



**Memo To** Paul Collings

**CC**

**Memo From** David Di Biase

**Date** 7<sup>th</sup> July 2014

**Ref/File No.**

**Subject** Haven Amphitheatre – Site Inspection

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Please see comments further to our site inspection of the Amphitheatre on Thursday 29 May 2014:

### General

- Generally the facility is very near the end of its useful life, namely
  - The stage surface has become uneven due to the movement of the underlying structural members, to the point where trip hazards have become evident.
  - Handrails and floorboards and other components have deteriorated due to dry rot.
  - The stage movement has also damaged the waterproofing so that the undercroft area leaks during wet weather.
  - Inadequate storage space for all the performance equipment.
  - The land on which the Amphitheatre is located is classified as bush fire prone, which has implications on any repairs upgrades that we propose.
  - The Amphitheatre is also located in a flood prone area and there has been a long history of the adjacent creek flooding the undercroft area and even the stage in severe events.

### Structural

- The structural components (piers, bearers, joists) are showing signs of wear and tear, due in part to their age and to the fact that they're inadequately sized for the application – as evidenced in the recent SDA Structures P/L report:
  - Treated timber structural posts driven into the ground are starting to show signs of rot as they approach the end of the protection provided by their treatment.
  - Bearers supporting the stage are cracking, with metal strapping present, as evidence of previous attempts at repairing the cracking previously.
  - Indications that the structural framing for the stage was constructed utilising volunteer labour as evidenced by poor workmanship and the lack of intermediate supports present, for the timber sizes used.
  - Dry rot present in structural members connection points

### Services

- The electrical, plumbing, fire safety and hygienic services are totally inadequate and are nowhere near the requirements of modern standards and present a real Work Health & Safety risk:
  - There are dozens of extension leads, at head height, bundled together and looped through the structural framing.

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- The distribution board is mounted against a wall which gets water dripping down onto it from above.
- The food preparation area is located in a dank and dingy part of the building, with all manner of items stored beside and over the area due to the lack of space.
- The one toilet is located outside, is inadequate for the number of performers that can part in a production.
- Being of timber construction and located within bush fire prone land is a safety hazard for the performers and audience alike.

## Recommendation

I recommend that the Amphitheatre not be used until such time that either substantial repairs are undertaken or the facility is replaced.

Discussions with SDA Structures have indicated that temporary repairs, costing in the vicinity of \$50,000, can be undertaken to allow the stage to be used until such time that the long term future of the facility is decided. The temporary repairs would although, greatly impair the use of the undercroft area as it would be taken up with the temporary propping and support beams required to strengthen the stage.

Due to its age, current structural condition and its lack of compliance with current National Construction Code (BCA) requirements, I consider that the existing Amphitheatre cannot be economically refurbished to meet these requirements as it would require a large portion of the building to be dismantled and the majority of the components replaced. The electrics and plumbing would also require replacement due to non-compliance issues.

Such an undertaking, being 'substantial works', would also require us to make the building comply with the requirements for buildings located within bushfire prone areas. It is questionable whether we would be able to refurbish the building using timber in this situation and even if we were, it would require so much fire protection that it would not be recognisable as a timber structure.

It is questionable whether it is possible to carry out the necessary flood mitigation works without having to dismantle a fair portion of the building.

In my opinion, and as backed-up by SDA Structures' report, the only viable option is the replacement of the existing structure with a concrete and masonry structure. That's not say that there could be some special treatment of the concrete finish utilised, through the use of special forms and/or pre-cast sections, that would lessen the 'harshness' of the typical off the form look of concrete, if it was so desired.

Please let me know if you would like to discuss the matter further.

# MEMO

**David Di Biase**  
**Property Maintenance/Construction Manager**