

On with the show, Sydney

Paul Nicolaou



Sydney, we are very lucky to have world-class arts and culture with everything from a top comedy festival to magnificent live theatre productions.

Yes, we could certainly use a stadium with a retractable roof to attract some of the biggest names in global entertainment.

Premier Chris Minns and his Arts Minister John Graham should get a wriggle on deciding the future of the Entertainment Quarter.

But events have shown our good fortune – The Lion King’s return to the Capitol and the 50th anniversary of Theatre Royal Sydney.

We’ve had a Theatre Royal in Sydney since 1833 and in its present incarnation and location in King St in the heart of the

CBD since 1976.

Some of Australia’s biggest stars – on their way to superstardom or already well established – have graced its stage.

They include Russell Crowe, Jacki Weaver, Anthony Warlow, Marina Prior, Normie Rowe, Mel Gibson, Todd McKenney and Natalie Bassingthwaighte.

International stars have included Angela Lansbury and James Earl Jones.

The theatre is also an economic powerhouse. Since reopening in 2021 after a major refurbishment, it has welcomed 1.1 million patrons and sold \$120m in tickets. TINA: The Tina Turner Musical alone accounted for a third of sales.

Add to this the multiplier effect of spending at hotels,

restaurants, cafes and carparks. A theatre ticket with an extended stay in our wonderful city.

Some of the world’s biggest musicals have been staged at the theatre, including the Australian premiere of Cats for a two-year season and an epic three-year run of Phantom of the Opera.

Theatre Royal’s success has been the catalyst for so many other productions with, at times, every live theatre stage in Sydney occupied.

Just imagine a production featuring all the stars who have appeared at the theatre. It would be a who’s who of international and Australian entertainment.

Paul Nicolaou is executive director of Business Sydney