



Kangaroo Flat
Community Enterprise

JB Osborne Theatre Redevelopment Project

*“A gathering
place for the
Kangaroo Flat
community”*

Building on the success of our Gurri Wanyarra project to bring sport and health benefits to the Kangaroo Flat community, the Kangaroo Flat Community Enterprise is now focussed on redeveloping the JB Osborne Theatre into an inclusive and creative space that brings social and mental wellbeing to all residents.





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"The JB Osborne Theatre serves an important role for creative endeavours, not only for Crusoe College, but also the wider community. Investment in this creative arts space is much needed and will benefit residents in Kangaroo Flat and beyond, providing a springboard for budding careers in the creative industries."

Cr Dr Jennifer Alden, Deputy Mayor
City of Greater Bendigo

"This is an exciting project that will provide the Performing Arts space that has been missing from our local community. Generations of St Monica's students will benefit from this redevelopment which will support the development of creative and artistic opportunities."

Fiona Dearn, Principal St Monica's Primary School



Our vision

Our vision is to turn an outdated old theatre into a creative, multi-purpose arts venue for schools, community groups and residents to enjoy. The old JB Osborne Theatre will be reborn as a place where young and old can gather for creative pursuits of all kinds in an accessible, inclusive community venue.

"The JB Osborne Theatre has served our community for many decades and this revitalisation will ensure it maintains its position as a valuable community asset into the future. With a vision for an amazing range of inspiring activities and uses for all ages, this venue promises to provide significant benefit and compliment existing facilities."

Tracey Moss, Centre Manager
Kangaroo Flat Community House

Background

The 382 seat theatre was built in 1978 for use primarily as an education facility. It is owned by the Department of Education and administered by Crusoe College. Over the past 45 years it has been well used as a theatre space by local schools and hired by local groups for performances and gatherings.

After a black box theatre was incorporated in the new Crusoe College in 2010, the JB Osborne Theatre was considered redundant. With minimal maintenance the building fell into disrepair and has limited community use due to its shortcomings.

The building contains asbestos, so remediation works are difficult and expensive. It leaks, has rotting floors and ceilings, no heating and dangerous electrical systems, making it unsafe. Community use dropped as groups needed to look elsewhere for suitable venues.

Meeting our community's needs now and into the future

Thanks to decades of local and state government investment, our suburb has wonderful sports facilities, green recreation spaces, meandering walking tracks, growing retail precincts and excellent education facilities. Gurri Wanyarra meets our needs for swimming and gym. What the Kangaroo Flat community desperately needs now is an investment in creativity.

A creative space that is truly multi-functional, cross-generational and easily accessible. JB Osborne Theatre site makes a great starting point for developing a facility that will grow with our community to meet their needs now and into the future.

"I am excited to be part of this project which will not only benefit the students at Crusoe College, but the whole of the Kangaroo Flat community. Our school already uses this valuable asset but once we develop this into a multi-use facility, sporting clubs, local organisations and performance groups will also be able to take advantage of it."

Simon Wood, Principal
Crusoe College

"Though aged, JB Osborne Theatre is a beautifully proportioned building that perfectly supports the making of creative work. Participation is key to today's arts and culture, and accessible buildings that foster human creativity are an essential part of this mission. We fully support the Kangaroo Flat community having their own creative space."

Christian Leavesley, Artistic Director/Co-CEO Arena Theatre Co

"Blue Light is excited for the potential redevelopment of the JB Osborne Theatre to help us deliver exciting and diverse events and programs to the young people of Bendigo. We see many opportunities to use the area to facilitate our programs and provide young people the chance to engage further with the local community."

John Dalton, Bendigo Blue Light



Who will benefit?

The Kangaroo Flat population of approximately 12,000 people is considered to be one of the more disadvantaged communities in Victoria. Compared to Greater Bendigo it has proportionally:

- More 'Seniors' and 'Frail aged'
- Fewer 'Tertiary educated and independent' people and 'Older workers and pre-retirees'
- More migrants and non-English speakers
- More unemployed. Of those employed, labourers were the biggest group
- More 15-24 year olds disengaged with education and employment
- More one-parent families and lone person households
- More renters

The area is growing, with the biggest changes being in the following age groups:

- Seniors (70-84), empty nesters and retirees (60-69)
- Parents and homebuilders (35-49)
- Young workforce (25-34)

How will a creative space meet our community's changing needs?

An accessible, multipurpose creative space will provide our community with the flexibility to engage our diverse and growing population segments: seniors, families and retirees. Creativity transcends barriers, appealing to all ages, abilities and education. To build Gurri Wanyarra, the old Leisure Centre needed to be demolished. Small groups and clubs lost a local "community centre". Redevelopment of the JB Osborne Theatre will return that space, to accommodate potential uses such as:

- A venue for community theatre groups
- A cinema
- Indoor sports such as dance, yoga, callisthenics or martial arts
- Art, sewing, craft or other creative classes
- U3A activities
- Seniors meetings and creative activities
- Youth programs and events
- A space for all schools to use

Local schools have expressed interest in reviving the space. Crusoe College needs more space for ten drama classes each week that cannot be accommodated in their black box theatre. Kangaroo Flat Primary School and St Monica's Primary School are both close by and could make use of more flexible spaces. Sporting groups are also keen to see new facilities added to the complex as the school oval is adjacent and there is a need for women's change rooms and toilet facilities for participants.

Kangaroo Flat's population is growing and becoming older. As people age in place, facilities are needed to keep people actively engaged in mindful activities in their local area.

Public transport may not be close by, and can be difficult to use by those with physical limitations.

With more people of limited income and inhibited mobility, an accessible, central, attractive, low cost facility will help people make the most of life in Kangaroo Flat.



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“What a great project to include upgraded change room facilities in the JB Osborne Theatre redevelopment. Teenage girls require confidence and privacy in their journey to play women’s AFL. Change rooms with women’s hygiene facilities provide them with assurance to engage in team contact sports while learning to managing their developing bodies.”

Kellie Dadds, Vice President Kangaroo Flat Junior Football Netball Club, Coach Girls U/14 Football



Who is involved?

The project is led by Kangaroo Flat Community Enterprise with the support of Crusoe College Principal and staff, and other members of the local community.

The committee has commenced engaging with the community to determine needs and opportunities, and in principle support has been received from:

- City of Greater Bendigo Lockwood Ward Councillors Jennifer Alden and Rod Fyffe
- Member for Bendigo West Maree Edwards
- Federal Member for Bendigo Lisa Chesters
- Crusoe College
- St Monica’s Primary School
- Arena Theatre
- Ulumbarra Foundation
- Agnico Eagle (Fosterville Gold Mine)
- Bendigo Blue Light
- Kangaroo Flat Community House

Help make this project happen!

Find out more or attend an open day

Visit <https://kfce.com.au>

Send us your ideas

Email chair@kfce.com.au

Ask your local Member to lend support

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