The Elder Hall Appeal

$12 million is required to fully restore and transform Elder Hall to its former glory. We aim to raise this amount in the next three years.

There is now an opportunity for you and/or your company to support this important project by making a donation or annual pledge for three years towards the revitalisation of Elder Hall. You can choose to memorialise your family through a donation to cover the cost of one of the specific projects within the rebuilding program.

Your contribution will be recognised by future generations when Elder Hall regains its rightful position as one of the state’s iconic heritage buildings and performance spaces following a successful fundraising program.

The details

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The past

The first School of Music in Australia was opened in our University in 1885 and, only two years later, a £20,000 grant from Sir Thomas Elder was used to establish the Elder Conservatorium of Music and to build, as its home, Elder Hall.

Elder Hall remains the centrepiece along the historic North Terrace boulevard – it is at the geographic centre of a built environment of National Heritage significance.

Help us return Elder Hall to its former glory. It’s all about keeping up appearances

Elder Hall, built by benevolence and arguably the most public building on North Terrace boulevard, requires conservation as currently it appears like a missing tooth in the smile of this beautiful person we call Adelaide.

Theo Maras AM
The present

The Elder Conservatorium of Music, with Elder Hall as its base, is a major contributor to the teaching and performance of music in South Australia and Australia. Elder Hall has provided an outstanding performance space which has enabled many of our alumni to achieve state, national and international musical careers.

Elder Hall is used 364 days per year by local, national and international bodies – it is a significant community venue.

The problem

The University of Adelaide has recognised the need for urgent revitalisation of Elder Hall to its original state. Conservator assessing Elder Hall for the Conservation Management Plan wrote: “Overall the stonework is in poor condition and among the worst I have seen in over 25 years of work in this field”.

The rejuvenation of this iconic building has become critical. The University of Adelaide has already spent $1.7 million to commence this process but needs the assistance of the entire South Australian community to help restore this wonderful performance hall to its original state for future generations to use and enjoy.

The solution

$12 million is needed to revitalise Elder Hall and provide a 21st Century fit-out so that the University can continue to produce 21st Century artists to perform on the global stage.

Individuals, families, corporations and organisations can contribute to the fund or to choose to memorialise their family or organisation by selecting to support a particular aspect of the revitalisation project.

The people

The international reputation that the Elder Conservatorium enjoys in the area of graduates in performance, composition and post-doctoral programs, underpinned by the excellence in performance provided by Elder Hall, has assisted to launch our alumni into professional careers including the current Vienna Philharmonic Principal Viola, London Symphony Orchestra Principal Violinist and Principal Oboe in the Lisbon Metropolitan Orchestra.

I was inspired to want to play the cello after being taken to Elder Hall to hear the Elder Conservatorium Junior Orchestra conducted by Harold Fairhurst over 50 years ago. This was an awesome experience for me and a defining moment in my life and one which I will never forget and which has not left me to this day. After that concert I passionately asked Professor John Bishop if my hands were big enough and when I could start to learn the cello and join that orchestra!

Janis Laurs, an Elder Conservatorium graduate, founding Cellist of the Australian String Quartet and current Principal Cellist of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

Born of Sir Thomas Elder’s extraordinary philanthropy, Elder Hall has become South Australia’s most loved and used concert and celebratory venue. Now more than a century on, this heritage jewel of the University and the North Terrace boulevard urgently needs our help before it melts and rots beyond saving.

Keith Conlon OAM