



CHAT GROUPS

Topic – The Opera House

Fun facts about the Sydney Opera House

- The original cost estimate to build Sydney Opera House was £3.5 million (\$7 million); the final cost was \$102 million, and it was largely paid for by a State Lottery.
- A total 233 designs were submitted for the Opera House international design competition held in 1956. Jørn Utzon from Denmark was announced the winner, receiving £5000 for his design after his initial design was rejected early by judges.
- Construction was expected to take four years. It took 14 years. Work commenced in 1959 and involved 10,000 construction workers.
- Paul Robeson was the first person to perform at Sydney Opera House. In 1960, he climbed the scaffolding and sang “Ol’ Man River” to the construction workers as they ate lunch.
- Sydney Opera House was added to UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2007.
- There are more than one million roof tiles covering approximately 1.62 hectares sitting over the structure. They were made in Sweden.



CHAT GROUPS

- Sydney Opera House was opened by Queen Elizabeth II on Saturday, October 20, 1973. She subsequently visited four times, most recently in 2006.
- When the Sydney Symphony Orchestra is on stage in the Concert Hall, the temperature must be 22.5 degrees to ensure the instruments stay in tune. Temperature and humidity are critical to musical instruments.
- Arnold Schwarzenegger (former actor and Governor of California) won his final Mr Olympia body building title in 1980 in the Concert Hall; Dame Joan Sutherland was the first opera singer to perform in concert at the venue, and had her last concert there in 1990.
- A net was installed above the orchestra pit in the Joan Sutherland Theatre during the 1980s following an incident during the opera Boris Godunov. The opera featured live chickens and one bird walked off the stage and landed on top of a cellist.
- More than 10.9 million people visit the Opera House every year.
- Sydney Opera House is cooled using seawater taken directly from the harbour. The system circulates cold water from the harbour through 35 kilometres of pipes to power both the heating and air conditioning in the building.