

# South Melbourne Town Hall



The South Melbourne Town Hall building complex is located on City of Port Phillip freehold land at 208-220 Bank Street South Melbourne, within the Emerald Hill arts and culture precinct.

It was constructed between 1878 and 1880 on land of the Wurundjeri people. Emerald Hill has a significant Indigenous history as a gathering place for ceremonies, conciliation and exchange, and is also of architectural and social significance to the state of Victoria.

A town hall is traditionally where the business of local government is conducted and public gatherings are held. In the case of South Melbourne Town Hall, the building was originally constructed to house the Emerald Hill Mechanics Institute, Post Office, Police Station and Court House, as well as the Emerald Hill Town Council (later becoming the City of South Melbourne, prior to amalgamation in 1994 with the cities of St Kilda and Port Melbourne to form the City of Port Phillip). Its use prior to amalgamation was largely consistent with the site's Indigenous history as a gathering place. Following amalgamation, most Council services were relocated from South Melbourne Town Hall to St Kilda Town Hall.

Over time, as communities change the way that they interact, communicate and conduct business, the need for town halls and other large public gathering places becomes diminished, which can result in these spaces becoming underutilised, or even obsolete. While the practical need for these spaces is reduced, the building's physical presence itself can contribute to a sense of civic pride and ownership due to its age, grandeur and what it may be seen to symbolise.

The Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM) has been the major tenant of the South Melbourne Town Hall since 1996, following an agreement reached by the City of Port Phillip and the Victorian Government. A range of other arts, cultural and community organisations have, until recently, occupied the remainder of the building.

Established in 1994, ANAM is one of eight national performing arts training organisations funded by the Federal Government to support Australia's creative economy and promote artistic and cultural excellence.

Council values and acknowledges ANAM's use of the town hall and the contributions it has made to the Emerald Hill area as an internationally recognised music training organisation.

## Have your say

The City of Port Phillip has negotiated a lease to the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM).

The lease is intended to:

- secure ongoing use of the South Melbourne Town Hall as a cultural hub;
- support its restoration, renewal and ongoing maintenance; and
- over time, boost use and visitation.

Under the proposal, the lease does not commence unless ANAM invests \$20.5 million into the building and, the rent it is required to pay is linked to achieving specified performance targets - to support building safety and insurance, conservation and community access.

Council is seeking the community's views on the proposed lease.

To share your feedback with Council, visit [www.haveyoursay.portphillip.vic.gov.au](http://www.haveyoursay.portphillip.vic.gov.au).