

WESTERN SYDNEY CREATIVE CENTRE



The O-vation Consortium seeks to develop the Mays Hill Gatehouse as Sydney's first Creative Centre - a facility bringing together Arts industry-focused individuals and organisations in a nurturing co-working facility.

Although the Creative Arts has been embraced as an integral part of the fabric of the city of Sydney, the artistic sphere of influence is very much limited to the affluent inner city. Until now, Arts initiatives in the West have been limited by infrastructure, community support and resources, and have been presented as a shadow or satellite of a City-based project. By bringing together and consolidating the resources of Western Sydney-based creative and performing arts initiatives, we will greatly increase the creation of the arts in Western Sydney. Creators of art will engage community much more effectively, and enrich the community around us.

The Western Sydney Creative Centre will provide high-quality facilities for new and existing arts organisations to provide their practice and enrich their community. It will be a fertile environment for Arts and Business incubation, and an environment fostering collaboration and connectivity through the physical clustering of Arts and creative industry businesses and practitioners focused on Western Sydney.

We see a wonderful opportunity to develop an interim facility at the Mays Hill Gatehouse while we continue to work towards the development of a larger permanent home in the following three to five years. Our Consortium will be working with Local, State and Federal Governments to fully fund a purpose-built Creative Centre as part of the relocation of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, the redevelopment of the Riverside Theatres, or as part of a new Arts precinct to be focused on Western Sydney. As part of this initiative, we envision the eventual development of a purpose-built facility in Parramatta, comprising office suites, an open co-working environment, teaching and rehearsal rooms, dance/large ensemble studios, an audio production facility and meeting rooms. Considering the scale of the project, we would expect to maintain our base at the Mays Hill Gatehouse for at least three to five years (and potentially longer).

Establishing the Creative Centre at Mays Hill Gatehouse is an incredibly attractive idea, and although we believe that our Centre merits public sector funding we understand that time constraints and commercial interests mean that the opportunity to establish the Creative Centre at the Mays Hill Gatehouse will **likely never come again** if we were to seek full funding from the public or philanthropic sector. We've prepared the following proposal as a financially sustainable and, eventually, self-funding initiative that will provide manifest benefits to the community around us.

FOSTERING ARTS & CULTURE



The Western Sydney Creative Centre will provide a home to Arts and Cultural sector individuals and organisations whose work is focused on Western Sydney and Regional New South Wales. As the home of the Riverside Theatres and future home of the Museum of Applied Arts Sciences, the City of Parramatta has the infrastructure to become a globally-recognised Cultural Hub - but it is the Western Sydney Creative Centre and its support for new creative enterprises that will make Parramatta and Western Sydney a fertile breeding ground for Creative Industries. Our sector already employs more people in New South Wales than both the Agriculture and Mining industries combined, and is projected to grow significantly in the following years.

The NSW Government response to its commissioned Creative Industries Action Plan reinforces its commitment to raising the profile of Sydney and New South Wales as the centre of Australia's Creative Industries. We believe that the Arts in Western Sydney and Regional New South Wales will be driven by Artist- and Industry-driven initiatives, and the Western Sydney Creative Centre will nurture these projects and their drivers.

The Western Sydney Creative Centre represents a significant shift in the way community (through Government) and the philanthropic sector can support the Arts - instead of artificially driving the development of cornerstone institutions, funding is used to provide those spearheading Arts and Culture initiatives across Western Sydney and Regional New South Wales with the essential resources they need to develop new programs uniquely suited to their communities. By creating and enhancing competitive and innovative programs created by Creative Industries we not only have the potential to enhance the effectiveness of our own community initiatives, but to build competitiveness and innovation in other industries, and greatly contribute towards the health of the broader economy. The NSW Government has strongly committed its support towards these goals, and we look forward to collaborating with Government at all three levels to grow the Arts and Culture sector in Western Sydney and Regional New South Wales.

We believe the Western Sydney Creative Centre is, dollar for dollar, the single most effective way for Public and Philanthropy to fund arts and community enrichment - as opposed to a grant to a single Artist or Arts organisation, investment in the Western Sydney Creative Centre has the ability to provide the essential and fundamental resources that will underpin the work of cultural organisations across Western Sydney and Regional New South Wales.

ENRICHING COMMUNITY



Home to the various Arts and Cultural organisations of Western Sydney, the Western Sydney Creative Centre will engage the community through outreach programs utilising its surrounds – a part of Parramatta Park that is generally under-utilised.

As a single access point to the individuals and organisations spearheading cultural initiatives in and focused on Western Sydney, the Creative Centre will better facilitate cooperation and collaboration on projects across Western Sydney and Regional NSW – fostering relationships within our sector and with the Public through Government and Industry.

The Western Sydney Creative Centre will be the staging point for community arts and cultural projects across Western Sydney, especially in the Parramatta and Holroyd LGA's. An orchestral programme could utilise the neighbouring Parramatta High School for rehearsal, and base its concert series at the Parramatta Town Hall or the Riverside Theatres. A visual arts showcase could be coordinated from the Western Sydney Creative Centre and deployed in public places across the City of Parramatta. A production company developing shows at the Riverside Theatres, the Joan Sutherland Theatre, the Casula Powerhouse or other venues could coordinate their day to day operations from the Creative Centre, as could an educational initiative running programs in schools.

These few examples represent only the proverbial tip of a very large iceberg - through our Creative Centre, **the potential for collaboration between creatives, community and Government at all levels is incredible.**

HONOURING THE HERITAGE



The Western Sydney Creative Centre at Mays Hill Gatehouse has been restored and developed with the modern annex as a flexible space for commercial use – but despite the opportunity to build a much larger facility capable of attracting significantly higher rental offers, the Parramatta Park Trust has rightfully seen to develop a low-key facility honouring and enhancing the standing of the heritage cottage.

Tenants of the Mays Hill Gatehouse will enjoy both the honour and heavy burden of protecting the long heritage of the facility – a 146-year-old testament to Western Sydney’s colonial history. Our consortium is painfully aware that it is possible for the Mays Hill Gatehouse to attract larger tenders than what our Creative Centre is capable of offering – but we believe that, rather than being closed off to the public as a commercial space, our proposed usage for this facility is in keeping with the intentions of the Parramatta Park Trust – one that both enriches and is enriched by the parkland around it.

From the beginning it is our intention to establish the space as a facility that invites the public to engage with our membership. We are committed to not only keeping the space accessible to the public, but to highlight the heritage of the Mays Hill Gatehouse as part of our Community outreach. We are eager to create new musical and art events in Parramatta Park South – and would be thrilled to provide ample opportunities throughout the year to host heritage Open Days (or to be part of an extended tour of heritage spaces in the Park) complemented by, for example, a String Quartet performance in the adjoining parklands.

GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE



The Western Sydney Creative Centre will be managed by a proposed **Creative Centre Cooperative**, and governed by a Board of Directors comprising elected representatives of the membership of the Co-op and – while we're at the Mays Hill Gatehouse – a representative of the Parramatta Park Trust.

Without external support we absolutely cannot offer a competitive commercial rental rate at this time – it is our hope that this Expression of Interest document successfully prosecutes a case that a minor reduction in rental income in the context of a multi-million dollar operating budget is more than offset by the manifest cultural benefit to Parramatta Park, the City of Parramatta and Western Sydney. Despite this, we do intend that the space will be financially self-sustaining.

The O-vation consortium believes it is highly unlikely that the Cooperative will be unable to secure at least *some* outside support, but in the interests of good financial management we have assumed no ongoing philanthropic, in-kind and Government funding. If we are fortunate enough to receive this sort of support we will use those resources to subsidise membership rates for registered not-for-profit organisations, develop networking and educational events inviting Creative Industries professionals from across Australia to engage with the Western Sydney Creative Centre community, and to re-invest back into Parramatta Park and new regional Creative Centres. It would be a pleasure and delight to develop these initiatives in conjunction with the Parramatta Park Trust.

We are committed to a long term tenancy in the Mays Hill Gatehouse – it is our intention to remain in this facility until such time as we are able to move to a publicly-owned, custom-built facility as part of the NSW Government's Arts Precinct planning. Since any funding we seek is subject to the Creative Centre existing in the first place our offer to you is based on what we believe is feasible if the Centre receives no funding beyond membership fees.

At this time, the proposed Creative Centre Cooperative is prepared to offer the Parramatta Park Trust a first-year rent of \$600/week, divided between \$196/week in outgoings (\$10192/year) and \$404/week rent (\$21008/year), to cover a twelve-month period following a provisional rent-free grace period through July and August 2015 to allow the Cooperative to form, display the space to prospective tenants and fit-out the space for occupation. Based on our financial performance in our first year and our ability to secure grants and sponsorship from the Public and Philanthropic sectors we would then be pleased to make our financial records available to the Trust to re-examine and re-negotiate these rates after our first year of operation.