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Putting bums on bigger seats

LOCAL NEWS 9 JAN 12 @ 07:00AM | BY MARION JOSEPH

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Tony Murphy has overseen the redevelopment of Hamer Hall.
Pic: ROBERT McKECHNIE

THE \$128.5 million redevelopment of Hamer Hall will include three new restaurants, new foyer spaces, a refurbished hall and, perhaps most importantly, new theatre seats - and they are wider.

Redevelopment project manager Tony Murphy said the new orange brushed-velvet seats were much anticipated by theatregoers.

Four companies from across the world were shortlisted for the seat design and asked to make a prototype, and the final commission was given to Spanish auditorium furniture design company Figueras.

"The major thing we wanted to do was improve the comfort factor, so that's been about the right design of the timber, the right clearance space and room for

feet and people to move," Mr Murphy said.

"And it's fair to say the seats are wider.

"From an acoustic point of view, the foam on the old seats absorbed sound. The new seats are supportive of the acoustic environment."

Balcony arms and walls near the stage were also removed to improve sound travel.

Mr Murphy said the overall aim of the redevelopment was to open the hall to the river with new riverside access and provide more amenities, including women's toilets and escalators to cut down the exit time from the hall.

Hamer Hall will reopen in July.

Tony Murphy, redevelopment project manager at Hamer Hall in Melbourne, explains why Figueras seating was chosen to outfit the new auditorium. Comfort and the product's excellent acoustic performance were the main factors taken into account.

El jefe de proyecto de rehabilitación de Hamer Hall de Melbourne, Tony Murphy, explica por qué se escogieron butacas de Figueras para equipar el nuevo auditorio. El confort y su excelente comportamiento acústico fueron los principales motivos.