

MEDIA RELEASE

SOUTHERN GRAMPPIANS SHIRE COUNCIL



13 OCTOBER 2022

ADDITIONAL FUNDING ALLOCATED FOR HPAC SEATING PROJECT

The Hamilton Performing Arts Centre (HPAC) new seating project continues to progress with Council allocating \$120,000 to the refurbishment at last night's Ordinary Council Meeting.

The funding will bolster the \$150,000 received from Creative Victoria's Creative Neighbourhoods Infrastructure Support Program to the seating replacement in the Handbury Auditorium.

Southern Grampians Shire Council Mayor Cr Bruach Colliton said Council are confident these upgrades will provide a better overall user experience for performances at HPAC.

"Council has reallocated \$50,000 from an underspend in the 2022/23 budget and an estimated \$70,000 from the long-term capital works program to see this important project through to completion," said Cr Colliton.

"Seating is now close to three decades old so this much needed seating replacement will ultimately improve overall access for those with mobility challenges while importantly bringing HPAC up to industry standards.

"While we will see a slight reduction in the number of seats, the proposed layouts will include aisles for greater flexibility and will also increase patron visibility throughout the auditorium. It is proposed that the new seats will also be wider and higher, resulting in more leg room."

The works will improve wheelchair access, provide accessible theatre seats with industry standard ergonomics, flexibility with a partially removable first row, and increase aisle row seating which will ensure the Southern Grampians is a must-stop location on the live performance circuit.

Tenders to explore three potential seating options are currently open with an expected decision to be made by Council pre-Christmas.

"We anticipate once the contract has been awarded that the works will be completed across the scheduled offseason from mid-December, carrying into the first quarter of 2023.

"Council will provide more information on the offseason closure and also the anticipated upcoming season later in the year. We are excited to share the completed update with residents and visitors in 2023."

Council is also currently seeking local community groups interested in repurposing the old seats to reach out.

"Community groups interested in finding a new life for some of the old seating are encouraged to contact Council on 5573 0444 to find out more information," concluded Cr Colliton.

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