

# Opera Australia announces 2022 results revealing some positive signs of recovery



Opera Australia (OA) today released its 2022 results revealing only a modest operating loss, thanks largely to the Government’s additional pandemic funding.

OA is extremely grateful for the NSW Government’s support through the NSW Performing Arts COVID Support Package, which resulted in a loss of just \$447,878.

In 2022, as the performing arts industry emerged from two consecutive years of pandemic interrupted programming, and with the spectre of outbreaks and cancellations still a possibility, the start of the year saw audiences still cautious about returning to theatres.

However as the community learned to live with COVID and confidence grew, international and domestic tourism gradually rose and audience numbers steadily increased as the year progressed.

By the end of 2022, more than 600,000 people attended 507 performances across the country - a marked increase from 2021 when the Company had only 348 performances and 171,155 attendees due to pandemic lockdowns.

In announcing the results, Opera Australia CEO Fiona Allan acknowledged the impressive numbers achieved under extraordinary circumstances, though the Company still faces significant challenges ahead.

“Although we still managed to self-generate 75% of our revenue in 2022 through strong ticket sales and other revenue streams, the costs of presenting and touring fully-staged operas and musicals have risen dramatically.

“Whilst 2023 continues to show signs of improvement, with healthy audiences over our summer season at the Sydney Opera House and Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour, the current economic environment with inflation and rising labour and production costs, some increasing as much as 40%, means there are continuing challenges ahead for OA,” said Ms Allan.

Throughout 2022 OA consolidated its position as Australia's biggest arts industry employer, with more than 1,500 employees on its books, ranging from singers and musicians, to wig and costume makers, scenic artists, props manufacturers and administrative and support teams.

Its broad range of performances included main-stage seasons at the Sydney Opera House and Arts Centre Melbourne as well as the National Tour of *The Barber of Seville* and Sir Cameron Mackintosh's production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera* that broke box office records in both Sydney and Melbourne and played to sold-out audiences at Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour.

2022 was also a year of renewal and change, with the Company working hard to lay the foundations for a sustainable future, confirming its mission and vision and developing a strategy for Australia's preeminent performing arts company in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

As OA evolves to be more reflective of an increasingly complex and diverse Australian community, the Company's focus is firmly on expanding its audience base to reach more and more Australians through its music, performance and storytelling.

Recognising and nurturing Australian talent, both on and off the stage, will be at the forefront of all its endeavours to bring a uniquely Australian flavour to the traditional operatic artform with a particular focus on embracing and celebrating First Nations histories and stories.

OA is grateful for the unwavering support from many key stakeholders: The Federal Government, through the Australia Council for the Arts, along with New South Wales and Victorian Governments.

OA also thankfully acknowledges the investment by Destination NSW and the generosity of Patron in Chief Dr Haruhisa Handa for his ongoing patronage and the annual presentation of Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour.

Opera Australia also acknowledges its corporate sponsors for their support and the many donors and subscribers who support the Company year after year.

The 2022 Opera Australia Annual Report and Financial Report are available here:

[opera.org.au/annual-reports](https://opera.org.au/annual-reports)

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