmosphere created within the CTC space for experiences before and after performances, the provision of a variety of performance and creative spaces to increase the range of arts capabilities within the CTC.
- The capability to support productions with innovative technologies.
- More restroom facilities, especially more female and unisex toilets.
- Plenty of seating options in the foyer before/after the show and during intervals.
- A destination which features interesting architecture.
- Lighting to enhance the atmosphere and overall experience.
- Permanent and visible security presence through both the use of security technology (cameras etc.) and security personnel.
- Capability to support productions with innovative technologies.

Integration with an activated precinct

- The ability to access food and hospitality services within or near the CTC before and/or after a performance.
- Strong interest in the opportunity to engage in other entertainment around the performance time.
- An end-to-end experience that is positive and comfortable from travel and arrival to departure and return home.
- Safety is an important consideration, with a strong focus on lighting and a lively activated environment.
- The ability to walk safely from other parts of the city was a recurring theme.
- Even footpaths that are well connected to other parts of the city and public transport.



Catering for diversity of physical and mental health needs

- Quiet spaces outside of the theatre or performance spaces to wait in before and after the show.
- Adequate and equitable wheelchair access seating inside theatres.
- Accessible toilets for non-ambulant people, including unisex and segregated bathroom facilities.
- Feeling welcome and invited at any time during the day, even when shows aren't on.
- For patrons with Autism or mental health requirements, the ability to have space within a theatre to take a moment out from large audience groups was also raised as an option that would make selecting a show at the CTC enticing.
- Positive wayfinding and ease of getting into and around the venue for everybody.
- Improved technology for tools such as headsets, for those with sensory challenges, and Auslan signing where possible.
- Consider sensory sensitivities with fragrance-free and quieter performances.
- Minimal stairs, accessible lifts.

Accessible parking and transport

- Accessible public transport and parking options (including drop off point) were noted as factors that would make someone want to go to the CTC.
- Free, plentiful and accessible disability parking and parking for seniors was a recurring topic.
- Good lighting is a key element in ensuring access to transport, and parking feels safer.

Theatre offerings and pricing

- Demand for full-sized performance from nationally and internationally recognised artists across genres and popularity and size, aligning to the desire for design to enable these performances.
- A broader pricing model to make attendance accessible for more people.
- Shows that had a wide range of cultural backgrounds represented within them.

Next steps

The full community consultation report will be finalised and available in early 2024. The findings from the community consultation will be used to inform design development and Planning Approvals.