



# ALBANY TOWN HALL REPURPOSING PROJECT

## PURPOSE OF UPDATE

The purpose of this update is to inform the community of the status of projects within the City of Albany city centre.

**Our vision "Albany aims to be Western Australia's most sought after destination to live, work and visit."**



# COMMUNITY UPDATE

JANUARY 2019



## YOUR TOWN HALL

Albany Town Hall is a much-loved local icon and highly valued Western Australian heritage building with potential to become the centre piece of a world-class regional cultural and artistic hub. It is important the City of Albany keeps community informed of plans for conservation works, structural repairs, and much needed upgrades to facilities, services and technology.

The heritage of our iconic landmark is being restored to its former glory of 1888, with modern technology and servicing bringing the building into the future capable of hosting a range of contemporary visual and performance arts, gallery display spaces, community and civic uses.

**The City of Albany thanks Lotterywest for making the Town Hall upgrades possible with a \$1 million grant, along with improvements planned for Alison Hartman Gardens. The City also have the support of the Community Advisory Group and a range of key stakeholders.**

## COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSIONS

The City of Albany invites community to find out more about the repurposing and enhancement of the Albany Town Hall at Community Information Sessions. City staff will be available to answer questions.

### INFORMATION SESSION AT ALBANY TOWN HALL

Thursday 31 January 2019, 5:30pm - 7pm

Saturday 2 February 2019, 10am - 2pm

Saturday 9 February 2019, 10am - 2pm

### INFORMATION DISPLAY AT ALBANY LIBRARY

1 February - 28 February 2019

Feedback can be submitted to the City of Albany through the public comment period from 1 February - 1 March 2019.

Further information is available on the City of Albany website: <http://bit.ly/cityofalbany> or contact City of Albany Major Projects on: 6820 3000 or email: [majorprojects@albany.wa.gov.au](mailto:majorprojects@albany.wa.gov.au)

## KEY BENEFITS

- Enhanced heritage values
- New opportunities for local creative communities
- Enhanced cultural tourism capacity and opportunities
- Continued attraction of high quality touring exhibitions
- Stimulation and diversification of the regional economy
- Increased activation and capacity of the city centre

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Ensure the longevity and continued use of Albany Town Hall
- Deliver a multifunctional, adaptable and flexible community venue
- Encourage innovation and creativity
- Connect and activate cultural assets in the city centre
- Enable a wider range of community uses - move away from specialised theatre use
- Conserve and enhance the heritage significance of the building
- Repurpose the main raked auditorium seating to a flexible flat floor space
- Upgrade ground floor galleries to a higher standard and more flexible exhibition space
- Provide dedicated loading and vertical transport to service programming and activities in all building levels
- Upgrade building services to meet contemporary standards and support programmable spaces
- Create compliant access and amenities.

## LEAD CONSULTANTS

Griffiths Architects | PTX Architects



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. Our Town Hall is iconic to Albany's history. What will change with the upgrade?

Conservation works will be carried out to strengthen the heritage fabric of the Town Hall as a State Listed Victorian Free Classical heritage building in the centre of the city. The old asbestos roof will be replaced. A new lift will provide contemporary standards of access and loading of installations to all building levels including the first floor hall. This will service the building on the town square side in front of the rear extension which was added in 1983.

The interior of the building will be upgraded with modern lighting, electrical and mechanical services, and temperature controlled storage and display spaces. The upstairs theatre area will be returned to a flat floor, as it was in 1888, capable of hosting a wider variety of exhibitions, performances and events, with the original stage and upper gallery seating both retained. The ground 1983 building addition will be adapted for enhanced storage, loading and building servicing.

Many other original building features will be reinstated including a proscenium arch, wooden floors, window features, stone work, and main entry, bringing the building back to its original form.

Overall, the works have been planned to restore the Town Hall and secure its long term future for the benefit of the community, encouraging flexible and contemporary use, incorporating essential safety and structural repairs, and improving existing gallery spaces and building facilities for public exhibitions and events.

The works will ensure the Town Hall continues to be a valuable community asset and reflect its importance in the development of the City since its construction in 1888. The last renovations to the Town Hall were carried out in 1983.

### 2. When will the Albany Town Hall reopen?

The Town Hall repairs and improvements are expected to be completed for reopening by mid 2020.

### 3. Why is the City doing this work?

Since Albany Entertainment Centre opened in 2010 the Town Hall has been largely underutilised and a new era of use was envisioned at the time. The City has since been working hard to program and activate the Town Hall, but has been constrained by the limitations of aging infrastructure.

In 2015, the City prepared a business case and started to apply for State and Federal funding, also reinstating the iconic bells with sound for the first time in many years.

In 2016, Lotterywest came on board with their support as a major funding partner and Council approved matching funds that helped to progress planning, design and approvals.

The City of Albany has been working steadily on concepts whilst seeking advice from Elected Members, a Community Advisory Group established in 2017, and obtaining heritage, cultural and building approvals, and is now ready to inform community prior to finalising the detailed designs and commencing construction by mid 2019.

Overall, the City aims to increase activity, creative and economic opportunities in the city centre alongside recent improvements to Stirling Terrace, York Street, parking amenities, the Albany Tourism & Information Hub (Library + Visitor Centre), and the yet to be completed enhancement of Alison Hartman Gardens complementing the State Government's new student accommodation development.

### 4. What engagement has the City done to hear from community?

In 2014 and 2015, the City engaged with community about early concepts to enhance and activate the city centre precinct through projects including York Street Enhancement, new Town Square and early ideas for the Albany Tourism & Information Hub and Town Hall improvements.

In early 2016, the City sought a clear direction from the City's Elected Members to apply for funding for the Town Hall rejuvenation, and in 2017 established a representative Community Advisory Group to help guide scoping and design development.

In March 2018, the City informed community through a community project update on the progress of funding and early planning. This update was seen through the Albany Advertiser front page article on Tuesday, March 15, 2016 titled "Major upgrade planned."

In May 2018, the City announced the upgrades through a media release announcing the restricted use to the upstairs theatre space from July 2018, and the closure of the venue in early 2019 in preparation of the works.

The groups established by the City have been responsible for representing community interests and provide advice, advocacy and support during the early project planning and concept design to date. A lot of conversations between City officers and group representatives have taken place. We trust that this advice has created a good foundation to inform the broader community.

The Community Advisory Group consists of the following representative groups: Vancouver Arts Centre; New Arts; MIX Artists; Broader community & residents in proximity; Albany Art Group Inc; Art South WA; Businesses and retailers in proximity; Department of Lands, Heritage and Planning; Great Southern Music; Southern Edge Arts; Creative Albany; MungArt Boodja; Denmark Arts; Plantagenet Arts Council

The City has also engaged with the following stakeholders: Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development – Great Southern Development Commission; Tourism WA; Albany Chamber of Commerce; Denmark Chamber of Commerce; Regional Tourism Operators and businesses; Heritage Council of WA; National Gallery Australia; Art Gallery WA; The WA Museum; Curtin University; UWA Albany; Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries; Independent Artists; Circuitwest; Fremantle Arts Centre; Art on the Move.

PROJECT  
PROGRESS

PHASE 1  
Pre-Feasibility  
Assessment  
2011

PHASE 2  
Feasibility  
& Planning  
2011 > 2015

PHASE 3  
Community Engagement  
City Centre  
2014 > 2017

PHASE 4  
Business Case &  
Funding Agreements  
2015 > 2017

PHASE 5  
Community  
Reference Group  
DEC 2017 > COMPLETION



**5. What is the City doing to engage with our local Noongar community?**

The City has included representatives from our local Menang Noongar community during the early engagement and on the Community Advisory Group. Further consultation has occurred through the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage and South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC) and this is progressing as part of the City's ongoing engagement with the broader community. The broader site containing the Town Hall is also recognised and registered as an Aboriginal Heritage site.

Early city centre workshops with key stakeholders enabled the City to capture the views on a range of cultural, artistic and interpretive opportunities within the broader civic precinct, including recognition of the Mokare's burial site to the west of the Town Hall, and the statue of Mokare in Alison Hartman Gardens which is the centre piece of a public art and cultural interpretative project currently in progress.

**6. How will this impact members of the community and users of the Albany Town Hall?**

Many of the users of the Town Hall have been part of the early engagement process. The early designs have considered the overall needs of identified users, and those identified as potential users of the spaces, with input from the Community Advisory Group.

Since the Hall was closed in 2018, the City has accommodated the current user needs with the new Library upstairs area, ongoing programming at the Vancouver Arts Centre and other surrounding community venues.

**7. Have the Heritage Council approved the proposed new designs and Conservation Plan?**

The proposed designs and changes to the Albany Town Hall plans have been approved by the Heritage Council of Western Australia. The site is also recognised and registered as an Aboriginal Heritage site which is the subject of a current approval process.

**8. What will the renovated Albany Town Hall be used for?**

Once the Town Hall works are complete the building will offer more opportunities for modern gallery and exhibition space, performance, community activity and multipurpose event uses. There will be more opportunities for our local artists and performers to showcase and collaborate their works and performances, as well as attract further regional, state and national exhibitions.

The repurposing and future use of the Town Hall will be a major contributor to the realisation of the key heritage, culture and arts aims of the City in creating a vibrant hub of the Great Southern region.

**9. When will construction begin?**

Once community have been engaged the City will finalise the designs and go out for construction tenders in April-May 2019. It is likely that the construction period will occur from mid-year 2019 to mid-2020.

**10. Will I still be able to get to York Street during the construction?**

During the construction period the City will take every effort to ensure minimal disruption to traffic and access to businesses along York Street. There may be limited full and partial road closures however these would be carefully managed to minimise disruption and kept to an absolute minimum. At these times due notice will be provided to residents and businesses in proximity.

**11. How will events in the Town Square and City Centre be impacted by the works?**

The City will be working closely with event organisers with early notification about the works schedule so that all efforts can be made to support the delivery of important and valued community events during the works period while construction continues.

**12. What is going to happen to Vancouver Arts Centre?**

The City is supportive of the ongoing operations of Vancouver Arts Centre and plans to retain the venue according to its current purpose; to support community participation in the arts and cultural development activity. Vancouver Arts Centre will continue to be the primary venue supporting art groups, individual artists and community members through access to studios, workshops, rehearsal spaces, exhibition areas, heritage information and project development space.

The Town Hall and Vancouver Arts Centre management will be aligned with complementary operations united under one portfolio.

The City is working on developing a management model for the new operations of the Town Hall prior to the re-opening of the venue. It is envisioned that the Town Hall will become the primary city exhibition space due to the central location, iconic profile and improved amenities for community and touring exhibitions.

**13. How can I be part of the new vision for the Albany Town Hall?**

Within the new management model the City is looking at the possibilities of bringing the community together through an engaging new group such as a 'Friends of the Town Hall' and Community Reference Panel.

This engagement may drive a patron program, recruit community champions and volunteers and help build the success of the venue. If you are a member of our community who would like to be involved and part of the success of the Town Hall please let us know.

