



Our new venue

October 2017

The “Rex” – our exciting new venue

The decision to change venues for a long running event like the Summer Festival is a difficult one and one not taken without serious consideration. The Summer Festival had called the QT (formerly Rydges and for a long time before that – the “Lakeside”) home and we had become accustomed to the staff, the hotel and the surrounding services. Of course, throughout the history of the Summer Festival, we have had other homes. There was a period when the tournament was split across two venues: the Hyatt and Rydges for several years to 2003), then the National Convention Centre and Rydges (2004-2006); and then Rydges and the Hellenic Club in Woden (2007-2008). From 2009, we conducted the tournament solely at the Rydges/QT. So, we are heralding a new beginning for the Summer Festival at the Rex who are getting ready to welcome us warmly.

The mural that saved a hotel....

The Rex has over fifty years of history and one of the more colourful episodes involved the public outcry at a proposed redevelopment and what was going to happen to the “Expansion” mural. The mosaic mural was designed by the celebrated Australian artist Margo Lewers who also designed the Aubusson Tapestry in the boardroom of the Reserve Bank of Australia. The public campaign to save the mosaic resulted in a major, painstaking restoration of Expansion. The earlier proposed redevelopment did not go ahead and the mural was subsequently heritage listed. When the Rex was later redeveloped with the Astin apartment building, the mural remained to grace the front of the hotel. Check it out when you come to the Festival.



Major refit at the Rex



A major refit of the Rex began a few years ago resulting in the return of elegance to the foyers, suites and rooms, well-lit and appointed function spaces all on the one level and a beautiful roof top bar with a stunning 180-degree view of Canberra’s inner north. Still to come – a 120 seat restaurant on the 5th Floor. For those of you fortunate enough to stay at the Rex, you have the chance to enjoy the great service from one of Canberra’s independent and locally owned hotels.





Great location.... light rail coming

The Rex is located a few blocks north of the CBD on Northbourne Avenue in the inner North suburb of Braddon. According to property consultants, Urbis and market research guru, APM, Braddon is one of the best hipster lifestyle spots in Australia up there with the likes of Camperdown and Darlinghurst (Sydney), Collingwood and Fitzroy (Melbourne), Fortitude Valley (Brisbane) and Highgate and Northbridge (Perth). A hip suburb according to Urbis is at the “leading edge of cosmopolitan trends”, and offers an “unusually rich source of information on future consumer directions.

For so long the beautiful tree-lined Northbourne Avenue welcomed visitors from Sydney and other places north connected by the Federal Highway. Now the trees have gone to be replaced by the (somewhat) controversial light rail system which has been inflicting great pain on Canberra’s commuters. Sadly, the light rail Stage 1 will not be completed until later in 2018, after the Summer Festival but undoubtedly the central position of the Rex next to the Ipima Street tram stop will enable players at future Summer Festivals to move up and down between the CBD and Dickson very freely and cheaply.



Food, drink, what to see in January

Wine and dine in the relaxed atmosphere of Rex Brasserie, located on the ground floor adjacent to Reception. This brasserie is all about indulgence from the sumptuous daily buffet breakfast to their intimate dinner experience, showcasing international flavours with fresh local produce. Enjoy a coffee or sit back and relax with friends in the brasserie Bar. The Rex’s new rooftop bar (on the 6th Floor) is a welcoming place for that relaxing drink after bridge and to take in the fantastic view towards Telstra Tower.



No self-respecting foodie however, can fail to take advantage of the many excellent restaurants in nearby Braddon. Visit Lonsdale and Mort Streets and immerse yourself in the boutique shops, trendy bars, a brewery for the beer lovers and award winning restaurants and quaint casual eatery’s lining the street. Or the many good, reasonably priced Asian eateries in Dickson. The Summer Festival website has a comprehensive “Where to Eat” guide, with contact details and location maps. Download it here::

<http://www.abfevents.com.au/events/not/2018/docs/2018SFOBWhereToEat.pdf>.