



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2022

# perthnow

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## Tiny turnout to elect new councillor

EXCLUSIVE PIP WALLER

Fewer than 500 people turned out to vote in the Town of Cambridge's in-person extraordinary election last weekend.

The low turnout — just 4.75 per cent of eligible electors — was a bleak return for the council's first election run in-house.

It also meant the victorious candidate, Ben Mayes, romped it in with just 366 votes. His opponent, former World Cup soccer referee Eddie Lennie, finished the count on Saturday, August 27, with less than 100.

Only 484 votes were cast, with 23 deemed informal.

Voting was limited to ratepayers in the Wembley ward, with the poll needed to fill the vacancy created after Rob Fredericks quit the council in April.

Saturday's low turnout of electors compares dismally to when Mr Fredericks joined the council two years ago, also via an extraordinary election. Mr Fredericks claimed 1595 of 2268 votes, about 22 per cent of eligible voters.

Eligible voters were entitled to ask the Town of Cambridge for a postal vote in advance if they couldn't, or preferred not to, vote at either the Wembley Community Centre or the Holyrood Pavilion in West Leederville.

The council is yet to decide which voting system it will use for the next extraordinary election it has to hold to replace another former councillor, Rod Bradley, who quit in July.

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# STAGE IS SET

**MUST READ: Private school's \$29 million ambition to build a 480-seat theatre with views of the Swan River PAGES 6-7**



Concept designs for the Christ Church Grammar School performing arts centre. Pictures: With Architecture Studio

## Grand plans for school theatre

# Student arts education to enter new stage

EXCLUSIVE JAKE DIETSCH

An elite all-boys school wants to build a \$29 million 480-seat capacity performing arts centre.

The plans will see Christ Church Grammar School demolish several buildings and build a four-storey centre, with the auditorium and foyer featuring sweeping views of the Swan River. It will also include four classrooms.

The centre is set to be 14 metres tall, with the structure to be largely shielded from view from the river by tree canopy.

The Town of Claremont council recommended at its meeting on Tuesday night that the plans be supported when they head to the Joint Development Assessment Panel.

A school spokesperson said Christ Church always had a rich culture of fostering creativity in the performing arts.

They said the centre — to be known as PERFORM — would become a home for all students "regardless of how they express their creativity".

"Combining disciplines and expansive teaching spaces, PERFORM will be where boys think differently and feel free to express their imagination," the spokesperson said.

"The School understands the value of the arts and its power to educate people about almost anything because it touches us emotionally. Emotional intelligence is a significant part of the school's curriculum, equal in importance to academics."

The spokesperson said the centre would help boys develop empathy and communication skills, as well as the capacity to build healthy relationships.

"At present Christ Church Grammar School students learn instruments, art, drama, oration in separate buildings, in separate parts of the School. PERFORM will bring these disciplines into the one location," they said.



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The performing arts centre will be four storeys high.



"With a purpose-built facility, they will work side by side and we will foster multi-disciplinary collaboration."

The school expects to begin construction in 2025 and finish in 2027.

While it will be used on a daily basis for education and performances, the school confirmed third parties would be able to perform in the space.

"The School already works with and will continue partnerships with the Midnite Youth Theatre and other third party production houses," the spokesperson said.

"When the building is not occupied by the School, use by external parties will be possible."

The school is set to draw on past experience working with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services to ensure the new structure — which is in an area designated as bushfire prone — was safe and confirmed there would be no impact on the heritage-listed Knutsford House or heritage-listed trees.

Christ Church is working with With Architects, who have experience designing performing arts buildings and have designed other projects for the school.

"The design of the PERFORM building has been deliberately restrained to seamlessly fit between its two neighbours, the heritage Knutsford House and the wonderful mid-century architecture of the School's chapel," the spokesperson said.

## SMALES

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